

## Harmony of Destiny: Divine Justice and the Colonial Influence in Southeast Asia

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### Abstract

Destiny, according to Islamic beliefs, is the predetermined course of events decreed by Allah, encompassing all living beings and natural elements. This study highlights the significance of recognizing Allah's justice in both pleasant and difficult circumstances, particularly through the historical lens of colonialism in Southeast Asia, focusing on Indonesia and Malaysia. By examining colonialism's legacy, the research uncovers how Allah's justice is manifested, showing that while colonialism was painful, its aftermath contributed to the nations' development. The methodology used is a historical analysis of Islamic teachings alongside colonial impacts. Major findings suggest that even adverse events are part of Allah's broader plan for justice. Further research could explore similar themes in other Muslim-majority post-colonial nations, offering deeper insights into the intersections of faith, justice, and history.

**Keywords:** Islam, Destiny, Qaḍā' And Qadar, Colonialism, Islam in the Archipelago

### Introduction

The discourse surrounding destiny in Islam is intricately woven into the broader discussion on one of the fundamental tenets of faith—namely, the belief in qaḍā' and qadar. Qaḍā', in essence, encompasses the divine decisions made by Allah Almighty concerning all of His creatures, spanning the processes of creation, elimination, or alteration (Khambali, Mahmud, & Suhartini 2022: 108-110). On the other hand, qadar signifies matters predetermined by Allah Almighty since time immemorial, aligning seamlessly with the vast expanse of His omniscience that predates and prevails over every conceivable circumstance (Aksa 2020: 3; Wan Zakaria 2015: 41). The obligation of believing in qaḍā' and qadar is underscored by its explicit mention in the verses of the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet in various

hadiths. The Quranic verses and hadiths serve as the bedrock for the theological understanding of destiny in Islam. Within these sacred texts, the concept of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* is elucidated, emphasizing the divine authority and wisdom encapsulated in Allah's decisions. The belief in destiny is not merely a theological abstraction but a fundamental aspect that binds the fabric of Islamic faith. The Quran, as the ultimate source of guidance for Muslims, imparts the imperative nature of acknowledging and accepting Allah's decree. The hadiths, comprising the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him), further elucidate the nuances of *qaḍā'* and *qadar*, providing a comprehensive framework for believers to comprehend the divine intricacies of destiny. Among them is the saying of Allah Almighty in Chapter of al-Ahzab verse 36 which means, "...It is not for a believing man or woman—when Allah and His Messenger decree a matter—to have any other choice in that matter. Indeed, whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has clearly gone far astray..." and in Chapter of al-Hadiid verses 22 and 23 which means,

"...No calamity or blessing occurs on earth or in yourselves without being written in record before We bring it into being. This is certainly easy for Allah. We let you know this so that you neither grieve over what you have missed nor boast over what He has granted you. For Allah does not like whoever is arrogant, boastful—..."

Moreover, the significance of this belief extends beyond individual contemplation to the broader implications for unity within the Muslim community. The divergence of perspectives on destiny, evident since the early days following the passing of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, has played a role in shaping the various theological schools of thought within Islam. The intricacies of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* continue to be a subject of scholarly discourse, fostering a rich tapestry of interpretations within the Islamic intellectual tradition. Thus, the multifaceted exploration of destiny in Islam extends beyond doctrinal adherence, permeating the realms of spirituality, jurisprudence, and the ongoing scholarly conversations that shape the dynamic landscape of Islamic thought.

Within the Islamic framework, the concepts of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* collectively encapsulate the divine decree of Allah encompassing all entities within His creation. This encompassing decree pertains to various aspects of existence, whether they unfold in a manner perceived as pleasant or unfavorable. The classification of experiences into pleasant or unpleasant, however, is inherently subjective and contingent upon individual perspectives. This relativity emanates from a multitude of factors, including an individual's knowledge, understanding, experiences, and memories. The subjective nature of what is deemed pleasant or unpleasant is intricately linked to individual subjectivity. This is because what brings contentment to one person may not necessarily evoke the same sentiment in others. Moreover, the relativity of this perspective extends temporally; what may be considered pleasant today might not necessarily retain its pleasantness in subsequent phases of life. These perceptions are subject to the influence of diverse factors, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of divine decree within Islamic teachings. As such, acknowledging the subjectivity inherent in these classifications encourages a comprehensive exploration of the intricate interplay between individual perspectives and the divine order. In navigating this nuanced landscape, individuals are prompted to appreciate the diversity of human experiences and interpretations, fostering a deeper understanding of

the nuanced and evolving nature of the concepts of *qaḍā'* and *qadar* within the Islamic theological framework.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the principles outlined, coupled with the inherent subjectivity and relativity they entail, can be extrapolated to a wider spectrum, influencing diverse facets of an individual's life. A pertinent illustration of this applicability emerges in the realm of life values—those elements classified as either virtuous or detrimental based on religious, cultural, or personal outlooks. Within this context, there exists a consensus that causing harm or inflicting torture upon others is universally deemed morally reprehensible, constituting not only a transgression of ethical norms but also a criminal offense warranting avoidance.

