

**ISLAM TODAY IN MODERN WEST**

**Fazlur Rahman's and Tariq
Ramadan's Views on Jihad**

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Abstract: This paper discusses the issues of radicalism that have reappeared in the public sphere nowadays. The discussion will focus on the interpretation of Jihad by Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan. They are among two modern reformers whose ideas heavily focus on the social, economic and political issues about Muslims in the West. This paper will discuss the thoughts of these two figures about jihad spread across their various writings. As a contemporary reformist Muslim leader, Rahman and Ramadan had made many interpretations of the Qur'an by adapting to the social context of society when the interpretation was made, namely Western society. Their Qur'anic interpretations and their thoughts-whether directly or indirectly-reflect on the circumstances and challenges that Muslims encounter in the West, Europe and the US, today. This paper contributes to the discussion of the meaning of jihad and various attempts at interpretation of the term. Besides, this paper will at least provide an overview of how the face of Islam in the West in the modern era as it is today.

Keywords: Islam minority, *jihad*, Fazlur Rahman, Tariq Ramadan, contextual interpretation

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Introduction

DISCUSSION ABOUT JIHAD is inseparable from the issue of Islam, Muslims and radicalism. A few years ago, the issue of radicalism was associated with Islam and became a topic that was massively discussed by people in various countries, including the European Countries. The Iranian Revolution in 1979 is an onset of the negative image of Muslims in the West. The Taliban movement, the killings and violence that occurred in the Middle East, terrible

episodes in Algeria have increasingly hampered the image of Islam and Muslims in Europe.¹ The attack on September 11, 2001, which popularly known as the 9/11 incident at the World Trade Center building in New York, United States, made Islamic countries and Muslims a focus of extraordinary attention. Furthermore, the impact that was aroused was that people now use 'Arabic', 'Muslim', and 'terrorist' as if they have become terms whose meanings are the same or similar and can be exchanged with each other.² In addition, the increasingly intense portrait of Muslims living in the European region as those who are associated with acts of terrorism just have further tainted such a negative impression.

The impact is that everyone starts to learn Islamic science, more specifically on the notion of radicalism. One of the most attentive subjects is concerned with *jihād*. Until now, *jihād* has mostly been misunderstood by many people. It appears that the understanding of "*jihād*" has been reduced Muslims and thus this is easily being manipulated and politicized by people to label Muslims radicals.

In this case, the effort to re-interpret the meaning of *jihād* is relevant to this contemporary challenge. Reinterpretation is the right term to be used to return the meaning of *jihād* following the Qur'an. Many Muslims believe that Islamic and its teaching are suitable for various contexts of space and time. Attempts to reinterpret Islamic religious texts, including the Qur'an, have been carried out since a long time ago, and are now increasingly becoming a trend among scholars or contemporary *mufassir* (interpreter of the Qur'an). Due to the rapidly changing contexts in society, the need for fresh interpretations and thoughts about religious texts is highly necessitated. Among contemporary scholars who have tried to uncover these fresh interpretations are Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan.

¹ Tariq Ramadan, *Teologi Dialog Islam-Barat: Pergumulan Muslim Eropa*, trans. Abdullah Ali (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), 268.

² Carl W. Ernst, *Pergulatan Islam di Dunia Kontemporer*, trans. Anna Farida, et.al (Bandung: Mizan, 2016), 27.

In general, Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan offer interpretations of the Qur'an by presenting new perspectives, fresh interpretations and thoughts on religious texts by looking at the present context, where the results of that interpretation are expected to answer the socio-historical and religious problems and challenges faced by contemporary society, especially Muslims in Europe. The presence of Tariq Ramadan and Fazlur Rahman in the midst of the Western life tried to overcome these various problems with the aim of obtaining interpretations with the objective to be able to answer challenges and problems in their context. One of their efforts is to reinterpret the terms of *jihad* in the Western context. Fazlur Rahman used to be a professor of Islamic studies at the University of Chicago while Tariq Ramadhan lives in Europe. Their experience as Muslim scholars living in the West, interacting with diverse people of different religious and cultural backgrounds, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, is the context that provides their interpretation *jihad*.

