

Editorial

## JISTECS - An Attempt to Develop Proper Links among Science, Islam and Civilization

Cahyo Budiman

*Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST), OIST Research Lab1, Level C, 1919-1 Tancha, Onna Kunigami  
Okinawa 904-0412, Japan  
Email: cahyo.budiman@oist.jp*

Despite a large number of muslims in the world, we should admit the facts of science development in the Islamic world. In 2005, a single Harvard University produced scientific publications more than 17 Arabic-speaking countries combined. Up to now, only two muslims Nobel laureates among 1.6 billion muslims in the world. Looking back to the historical facts of the flourishing Islamic science throughout the Medieval period (9<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries), today's evidences indicate that the muslim has been in deep and long sleeping.

Who can we blame for these ironic facts? This is a matter of intense debate, but several factors leading to the fall of Islamic science have so far been identified. While external factors were proposed to induce the falling: the Mongol invasion, the Crusades, and colonialism, it was suggested that the muslim themselves played a crucial role in the decline of Islamic science.

Yet, no report overestimating the impact of this internal factor, Linderg's idea on 1992 might be interesting to be considered: narrow minded scientist due to (strong) relationship between Islam, as a religion, and science. Linderg highlights the development of Islamic science in the Medieval period was merely for worship practices. Put simply, the astronomy is studied for designing the schedule for fasting (Ramadhan) or praying time, arithmetic is developed mainly for distribution of the inheritance, and so on. Linderg implies that the philosophy of science development in Islam inhibits the growing of science itself and the religion acts as a cage for science by reducing freedom of thinking and tons of idea beyond of the religious' frames. 'The cage' also induces conflict between scientists and conservative groups when the scientific finding *vis a vis* a dogma of religion. Empirically, Linderg's idea is supported by development of science in non-Islamic, so called Western, countries. When the science is liberated from 'the cage', Western countries enable to drive development of science in the world. It is, by all means, debatable. However, depth understanding on Linderg's idea might reveals reposition of science in Islam by means redefinition of Islamic science itself.

There are, at least, two issues raised. First, there is a confined understanding on the worship in Islam further narrowing the understanding of development of science for worship. When the worship is defined, as Linderg's understanding, merely as praying, fasting, and so on, it is then acceptable that the development of science would be narrow. In fact, worship in Islam is all types of acts of goodness based on the God commands and generally encouraged in the life of muslim. In this respect, there is nothing wrong on the development of science for supporting of the worship. Indeed, it emphasizes the dimension of science itself. Put simply, Islam commands the believers to have healthy live, consume a healthy and halal food and so on as mentioned in the Al-Quran. As obeying this command is part of worship for the believers, therefore it is important to develop medical, pharmaceutical, and or food sciences in order to address the command. It may propagate the raising of depth researches on molecular biology, organic

chemistry, and other related fields. This is development of science in Islam. Using the same philosophy, to solve the lack of lawful (halal) vaccine for muslim is also considered part of worship implementation. Thus, (again), depth research is necessary for development of new vaccine free from prohibited materials and/or procedures during production. This issue implies that role of science for worship is indispensable. Indeed, Islam clearly states that acquiring beneficial science is part of worship.

The second issue deals the narrow understanding of Islamic science. Islamic science is merely defined as the Islamic studies: *kalam* (Islamic theology), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Islamic history, Islamic philosophy and so on. On the other hand, medical science, pharmaceutical science, engineering, natural science, and so on, are not considered as Islamic sciences. This secular understanding narrows the development of science itself. Hence, redefinition of Islamic science is important for addressing this issue. Islamic science is a science produced from critical integration of the scientific endeavor into the conceptual framework of Islam, and the concomitant explication of the cognitive, methodological and axiological implications of such integration for empirical scientific research. Noteworthy, incorporation of science's product into the framework of Islam is a characteristic of Islamic science. Accordingly, Islamic science has no disciplinary segmentation. When the medical science is incorporated into the framework of Islam, worship fulfillment, then it is part of Islamic science as well as *fiqh* or *kalam*. The importance of methodology on scientific research obviously distinguishes Islamic science and pseudo-science.

The absence of the understanding on the science-worship relationship and dimension of Islamic science promote the current declining of scientific advancements in Islamic worlds. Even more, vision of development of science in many Islamic countries are apparently unclear as indicating on *Nature's* report (May 16, 2013) for the failing of Islamic nations to cooperate on the key development in the face of the global economic downturn. Despite having sufficient funds, Islamic countries continue to spend less than the world average on research and development, posing difficulties for the development of their science, technology and innovation sectors.

The Journal of Islamic Perspective on Science, Technology and Society (JISTECS) is developed as an instrument to flourish the reposition of science-worship in Islam and redefinition of Islamic science. The interdisciplinary articles published in JISTECS shows the readers that there is no segmentation of science in Islam. Indeed, all disciplines of science are able to be incorporated into Islamic framework. At the end, JISTECS attempts to develop proper links between science and Islam as a way of life that has a specific view on science and civilization. It aims to encourage reflective thinking and progressive working toward development of science and technology in Islamic world. In addition, JISTECS welcomes interfaith scholars to actively join, as we believe that development of Islam is important for world society, regardless of ideology.