Within the sphere of colonialism, indigenous populations often subjectively concur that the imposition of colonization by external powers represents an inhumane transgression. This imposition results not only in the forced displacement from ancestral lands but also entails widespread oppression, often culminating in the loss of lives sacrificed for the interests of the colonizers. Nevertheless, the relativity of this narrative becomes apparent when scrutinizing the historical aftermath. While the suffering is palpable within the context of colonization, the dynamics shift after the attainment of independence. Beyond the grim facets of oppression, torture, and fatalities, it becomes evident that colonial powers, albeit motivated by self-interest, played a role in advancing various spheres such as the economy, society, and politics. The institutional frameworks and systems established during colonial rule, albeit not universally beneficial, became foundational elements that the newly independent nations could selectively adopt to forge and sustain their sovereignty (Kohn & Reddy 2023). Thus, the legacy of colonialism encompasses not only deep-seated trauma among the indigenous populations but also a substantial contribution to progress.

Henceforth, the present article endeavors to scrutinize the concept of justice as ascribed to Allah, focusing on its manifestation in the historical trajectory and ultimate outcomes of colonialism across various Southeast Asian nations, with a particular emphasis on Indonesia and Malaysia. The primary objective is not to vindicate colonial practices but rather to assess the enduring constructive impacts of the colonial legacy, which persistently inform the nation-building and developmental endeavors of Malaysians and Indonesians. Through this analysis, one can discern the embodiment of Allah's justice, even in decisions that may evoke discomfort.

### **Destiny and its Discussions**

In the realm of Islamic knowledge, the justice of God is commonly discussed in the context of destiny. Destiny itself carries the meaning of Allah's absolute decree. The word *taqdir* originates from the Arabic word *qadara*, which means destiny or, in terminology, it is said that Allah destines something according to His will. Meanwhile, *qaddara* with the addition of the emphatic letter *tasydid* means that Allah makes someone capable of doing something according to their ability. The term *taqdir*, with the addition of the letters *ya'* and *ta'*, signifies that Allah has preordained something (Yunus 1990: 332). Absolute here means that whatever Allah has decreed in the reality of life is undoubtedly just. The absolute decree of Allah reflects His attributes of supreme nobility and omniscience concerning all of His creations. He possesses the power to determine the form, span of life, function or mission, and specific

qualities of each of His creations (Gülen 2005: 77-78). However, Allah's decrees, which may be contrary to human expectations, sometimes make it challenging for individuals to fully grasp the values of Allah's justice.

Two crucial terms in matters of destiny are "qaḍā'" and "qadar." It is well-known that belief in qaḍā' and qadar is a fundamental principle in Islam, even considered the sixth pillar of faith. Qaḍā' is Allah's knowledge about everything that will happen, while qadar is Allah's permission for something to occur. In other words, nothing happens unless it is already known by Allah, and nothing occurs unless it has been decreed (determined) by Allah.

However, in the context of human actions, what needs to be understood and emphasized is that every sinful act, transgression, or disbelief committed consciously by individuals, according to their own will, should not be interpreted as Allah's will for them. This is based on the Quran, Chapter An-Nahl, verse 93, which means:

"If Allah had willed, He could have made you one community [united in religion], but He sends astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. And you will surely be questioned about what you used to do."

The scholar Thabathaba'i, in his exegesis "Al-Mizan," explains that the phrases "misguidance to some" and "guidance to others" in the above verse do not imply a predestined decree established since eternity. Instead, they represent a reward for human choices (Thabathaba'i 1983: 48). Those who are misguided by Allah are those who choose to stray, despite knowing the right path. Similarly, those who are guided by Allah are those who consistently strive to follow the right path. Thus, humans, endowed with the gift of intellect from Allah, have the capacity to choose their life's path. Consequently, it can be understood that Allah grants freedom, will, and authority to humans to choose between right and wrong actions, and they will be rewarded or punished accordingly for their choices.