There are some studies on Rahman's and Ramadan's thoughts.³ However, this present study focuses on the concept of *jihad* and its meaning for Muslim in modern Western societies. This article attempts to uncover how Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan interpret *jihad* in the Western context and analyze how such new understanding is important to provide an alternative, a more suitable, discourse to Muslims living in the West and beyond.

Fazlur Rahman and his Intellectual Career

Fazlur Rahman is known as one of the leading figures in the modern interpretation of the Qur'an. He was born in Pakistan in 1919 and died in 1988 in the United States. His academic career began from his homeland until he obtained his Masters of Arts

³ See Tamara Sonn, "Fazlur Rahman's Islamic Methodology," *The Muslim World* 81, no. 3–4 (1991): 212–230, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1478-1913.1991.tb03526.x>; Daniel W. Brown, "Islamic Modernism in South Asia: A Reassessment," *The Muslim World* 87, no. 3–4 (1997): 258–271, <https://www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1478-1913.1997.tb03639.x>; Frank Peter, "Leading the Community of the Middle Way: A Study of the Muslim Field in France," *The Muslim World* 96, no. 4 (2006): 707–736.

degree in 1942 from the University of Punjab, Lahore-Pakistan in the field of Arabic Literature.⁴ Then in 1949, he obtained a Doctoral degree in Philosophy from the University of Oxford, England. He was a lecturer in Persian studies and Islamic Philosophy at Durham University from 1950 to 1958. Later, he was appointed as Professor of McGill University, Canada in 1958-1961. From 1962 to 1968, he was appointed as the director of Pakistan Islamic Research Institute. Many rejections and harsh criticism from Pakistani people were addressed to him because he was considered liberal. Rahman then decided to leave Pakistan in 1968 and moved to the United States where he started his career as a professor at the University of Chicago until the end of his life.⁵

As an academician, he has written many intellectual works. Some of them are *Prophecy in Islam* (1958), *Islamic Methodology in History* (1965), *Islam and Modernity* (1982), and *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (1980).⁶ This book contains the main and core themes in the Qur'an which are presented in detail as the type of the hermeneutical model developed by Rahman. Rahman's concept of *jihad* can be found in this work, which becomes the main data and analysis of this present study.⁷

As a Muslim reformist figure, from the beginning, Fazlur Rahman's main ideas are the result of his anxiety regarding Islam and modernity that must be faced by Muslims. In many of his writings, Rahman tries to unravel the challenges of modernity faced by Muslims, so that most of his work is a form of response to this issue that occurs in Muslim's daily life.

⁴ Sri Lum'atun Sa'adah, "Transformasi Fikih Klasik menuju Fikih Kontemporer," *Jurnal Falasifa* 3, no. 1 (March 2012): 141.

⁵ Vita Fitria, "Komparasi Metodologis Konsep Sunnah Menurut Fazlur Rahman dan Muhammad Syahrur (Perspektif Hukum Islam)," *Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah dan Hukum* 45, no. 2 (July 1, 2011): 1338-1339, accessed February 19, 2019, <http://asy-syirah.uin-suka.com/index.php/AS/article/view/18>.

⁶ An edited volume has been written in honour of Rahman. See Earle H. Waugh and Frederick M. Denny, eds., *The Shaping of An American Islamic Discourse: A Memorial to Fazlur Rahman* (Atlanta: Scholar Press, 1998).

⁷ The study also uses Rahman's other works. See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

Fazlur Rahman is known for his theory of *double-movement*. In his view, Rahman rejects the interpretation of the Qur'an that separates each verse from the other as the traditional method has commonly adopted.⁸ Besides the lack of effectiveness, he considers that the separate-verse interpretation of the Qur'an is incapable of solving problems at hand. He then provides a solution by offering a new methodology in interpreting the Al-Qur'an. The new perspective and methodology aim to understand the Qur'an as a unit by considering the background of the Arab community, the situation and reality that occurs when the Qur'an was revealed and by reviewing reality that happens in the present time. This method of interpretation by Fazlur Rahman shows that it is necessary to reinterpret the Qur'an verses to gain new understanding that is contained in it so that it can be used to overcome the problems faced by Muslims in modern times.

Tariq Ramadan: Life and Academic Journey

Born in Geneva, Switzerland, on August 26, 1962, Tariq Ramadan was one of the reformist figures of contemporary Islam in Europe. He is a professor in the field of contemporary Islamic studies at the University of Oxford and also a lecturer in the Theology Faculty at the same university but now is on leave. Tariq Ramadan, the grandson of the founder of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn group, Hassan al-Banna – has lived for a long time in Switzerland. He is considered as a reformer.⁹ Currently, he is a guest lecturer at the Islamic Studies Faculty, Qatar and Perlis University Malaysia, a senior researcher at Doshisha University, Kyoto-Japan and Director of the Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE) Research Center in Doha-Qatar.¹⁰

⁸ Ahmad Syukri, "Metodologi Tafsir Alqur'an Kontemporer dalam Pemikiran Fazlur Rahman," *Kontekstualita: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 20, no. 1 (2005): 54.

⁹ Sahiron Syamsuddin, "Book Review: Beberapa Tema Reformasi Dalam Islam," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 44, no. 2 (December 30, 2006): 488, accessed September 19, 2019, <https://www.aljamiah.or.id/index.php/AJIS/article/view/64>.

¹⁰ Anonim, "Biography," *Tariq Ramadan*, accessed May 12, 2017, <https://tariqramadan.com/english/biography/>.

Tariq Ramadan is the son of Sa'id Ramadan and Wafa al-Banna, who was the eldest daughter of Hassan Al-Banna. His father was a prominent figure in the Ikhwanul Muslimin. In the 1950s, his father was exiled from Egypt to Switzerland by Gamal Abdul Nasser.¹¹ The place where Ramadan was born. Then on August 4, 1995, his father died.¹²

As a teenager, around the 1970s, Tariq Ramadan left for Egypt and studied various religious disciplines there, such as *Ullūm al-Qur'ān*, *Tafsīr*, *Hadīth*, Arabic, Prophetic Biography (*Sira Nabawiyya*), and so on. He finished his study only in 2 years, even though the normal study period lasts for five years.¹³ Then he returned to Switzerland to study French Philosophy and Literature and obtained the title of Master of Art (MA). He then obtained a PhD in Arabic and Islamic studies from the University of Geneva. Ramadan then studied Islamic Law at Al-Azhar University, Cairo-Egypt.¹⁴ There, he attended intensive training in classical Islamic studies from Al-Azhar University scholars. The training covered 7 disciplines. Through his writing and classes, Tariq has contributed to debates about Muslim issues in the West. He is active in academics and teaching in the world about theology, ethics, social justice, ecology and interfaith and intercultural dialogue. He is the President of the European think tank European Muslim Network (EMN) in Brussels. Tariq also joined as a member of the Association of International Muslim Scholars.¹⁵

Tariq Ramadan has many followers from young Muslims in big cities, such as Lyon and Paris, as well as from the left-liberal intellectuals.¹⁶ He did a lot of teaching in various regions in Europe and trained young Muslims throughout Europe. Within a year, he and his friends have successfully guided around 300

¹¹ Eep Khunaefi, "Tariq Ramadan, Salah Satu Innovator Terpenting Abad 21 Versi Majalah Time," *e-biografi*, Senin, Agustus 2015, accessed May 23, 2017, <http://e-biografi.blogspot.com/2015/08/tariq-ramadan-salah-satu-inovator.html>.

¹² Tariq Ramadan, *Menjadi Modern Bersama Islam: Islam, Barat, dan Tantangan Modernitas*, trans. Zubair and Saenong (Jakarta: Teraju, 2003), xxvi.

¹³ Khunaefi, "e-biografi."

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Anonim, "Biography."

¹⁶ Syamsuddin, "Book Review," 488.

young Muslims between the ages of 20-30 until the same age as them. For this effort, he was named as One of the 100 Most Important Innovators of the 21st Century by Time magazine.