In examining both *qaulyah* (statements) and *qauniyah* (laws of nature) verses, destiny is categorized into at least three types (Hidayat 1996: 120). First, there is destiny in natural phenomena (causality), which refers to Allah's laws or decrees that govern the behavior of nature, allowing humans to derive benefits from it and serving as evidence of His Greatness. For example, certain types of plants are specifically ordained by Allah to contain substances capable of healing human ailments. Another example is the regular alternation of day and night, whose set and unchanging pattern is explicitly mentioned by Allah, with the night designated as a time for human rest.

Secondly, destiny pertains to social laws involving human interaction. Indications about this destiny are consistently implied in the Quran through simple questions such as "Have you not learned from the behavior of those before you who consistently caused corruption on the earth?" or through affirmations like "Allah does not change the fate of a community unless they themselves change what is within themselves." Both excerpts from the verses illustrate a rational approach to the rise and fall of societal norms, comprehensible to subsequent generations.

Thirdly, destiny concerns the fate of individuals in the afterlife. This destiny is Allah's decree upon individuals for the accountability of their deeds throughout their worldly existence. Unlike the laws of nature and social laws, which can be observed and studied by humans as explained earlier, this destiny is beyond the reach of human reason. Although there are indications in the Quran about the afterlife, such as the Mahsyar (afterlife gathering place), heaven, or hell, because they are unseen, human intellect cannot grasp them. Therefore, Allah's destiny regarding the day of judgment can only be approached through faith.

In the scholarly tradition of Islam, there are two conflicting views when discussing the issue of destiny. On one hand, there is a perspective that considers discussing destiny to be prohibited in Islam, as explained in the Quran and the hadith of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (al-Baihaqi 2010: 192; 'Isa al-Tirmīzi 2000: 1865). For example in Chapter al-Anbiya' verse 23, which means, "He cannot be questioned about what He does, but they will 'all' be questioned."

Delving into the question of destiny is believed to lead to doubt, confusion, and deviation. Moreover, the act of exploring and studying destiny is seen as a cause of disgrace and a gateway to evil. According to Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi, cursed is the one who attempts to unveil the unseen using mere illusions, as it goes against Allah's decree. This action will lead them into uttering falsehood. Divergent perspectives on destiny have also been a contributing factor to the schisms within the Muslim community following the demise of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (al-Atsari 2006: 393-421).

On the other hand, some argue that destiny is one of the pillars of faith in Islam. Neglecting discussions on destiny is equivalent to neglecting the religion, especially considering the command to contemplate and reflect on the verses of Allah, which extensively touch upon the subject of destiny in the Quran and the hadith of Prophet Muhammad PBUH. This viewpoint is grounded in the saying of the Prophet in Book of al-Iman no. 37 narrated by al-Bukhāri, which means "He is Gabriel who came to teach you your religion." (al-Bukhāri 2000:6) and Chapter Sad verse 29, which means:

"This is a blessed Book which We have revealed to you 'O Prophet' so that they may contemplate its verses, and people of reason may be mindful." Therefore, if the verses related to the concept of destiny are systematically and thoroughly understood and discussed, the Muslim community will benefit greatly. One of these benefits is the safeguarding and preservation of the creed of the Muslim community from misguided understanding and innovations.

From the two contrasting views on destiny mentioned above, it can be concluded that discussions about the justice of Allah in destiny are indeed a sensitive matter as it is related to creed. Therefore, to derive benefits from it, humans cannot solely rely on their intellect but must also adhere to rational and textual evidence. This is because the limitations of human knowledge regarding unseen matters can expose their understanding to deviation when not guided by the guidance provided in the Quran and Hadith.

**Colonialism: Concept and Background**

Colonialism is a concept referring to the delegation of political power to empower another territory, where all policies and rights are dictated by the occupying state. Legally, the state delegating political power becomes the center of governance, and the empowered territory becomes a subordinate or colonial state (Mulya 2012: 5).

The idea and notion of colonialism as a response to natural conditions are not advantageous (Miftahudin 2019: 11). Colonialism is more than just a narrative of chaos because it has shaped its own ego and power (Dirks 1992: 2). Colonialism can also be described as a system in which a state controls both the people and resources of another state while still maintaining a relationship with the original state. The characteristic feature of colonial rule is centralization, as decentralizing autonomy to regions would threaten the hegemony of the colonizing homeland (Miftahudin 2019: 7).