Tariq Ramadan is known as a new reformist figure who is quite productive. Its contribution to the academic world can be seen in various writings, both in the form of books and articles in various languages. Until now, he has written at least 20 books and around 700 articles about Islam.

His works include *Western Muslim and The Future of Islam* that was published in 2004 by Oxford University Press, *To Be European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in The European Context*, which was printed 1998 by The Islamic Foundation, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* that was published in 2008 by Oxford University Press, *Islam and The Arab Awakening* which were published in 2012 by Oxford University Press, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lesson from the Life of Muhammad* that was published in 2006 by Oxford University Press, *The Messenger: The Meaning of The Life of Muhammad* which was published by Oxford University Press; *What I Believe* that was published in 2009, *Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity* published in 2001, *The Arab Awakening: Islam and The New Middle East* which were published in 2012, *Islam and The West, Introduction to Islam* published in 2017, *Al-Islām wa al-Hurriyah; On Super Diversity* that was published in 2011, *De l'slam* which was published in 2002, *Muslim in France* that was published in 1999, *Globalization: Muslim Resistances* published in 2003, *Aux Sources du renouveau musulman* published in 1998, *Jihad, Violence, Guerre et paix en Islam* that were published in 2002, and many more.

Some articles that were written by Tariq Ramadan include: "Solidarity" written on the official website - tariqramadan.com - which was published on January 3, 2017, "The Social Message of Islam" that published on December 6, 2016, "Social Commitment and Political Participation" on 28 November 2016, "The Birth of an Islamic Feminism", "In Case You Missed it", "Canada Passed An Anti-Islamophobia Motion" (Thomas Woodley); and many more.

Tariq Ramadan is famous for his notion about "European Muslim" or European Islam. This idea reflects how the principles of Islamic teachings are integrated into the lives of people in the

West. In Indonesian context, the idea of Ramadan is similar to that of Musthofa Bisri, better known as Gus Mus, about 'Islamic Archipelago', where the points of Islamic teachings mingle and synergize with various archipelago cultures which then form social systems, as well as educational institutions -one of which is popularly known as Islamic boarding school.¹⁷

For this reason, both scholars' ideas are comparable, especially those that relate to the concept of *jihād* and its implementation in the modern world. It is of the importance of academic enterprise to present these two scholars' thoughts, analyzing and comparing them and finding the most relevant contribution that they give to respond contemporary challenges of Muslims, especially in the Western context.

Jihād in the West: Not Just 'Fighting'

Jihād is one term that has multiple meanings and is often associated with negative connotations towards Islam. Apart from various assumptions about Islam, what is the exact meaning of *jihād*? The word *jihād* in Al-Quran is mentioned 41 times and are spread in 19 surah with various forms and meaning. Over time, this term continues to experience development, even a shift in meaning - in addition to the interpretation that is also being carried out - according to the tendency of each interpreter when interpreting this term.

Both Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan perceive of *jihād* in al-Qur'an as a term that does not always have one and the same meaning. Rahman then distinguished the use of this term-including the derivative form of the word 'j-h-d'- into the context of the descent of the verse, whether the verse was revealed in Mecca or Medina. Rahman explains:

"... if one closely follows the developments in Mecca, one is inevitably led to the belief that terms like *jihād* and *munāfiqūn* had begun to be used in Mecca, although their meanings become much stronger and more sharply defined in Madina, ... If we consider the terms *jihād* and *munāfiqūn* in this Qur'ānic passage, in this fitna-back-ground, it at once becomes clear that

¹⁷ Queen Fannis Listia, "Islam Nusantara: Upaya Islamisasi Islam menurut NU" (Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2016), 3.

their meanings are not the same as when they are employed later in Medina.”¹⁸

Rahman's explanation is basically his response to most commentators who tend to understand the term *jihād* with one particular meaning, without looking at the context of the verse. According to him, most *mufassirs* tend to understand *jihād* in the context of Medina simply because it is generally used in Medina.¹⁹ This is understandable considering the command or verse of *jihād* by fighting and using weapons for the first time was revealed in the Medina period, specifically in the surah al-Hajj: 39-40²⁰ after Muslims being patient with various acts of violence they experienced in Mecca.

The example of the verse that uses the word *j-h-d* in the Qur'an that reflects the Meccan context is the one found in *Sūra al-Ankabūt*: 6 and 8 and *Sūra Luqmān*: 15, as follows:

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فِيمَا يَجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

“And whoever strives only strives for [the benefit of] himself. Indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds.” (Q.s. Al-Ankabūt: 6);

The meaning of *jihād* in this verse is struggled, a persistent and earnest effort in resisting lust and an evil desire to remain obedient to the commands of Allah, and to remain steadfast in fighting the

¹⁸ Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1980), 107–110

¹⁹ Ibid., 110.

²⁰ Q.s. al-Hajj: 39-40 reads :

أَذْنَ اللَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلَمُوا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ . الَّذِينَ أُخْرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ وَلَوْلَا دُفَعَ إِلَيْهِ النَّاسُ بِعَصْبَهُمْ بِعِصْبَهُمْ لَهُدْمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبَيْعَ وَصَلَوَاتُ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوْيٌ عَزِيزٌ .

“Permission (to fight) has been granted to those against whom war has been waged because they have been treated unjustly, and Allah is certainly able to help them. These are the people who have been expelled unjustly from their homes only for the reason that they said, "Our Lord is Allah." Had Allah not repelled one people by means of another people, monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is often mentioned, would have been demolished. Allah will surely help those people who help Him: Allah is indeed All-Powerful, All-Mighty.”

challenges of the idolaters and infidels.²¹ Besides, the following verses of *jihād* in the *Sūra al-'Ankabūt*: 8 and *Sūra Luqmān*: 15 were also revealed in the Mecca period.

ووصينا الإنسان بوالديه حسنا وإن جاهداك لتشرك بي ما ليس لك به علم فلا
تطعهما إلى مرجعكم فأبئكم بما كنتم تعملون

"And We have enjoined upon man goodness to parents. But if they endeavour to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them. To Me is your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do." (Q.s. Al-'Ankabūt: 8);

وإن جاهداك على أن تشرك بي ما ليس لك به علم فلا تطعهما وصاحبها في
الدنيا معروفا واتبع سبيل من أناب إلى ثم إلى مرجعكم فأبئكم بما كنتم
تعملون

"But if they endeavour to make you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do." (Q.s. Luqmān: 15)

In the two verses above, *jihād* refers to the meaning of 'persistent and earnest effort' by children whose parents are disbelievers of Allah, who attempt to make their children disobedient to Allah or force them to deny Allah completely.²² Basically, the similar terms in verse or in a different chapter with different revelation contexts do not necessarily share the same meaning.

Although the two verses above use the term *j-h-d*, Rahman does not immediately conclude that the two verses are Medinan verses as many interpreters have assumed.²³ After studying the use of the word *jahada* with other words that followed it, Rahman assumed that the two verses above were the Meccan verses

²¹ Khairunnas Rajab and Fikri Mahmud, "Keganasan: Telaah terhadap Konsep Jihad fi Sabilillah," *Jurnal Syariah* 18, no. 3 (2010): 616, accessed September 19, 2019, <http://repository.um.edu.my/115301/>.

²² Ibid., 613–614; Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 110.

²³ Theodor Noldeke is among those who consider Surah Al-Ankabut verses 6 and 8 to be verses revealed in Medina. See Theodor Noldeke et al., *The History of the Qur'an*, trans. Wolfgang H. Behn (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 126, see also footnote 69.

revealed in the Mecca period. This is because that the word *jahada* in verse is more likely to mean "an earnest effort" to endure the faced pressures. In addition, this meaning is identical and aligned with the socio-political background conditions that occurred in Mecca. Rahman says:

As for the term *jihād* in this context, it obviously means not *jihād* in its Madinan sense but merely a strong-willed resistance to the pressures of fitna and retaliation in case of violence; or, in the case of the parents of a son who had embraced Islam, a strong effort to reconvert him from Islam.²⁴

Fazlur Rahman's explanation above shows that the term *jihād* is not merely interpreted as a single meaning that bears similarity across the Al-Quran because, in Al-Quran itself, the term has various meanings according to the context when the verses were revealed. The meaning of the word *jihād* in the Al-Quran in the Mecca period is certainly different from the Medina period.