Some scholars argue that imperialism and colonialism are inevitable phenomena. This is due to the unbalanced development between advanced European nations and less developed countries in areas such as capital, science, and technology. This phenomenon arises because the process of capital accumulation occurred earlier in Europe and the United States of America as a result of the industrial revolution. It expanded overseas to fully exploit potential, leading to negative consequences such as wars or the conquest of smaller or weaker nations. These actions became contributing factors to the emergence of political conflicts or unavoidable pressures (Cheah & Ahmad 1990: 8).

Non-economic factors are also said to play a role in the development of this "new imperialism." For instance, there is a belief that Western civilization and culture are superior. Therefore, Westerners must assist less developed nations in their nation-building efforts. This belief is based on the theory of scientist Charles Darwin, who stated that human survival depends on the stronger. Additionally, factors like jingoism, or aggressive patriotism and hatred toward other nations, also play a role. This spirit is cultivated by pro-imperialist authors to garner support for what Hobson characterizes as imperialist adventures. There are also religious missionary organizations that encourage the new imperialism. They view it as the white man's sacred duty, as described by English author, Rudyard Kipling as "The White Man's Burden," to spread Christianity to other nations (Cheah & Ahmad 1990: 8).

From all the explanations above, it can be concluded that there are three underlying factors contributing to the occurrence of colonialism and imperialism: economic (mercantilism), orientalism, and Christianization. This aligns with the imperialistic motto itself, namely God, Gold, and Glory. These three factors are inseparable and interconnected. Each of these factors will be discussed more in-depth in the following sections.

**Mercantilism**

Colonialism is a term that refers to a system involving the extension of a nation's power over territories and people beyond its borders. Typically, entities or powers practicing colonialism in expanding their empires often seek economic domination of the respective regions (Harkantiningih 2014: 67-80). This understanding is linked to economic concepts developed by colonial powers, commonly culminating in the practices of colonialism and imperialism. One of the most well-known practices is the mercantilism system.

Mercantilism is a structure and economic system employed by European governments that mandated and allowed them to engage in exploration. Although the mercantilist economic system is no longer in use today, it was one of the primary systems implemented in the 17th and 18th centuries (Mokhtar, Azmi & Samsudin 2017: 1-26). Mercantilism is an economic system where a nation seeks to accumulate wealth through trading with other countries. To maximize profits, this system encourages countries to shift away from agricultural activities and replace them with trading activities (Widodo 2017: 1-12). Mercantilism became a significant driving force behind various exploration and colonization activities conducted by European nations in the early modern era (Mokhtar 2019: 28-55). The background behind the emergence of the mercantilist system includes the drive to acquire as much precious metal (gold and silver) as possible, as at that time, the standard measure of a nation's wealth was the possession of abundant gold (Appleyard & Alfred 1998: 19-20). This system further developed with the rise of independent European nations, including Britain, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and France, aiming to increase their treasures to maintain sovereignty, freedom, and the welfare of their people through a robust economic foundation. European efforts to realize this goal included establishing trade networks, maritime expeditions, and exploration of new territories.

Historically, proficiency in the mercantilist economic system often led to wars and fueled colonial expansion (Aslam & Suprayitno 2021: 11). The intricate dynamics of colonialism in the context of mercantilism become evident through the historical influence of Western nations in the East, specifically contributing to the onset of ancient imperialism across the Asia-Africa region. The expansionist endeavors of European nations unfolded against the backdrop of mercantilist principles, which prioritized the accumulation of wealth through favorable balances of trade. This economic orientation prompted the establishment of formidable trade alliances, exemplified by entities like the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in Indonesia and the British East India Company (EIC) in India. These entities, operating as quasi-governmental bodies, played pivotal roles in not only facilitating trade but also in administering territories under their control. Indonesia, under the rule of the VOC, and India, governed by the EIC, bore witness to the manifestation of mercantilist principles in action. The imposition of these economic structures, while ostensibly driven by profit motives, laid the groundwork for broader imperialistic ambitions. The mercantilist system, with its emphasis on economic dominance, indirectly served as a harbinger of the subsequent ideologies of colonialism and imperialism that would come to define the socio-political landscapes of Southeast Asian countries. The legacy of this mercantilist era is multifaceted, shaping the historical trajectory of the regions affected. While the mercantilist agenda primarily sought economic gains, its ramifications extended beyond commerce. The establishment of trade monopolies and administrative control paved the way for more overt colonial ventures, marking the beginning of a complex historical narrative. Acknowledging this nuanced interplay between economic interests and imperialistic ambitions provides a comprehensive understanding of the lasting impacts of mercantilism on the geopolitical landscape of Southeast Asia. The historical imprint left by the VOC, EIC, and similar entities underscores the enduring consequences of mercantilist policies, underscoring the intricate relationship between economic motivations and geopolitical transformations in the annals of colonial history.