In the context of Medina itself, Fazlur Rahman explained that the word *jihād* is generally often combined with the term *qital* (killing or war), which means as a form of organized community struggle and this struggle is in totality, even if necessary with war, with the aim of disseminating Islam.²⁵ It seems that the meaning of *jihād* in the Medina period was more interesting and until now understood as the true meaning of *jihād* by the majority of the people. This is what is Fazlur Rahman wants to refine in his book.²⁶

Jamal Albana explained that equating the meaning of the word *jihād* with *qital* is a mistake. The words *jihād* and *qital*, besides being different from the lexical aspect, are also different in terms of their use. According to him, *qital* is only an accidental thing that carries an urgency in times of emergency while *jihād* is the main thing that is done everywhere and at any time. Here *jihād* means

²⁴ Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 110.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Through his book, Fazlur Rahman tried to straighten out views which he thought were wrong and incorrect. That the verses that contain the term *Jihād* or *munāfiqūn* are always regarded as verses that were revealed in Medina, even though according to him, it was clearly a serious mistake. This error, according to him, is caused by an incorrect and wrong perspective on these verses. See Ibid., 111.

struggle, not war or violence.²⁷ From this view, it can be seen that *qital* is only done when it is needed and in a very urgent or emergency situation with the aim of fulfilling the main thing, namely *jihād*, or self-defence. It is clear that *jihād* is an endeavour, hard struggle to realize religion while *qital* is not because it is only needed in certain circumstances when carrying out *jihād* in the sense of self-defence in warfare.

However, the public usually understands the term *jihād* as a 'holy war', although the term 'holy war' itself is a term derived from Christian terminology,²⁸ where the events of wars are carried out on behalf of or with religious purposes.²⁹ Until then this term is reflected in Islam and Muslims, producing an impression of Islam as 'a religion developed with swords,³⁰ and 'religion of war'. This widespread perception throughout modern history then changes the connotation of the true meaning of *jihād*. *Jihād* in the modern context - according to Fazlur Rahman - is a struggle carried out with the aim of forming an egalitarian and just social-moral order, and *jihād* is not always done by fighting,³¹ although fighting or war is part of *jihād* in the emergency situation of self-defense like in war.

The meaning of *jihād*, according to Ramadan, varies. *Jihād* is seen not only theoretically, but also practically.³² In an era where the flow of modernity is strong as it is today, Muslims are not only required to understand Islamic teachings theoretically, but they must also interpret Islamic teachings in the form of real actions, both in personal life and in the lives of social communities.

A person's understanding of *jihād* is a form of reflection of one's faith on the one hand, and on the other hand, the right way is needed in the practice of actualizing it in life. In relation to how or

²⁷ Jamal Albana, *Revolusi Sosial Islam: Dekonstruksi Jihad dalam Islam*, trans. Kamran A. Irsyadi (Yogyakarta: Pilar Religia, 2005), xxiii.

²⁸ Ernst, *Pergulatan Islam*, 119.

²⁹ M. Dawam Rahardjo, "Ensiklopedia Alqur'an: Jihad," in *Ullumul Qur'an*, vol. 2, 7, 1990, 57; Muhammad Chirzin, *Jihad dalam al-Qur'an: Telaah Normatif, Historis dan Prospektif* (Yogyakarta: Mitra Pustaka, 1997), 4.

³⁰ Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 43.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ramadan, *Menjadi Modern*, 37.

how to actualize *jihād* in life, Ramadan categorizes the meaning of *jihād* according to its purpose into several classifications, namely:

Personal Jihād

Personally, *jihād* that one can do is inner struggle and self-control. This needs to be done for the purpose of gaining personal and inner of heart.³³ The meaning of *jihād* here is interpreted as a form of self-defense carried out to fight negative pressures from outside of oneself which can threaten inner peace.