**Orientalism**

Colonialism also refers to a set of beliefs used to legitimize or promote the idea that the moral values of the colonizer are superior to those of the colonized (Hj. Wahid 2011: 169-185). This understanding directs us to a historical context when Islam reached the pinnacle of its intellectual prowess in the 8th to 11th centuries. Advancements in scholarly fields such as philosophy, medicine, astronomy, and others during that time made Islam the most advanced civilization in the world. In fact, the influence of Islam during that period extended across both the Eastern and Western regions.

Concurrently, Western nations, notwithstanding their perceived deficiencies and relative lag in comparison to Islamic advancements, embarked on a determined quest to ascend, fueled by a fervor to reclaim territories in the West that were under Islamic dominance. In their pursuit of resurgence, these Western nations exhibited a noteworthy inclination to draw inspiration directly from Islam itself. This manifested in diverse ways, ranging from the acquisition of knowledge within Islamic universities to the emulation of Islamic principles as a guiding model for their burgeoning civilization (Mohd Nor 2010: 19-40). This assimilation of Islamic ideals and the quest for knowledge within the Western intellectual sphere played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of Western civilization. The fruits of these endeavors materialized as the West initiated the Crusades between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, representing a significant historical juncture that marked the culmination of Western efforts to challenge Islamic dominance. The Crusades, emblematic of Western endeavors to reclaim territories influenced by Islamic rule, eventually brought about a transformative shift in the balance of power. This pivotal historical episode witnessed the end of Islamic ascendancy in the Western regions. The assimilation of Islamic knowledge and emulation of Islamic values by Western civilizations during this period underscored the complex interplay of influence and adaptation in the historical narrative.

The discourse of orientalism actually emerged closely tied to the psycho-historical background outlined above. The Western colonial powers felt a growing interest in studying the East as they needed to learn and understand the societies they were dominating. This circumstance subsequently turned the orientalist knowledge system into a tool for colonial interests (Luthfan 2013: 133-146).

The emergence of a paradigm that frames the West as superior, powerful, and intellectually advanced, while concurrently portraying the East as weak, ignorant, and inferior, represents a significant facet in the historical discourse between these two civilizations. This paradigm, deeply ingrained in Western thought structures, has had profound implications for the construction of identity and the perception of civilizations on a global scale. The narrative evolved to not only assert Western superiority but also foster a newfound awareness that positioned the West as an exemplary civilization for the entire world (Kurniawan 2013: 30-38). The roots of this paradigm can be traced to historical interactions, notably during periods of colonial expansion and encounters between the West and the East. Eurocentrism, a lens through which Western perspectives dominate, perpetuated notions of cultural, intellectual, and moral superiority. The consequences of this Eurocentric worldview manifested in the cultural narratives and representations that permeated Western discourse. The East, often subjected to essentialist generalizations, found itself cast in the role of the 'Other,' perpetuating stereotypes that emphasized its purported



weaknesses and perceived lack of intellectual prowess. This paradigm not only influenced historical interpretations but also shaped the trajectory of Western civilization's self-perception. The West, viewing itself as the epitome of progress, innovation, and enlightenment, began to position its civilization as a model for the entire world to emulate. This shift in consciousness reflected an evolving global awareness wherein the West saw itself as not just superior but as a beacon of civilization, offering a template for societal advancement. Moreover, this paradigmatic shift provides insights into the challenges of fostering a more inclusive and equitable global discourse—one that transcends historical imbalances and appreciates the diversity and richness inherent in all civilizations. Understanding the origins and ramifications of such paradigms is essential for cultivating a more nuanced and balanced appreciation of the global tapestry of cultures and civilizations. This above-mentioned paradigm continued to evolve and reached its peak when the West embarked on colonial and imperial missions against Eastern countries. European nations claimed that their journeys to the East were missions for wealth, success, and the civilization of Eastern nations. In other words, each colonizing country asserted that its colonial superiority often brought civilization to the colonized country (Pozzolini 2006: 154). However, the beliefs propagated by the colonizers did not seem entirely true. What actually occurred was the opposite. The mission of civilization by the colonial powers to the colonized nations and the efforts made by European nations, in reality, reflected more of conquest, expulsion, massacres, and killings for the sake of power and power expansion.

The explanations derived from the above descriptions indicate that orientalism is closely related to colonialism. This movement had the task of gathering information, translating information, collecting data, and making interpretations related to history, religion, culture, and matters related to tradition. With these tasks, they appeared as informants and consultants for their countries, potentially determining the direction of colonialism itself. The broader the colonial territories, the stronger the dependence and trust in orientalists, indirectly making orientalism an integral part of colonialism itself (Luthfan 2013: 140).

### **Christianization**

Christianization is another integral element of colonialism. This is clearly evident through the Western imperialistic slogan over the East, particularly Islam, which is God, Gold, and Glory. The God component serves as the legitimization of Western imperialism, where both Protestant and Catholic churches view imperialism as a "vehicle" for their missionary activities in the East, predominantly among Muslim populations, including Indonesia and Malaysia. The connection between Christianization and imperialism can be observed through two factors. First, the aftermath of the trauma and animosity of the Crusades, where the West aimed to Christianize Muslims considered as Barbarians due to their perceived heretical faith and tendencies towards violence. Additionally, the imperialists sought to weaken the political influence of the Ottoman Turks in the North, considered a symbol of unity for Muslims worldwide from the 16th to the 20th century. Second, the missionary movement aiming to Christianize Muslims was highly advantageous for the Christian West. Logically, it would be easier to govern a colonized population of the same faith than one with a different religion, especially Islam, which historically had a long history of "competition and enmity" with Christian West (Tarpin 2011: 38-53).

The factor of Christianization has prompted many historians and enthusiasts to uncover the relationship between the two, whether it be a symbiotic mutualism or an attempt to reject the stigma by denying the connection between colonialism and Christianization (Sidjabat 1964: 23). Some argue that missionaries are entirely unrelated to the secular ambitions of colonialists. Instead, they assert that the spread of Christianity is primarily due to the power of the Bible and not solely influenced by Christian individuals. However, such perspectives are challenging to accept, especially when considering historical facts, notably the support and political stance of colonialists towards Christian missionary efforts (Arbaningsih 2005: 770-71; Kruger 1959: 30).

### **Allah's Justice in the Destiny Of Colonialism**

The concept of Allah's justice has many connections with human freedom or, conversely, the absolute power of Him. Theological discussions regarding destiny in Islam are primarily bifurcated into two prominent streams of thought: Jabariyah and Qadariyah, each epitomized by the religious schools of Mu'tazilah and Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah. While theological schools, including al-Asy'ariyah and Mu'tazilah, engage in frequent debates, they collectively uphold the fundamental belief in Allah's justice and wisdom. The discourse on divine wisdom within Islamic theology revolves around human perceptions of Allah's just governance, both in the current temporal context and in the unfolding future. Despite doctrinal divergences, these Islamic theological schools converge on the fundamental tenet that Allah is inherently just and wise. The ongoing debates and dialogues between schools like al-Asy'ariyah and Mu'tazilah signify the richness and complexity of theological discourse within Islam. The focus on divine wisdom extends beyond the notion of predestination, addressing the intricate relationship between human understanding and Allah's justice. This multifaceted exploration emphasizes the profound connection between theological principles and the human experience, fostering a nuanced comprehension of Allah's justice and wisdom within the Islamic theological framework. Human knowledge and conviction regarding the wisdom and just treatment of Allah can be acquired by engaging with revelation with the assistance of reason and correct thinking (Mansur & Saputra 2018: 339-360).

The issues discussed in this writing demonstrate the numerous negative effects left by colonialism during and after the period of colonization. These realities led to two categories of discussions on colonialism: those supporting it and those opposing it. Supporters of colonialism argue that it brought many benefits to the colonized nations. This can be observed through the modernization brought by colonial powers, contributing to the advancement of the lives of the colonized nations. On the other hand, opponents of colonialism argue that it only left deep-seated trauma through oppression, expulsion, and even murder perpetrated against the colonized nations. Both reactions to the destiny of colonialism can be addressed through the Quranic verse in Chapter al-Baqarah, verse 26, which means, "Indeed, Allah is not timid to present an example - that of a mosquito or [that of] what is smaller than it. And those who have believed know that it is the truth from their Lord. But as for those who disbelieve, they say, 'What did Allah intend by this as an example?' He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient." Regarding the above verse, the Book of Jalalain mentions that Allah does not hesitate to raise a mosquito as a parable, or even something smaller than a mosquito. Allah is not ashamed to raise a mosquito as a parable because it contains wisdom. If believers accept the truth of this parable from Allah, disbelievers' question and deny the benefits and necessity of this analogy. Meanwhile,