According to Ramadan, humans are endowed with good attitudes, respect for others, and purity of heart. As one verse of the Qur'an explains:

وَنَفْسٌ وَمَا سَوَّاهَا، فَلِهُمَا فُجُورٌ هَا وَتَقْوَاهَا، قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا.

"And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it. And inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness. He has succeeded who purifies it." (Q.s. al-Shams: 7-10).

This human nature often gets influence from various things that come from outside of human beings, such as various pressures, violent traits, aggressive attitudes and other various negative influences. To maintain human nature, according to Ramadan, *jihād* is needed.³⁴ This *jihād* refers to struggle against lust. To support his argument, Ramadan quotes the Prophet Tradition stating that upon the return from a great battle, the Prophet Muhammad told his companion that they won a small *jihād* and would go to the real, greater *jihād*, namely struggle against one own lust and misconducts.³⁵

This interpretation of the meaning of greater *jihād* is similar to what was understood by al-Ghazali in his greatest work *Ihya' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, as quoted by David Cook, that Muslims must strive or struggle, but not by their wealth and soul, but by fighting against their wealth 'and soul.³⁶ This interpretation of *jihād* spiritually explains that war is not the only definition or way of

³³ Ibid., 72.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 73.

³⁶ David Cook, *Understanding Jihad* (California and London: University of California Press, 2005), 37.

jihād. It is precisely that the greater *jihād* and the real one is to fight the passions in human selves-ness. This verse of the Qur'an explains that lucky people are humans who are able to 'maintain the sanctity of their souls' from various things that pollute them. To maintain purity requires effort and struggle. These efforts and struggles are classified as *jihād* in basic understanding. The next question is, what is the struggle for? This is - one of them - then explained by the Messenger of Allah that the struggle in controlling anger. Those who are able to control it are including those who are 'strong'³⁷ certainly not in the sense of being physically strong, but more than that, namely psychologically strong in dealing with these emotions themselves.

Social, Economic and Political Jihād

This *jihād* is an expression of fight against various forms of injustice and abuse in social life. According to Ramadan, this *jihād* is an effort taken against various exploits and violence against humans and various interests with the aim of creating equality and justice in life.³⁸ According to him, to fulfil this goal, the Qur'an orders *jihād* using weapons as recorded in the *Sūra al-Hajj*: 39-40. It says:

"Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory."

Historically, the verse was the command of Allah to Meccan Muslims who had been oppressed for so long to carry out armed *jihād* to face the violence and injustice that they received because of their faith.³⁹ In the contemporary European context, *jihād*-according to Ramadan-is a struggle that is carried out to deal with various problems, both educational, economic, political, and social, such as problems of hunger, unemployment, drugs, exploitation, and various other crimes.⁴⁰ Basically, the command

³⁷; This Hadith reads: "The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, "The person who is strong is not strong because he can knock people down. The person who is strong is the one who controls himself when he is angry." (Al-Bukhori and Muslim). See Ramadan, *Menjadi Modern*, 74.

³⁸ Ibid., 77.

³⁹ Albana, *Revolusi Sosial Islam*, 169.

⁴⁰ Ramadan, *Menjadi Modern*, 82.

of *jihād* arises because of social inequality, injustice and the amount of violence that occurs in the wider community, so that justice, both socially, economically and politically, requires extraordinary effort and struggle. The Qur'anic verses then confirm the struggle by mentioning *jihād* as the solution, as one of the proofs of one's faith and sense of responsibility in establishing justice in society for a better life. The Qur'an says:

إِنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهُوهُمْ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ
وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

"The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah . It is those who are truthful." (Q.s. al-Hujurāt: 15)

Jihād fi sabīlillāh (struggle in the path of God) in the above verse might be interpreted by fighting with weapons. This is different from the view that Ramadan offers. According to him, 'struggling in the path of Allah' is not only seen in terms of military action. But, he emphasizes, it is also understood the struggle in the social aspects,⁴¹ Namely trying and mobilizing with all abilities, both materially and non-materially, with body, property or possessed material, or with our own soul for the purpose of overcoming various problems faced by modern society today, such as injustice, low quality of education, poverty, drug abuse, and so on. In this case, *jihād* is carried out for the purpose of fighting for the rights of the people who are deprived so that a more positive, fair, and balanced social life is established to bring signs of progress to people, community or nation.