the wicked, who are misled by Allah's analogy, are those who deviate from obedience to Allah (Kurniawan 2020). The same principle applies to other analogies, such as the destiny of colonialism. As mentioned earlier, colonialism, known for its violent actions and the consequences it imposed on many Southeast Asian countries, has left deep wounds and trauma for the people who were victims of colonial rule. However, with faith and reliance on the above-mentioned Quranic verse, full belief in the wisdom behind the events of colonization should exist within every Muslim.

In the history of thought, the concept of nationalism is closely related to the notions of nation and state. Although this concept did not give rise to major thinkers like democracy, liberalism, or socialism, it led to significant events in history, such as revolutions, major wars, and, most importantly, the emergence of new nations. Furthermore, Hobsbawm states that nationalism is a "political program" that constructs and architects the nation. Nationalism and the nation are deemed "necessary" as an identity up to the present day. National identity helps us identify and locate ourselves on the world map, stating who we are, where we come from, and what we have accomplished. Although nations in the world have already been established, the concept of a nation is a "construction that will never be completed." Therefore, both of these concepts are highly flexible and will be adjusted in the ongoing course of time – in positive and negative, socio-cultural, and political contexts (Utama 2014a: 51-69).

Discussions about anti-colonialism and the growth of nationalist sentiments in a colonized country are often situated in the movements and thoughts that occurred within those colonized nations (Utama 2014b: 166-183). As known, many countries in Southeast Asia experienced colonization until they began to gain independence in the 20th century. The wave of independence was triggered by the development of nationalism in the Southeast Asian region. The growth of nationalism and anti-colonial sentiments in Southeast Asia was influenced by the suffering endured due to European colonization. However, the awareness of nationalism that emerged in Southeast Asia was not a natural formation based on cultural, ethnic, racial, or linguistic similarities. Instead, it arose due to a shared consciousness of the fate and suffering caused by colonialism carried out by foreign powers.

Moreover, external interventions also contributed to building awareness and the spirit of nationalism in Southeast Asia. This can be observed in the defeat of Russia by Japan in 1905, which inspired many Asians who saw it as the first sign of Europe's vulnerability to Asian attacks. The 1911 Chinese Revolution also had a dual influence. The modernist movements and Islamic reforms in Egypt and Turkey were partially reactions to Western interference. Indian nationalism also influenced Indonesia; the passive resistance advocated by the Gandhian movement and *Wadashi*, the production of previously imported goods, both resonated with Indonesian thinking. Thus, it can be said that the rise of nationalism in Southeast Asia is part of the global development of national consciousness (Zainu'ddin 1968: 169).

The emergence of nationalism and the idea of national revival is influenced by a multitude of factors, with a significant impact from the modernization brought by European nations into colonial territories. Most importantly, this modernization induces a change in mentality, thought, and knowledge through education. Education gives rise to intellectuals as a new influential class in the progress of nations within colonial territories. Modernization

leads educated intellectuals with Western knowledge to become increasingly critical in questioning their identity within the colonial state structure. Nationalist leaders and proponents of national ideas in colonized countries, such as Southeast Asia, exhibit distinctive characteristics, indirectly portraying them as emerging from an educated middle class. On average, they are often young when involved in movements (Zainu'ddin 1968: 179). This demonstrates that critical intellectuals play a crucial role in the development of nationalist movements in various Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh formed an anti-colonial network and opposed European powers with a strategy involving a global revolutionary network, even resisting America during proxy wars. In the Philippines, Jose Rizal fought for Philippine independence by leading a movement known as the Second Propaganda Movement through major media channels for Filipino student propaganda in Europe. In Indonesia, figures like Soekarno, Moh. Hatta, and Tan Malaka played crucial roles in the anti-colonial movement. Lastly, in Malaysia, the establishment of the Young Malays Union organization in 1938 became the catalyst for Malaysian nationalism, continuously working to unite and advocate for the rights of Malays without considering their true origins (Utama 2014a: 58-60).

As previously mentioned, nationalist awareness also actively stimulates the resurgence of Islam and its spirit of resistance against colonialism. This spirit originated from Islamic reforms that began in Egypt and Mecca and extended to several colonial territories such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The contributions of scholars and the Muslim community are prominent in the history of independence in these two nations. In addition to resisting colonial rule, Muslims also played a significant role in opposing the Christianization mission spread by the colonial powers. It is not an exaggeration to suggest that the activities of Christian missionaries, beyond provoking reactions from the Malay people, also served as a catalyst for the resurgence of Islam among the Malays. This reaction emerged as resistance to the Christian evangelism carried out by the British colonizers. This resistance developed gradually, first in the 19th century with the awakening of religious awareness among Malay leaders, especially religious leaders, regarding the dangers of Christian influence. This opposition then led to expressions through the publication of Malay newspapers and the development of religious schools for Malay children to provide religious education before engaging in secular education. Moving into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a growing awareness among the Malays of the need to transform their worldview to face the modernization of the world. Unlike the earlier defensive awareness, this new group, known as the *islah* group, sought to encourage Malays, especially, to revitalize Islam in a new environment. In other words, the *islah* movement aimed to modernize the culture among the Muslim community (Cheah & Ahmad 1990: 138-139).

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, Islam served as a source of inspiration for opponents of the former Dutch government. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, pilgrimages and visits to Mecca provided a space for creating direct connections between Indonesia and the outside world. This was a concern for Dutch authorities, but these actions were carried out diplomatically, and these relationships successfully addressed the increasing Christianization activities in Indonesia. These relationships and the growth of these activities, particularly in Central Java, served as a catalyst for the establishment of organized Islamic organizations such

as the formation of Muhammadiyah. However, this did not mean that Muslims were entirely free at that time. In fact, the Dutch authorities prohibited missionary activities in several regions with a stronger Islamic presence, such as Banten and parts of Sumatra.

From the 1920s, the Muhammadiyah Movement became the largest and most organized movement in Indonesia during the colonial era. This modern-inspired movement continued the modernist reforms that took place in Mecca and Egypt in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. All these efforts were made to reform Muslims by providing essential nutrients as preparation for facing the world in the twentieth century and beyond. This reform continued, either through those who returned after studying in Mecca or Cairo, or from pilgrims returning from Mecca. The reformist and modernist groups, in some respects, criticized traditional Islamic beliefs that contradicted the teachings and principles of Islam based on proper and valid reasoning that they had studied. They educated Muslims to be cautious in practicing Islamic teachings and to reject practices that did not align with true and valid Islamic teachings. The Muhammadiyah Movement was considered more individualistic in their approach compared to older traditionalists and attracted more members from newly developed urban communities compared to traditional rural communities. They responded to the challenge of Christian missionary activities by using similar organizational and methodological approaches for the benefit of Islam. They established schools using Western methods, teaching both religious and Western subjects (including Dutch). Additionally, they founded orphanages, hospitals, and other social service activities (Zainu'ddin 1968: 176-177). These activities later spread beyond Indonesia to the entire archipelago, including Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, and the Philippines.

### **Conclusion**

This comprehensive exploration delves into the intricate dimensions of the justice of Allah, spanning a spectrum that encompasses both favorable destinies and painful decrees. The omnipresence of Allah's justice is manifested in every conceivable aspect, guided by a profound wisdom that may manifest overtly or remain concealed within the intricate tapestry of events, all intricately subject to the divine decrees of Allah. It is imperative to recognize that the justice of Allah defies a singular, circumscribed interpretation; instead, it is an absolute, inherent right of Allah. Frequently, the intricacies of divine justice may elude the grasp of human comprehension, surpassing the boundaries of human intellect and reasoning. Despite the limitations of human understanding, individuals possess the capacity for contemplation, sustained investigation, meticulous examination, and deep exploration of the consequences emanating from Allah's decrees. These outcomes may manifest immediately, undergo a gradual unfolding over time, or remain veiled in the inscrutable plan of Allah. In essence, this underscores the unfathomable power of Allah, who is inherently Most Wise. What individuals are encouraged to instill in their hearts and souls is an unwavering faith in the inherent justice of Allah. This enduring faith serves as a guiding principle, fostering a profound understanding that Allah's justice operates beyond the immediate grasp of human intellect, yet remains an omnipresent and integral aspect of the divine order. As individuals embark on the ongoing journey of comprehending Allah's justice, it becomes a continuous exploration that transcends temporal constraints, inviting a deeper connection with the profound wisdom inherent in the divine plan. In cultivating this steadfast belief, individuals find solace and purpose, acknowledging the sovereignty of Allah whose justice prevails, even when shrouded in the mystery of His divine will.

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