Intellectual Jihād

This *jihād* is carried out by the effort to establish the universal messages that allow Muslims to return to Islamic concepts that have been adapted to the present era under the Islamic framework and within the context of minority and assimilated Islam, especially in Europe.⁴² As Muslims who live in the challenges of

⁴¹ Ibid., 80.

⁴² See Tariq Ramadan, "The Global Ideology of Fear," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (February 2006): 16; Abd. Muid Nawawi, "Islam, Barat dan Tariq Ramadan," *Jurnal Bimas Islam* 5, no. 4 (2012): 726.

the flow of modernity, the development of the media and the strong influence of globalization, Muslims need to stick to the principles and return to the values of Islam to face the era changes.

Cultural Jihād

Jihād, in this case, is a form of business of a Muslim is facing the challenges of culture, custom, and art that exist in the West. According to Ramadan, Muslims do not have to close themselves from the various external cultures that exist. Instead, Muslims must be able to select and replace a culture that is considered bad by something positive.⁴³ In addition, Muslims can also develop their creativity in various ways, including art. Cultural values in the form of artistic expressions have important values in everyday life. By having a sense of sensitivity to aesthetic values, Muslims can praise and glorify the Creator through signs of beauty, gorgeous, diversity of His creatures. This can support the relationship between Muslims and the Creator.

In the context of Europe's own social culture, Muslims can adjust to local culture. Ramadan saw that the formation of European Islamic culture almost happened naturally, where songs and arts were created in accordance with European culture without violating Islamic law.⁴⁴

In the modern context, Tariq Ramadan views that the term *jihād* is emphasized in social, economic, cultural and political aspects, where term *jihād* is interpreted as a form of effort that is done by all people who face various problems in contemporary contexts, such as poverty, lack of education, injustice, drugs, and so on. The aim is to shape life for being a better society. Besides understanding the term *jihād* as an effort to overcome these social problems, it can reflect the form of Muslims faith in the modern era.

It can be said that both Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan have attempted to re-interpret *jihād* but not necessarily the same. However, their interpretation is similar because they tend to

⁴³ Tariq Ramadan, *To Be a European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1999), 199.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 206–207.

interpret *jihād* contextually. The reinterpretation does not deny the context of the verses of *jihād*. What they have done in their interpretation is to look at the root of *jihād* found in various verses so that *jihād* is understood accordingly. Their form of interpretation reflects each of their lives' context within the era they live in without necessarily leaving the basic interpretative method and the relevant knowledge used to support such reinterpretation.

Conclusion

The interpretation of the Qur'an verses that are performed by Fazlur Rahman and Tariq Ramadan put a priority on the social context where the verses are interpreted. According to them, it is essential to obtain the Qur'anic values which can be used as problem-solving for the various challenges that are faced by Muslims today. One term that needs to be re-interpreted contextually is *jihād*. This term has always been controversial, especially in today's modern West.

Both Rahman and Ramadan argue that *jihād* in the context of modern Western society is best understood as an endeavour to overcome socio-religious problems. For Muslims in the West, *jihād* is carried out to tackle various challenges and problems of modern life, such as moral issues, education, poverty, exploitation of rights, economic problems, culture, and inequalities. In this case, *jihād*, to Rahman, is necessarily needed to establish an egalitarian and fair social-moral order.

Meanwhile, Ramadan rejected the interpretation of *jihād*, which was merely interpreted as 'war'. According to him, *jihād* is an implication of the level of faith that requires a balanced and harmonious implementation. There are levels of *jihād* that are carried out by modern Muslims, especially in the West, namely (1) Personal *Jihād*, (2) *jihād* in social, economic and political life, (3) intellectual *jihād*, and (4) cultural *jihād*. In the context of the modern era of the West, Ramadan interprets the term *jihād* for Muslims as a form of serious effort to respond and answer their social, economic, political, legal problems. This effort can be conducted within the context of legal, cultural and ethical values of the society or country concerned.

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