

**ṬANṬĀWĪ JAWHARĪ AND HIS INTELLECTUAL RESPONSES TO THE  
DANGERS OF WESTERN EXPANSIONISM AND DOMINANCE OF MODERN  
WESTERN CIVILIZATION; A STUDY ON HIS TAFSIR *AL-JAWĀHIR FĪ TAFSĪR  
AL-QUR'ĀN AL-KARĪM*.**

*Tanṭāwī Jawhari dan Respons Intelektualnya Terhadap Bahaya Ekspansi dan Dominasi  
Peradaban Barat Modern; Studi Terhadap tafsir al-jawāhir fī Al-Qur'ān Al-karīm*

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**Abstrak**

Barat memiliki agenda dalam ekspansionisme dan dominasi dunia. Mereka memiliki apa yang disebut kehidupan modern, sains modern, dan dunia modern. Menjadi modern berarti mengikuti mereka dan menyalin semuanya dari mereka, meninggalkan budaya dan hidup berdasarkan apa yang disebut hak asasi manusia. Tantawi Jauhari adalah salah satu ulama yang sadar tentang bahaya ekspansi dan peradaban Barat, sehingga dengan tulisannya, tanpa ragu dia berpandangan bahwa penyebab rendahnya moral Muslim merupakan agenda yang tersembunyi Barat. Dan artikel ini akan menganalisis pemikiran Tantawi Jauhari tentang pandangannya dalam menghadapi bahaya ekspansionisme dan dominasi Barat dengan mempelajari bukunya *Al-Jawāhir Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Karīm*. Dalam tafsirnya, ia menyimpulkan bahwa ilmu pengetahuan, pernikahan, poligami, manajemen keuangan dan fashion wanita beberapa persoalan umat Islam yang mampu diekspansi dan dominasi oleh peradaban Barat modern dan hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa Syaikh Ṭanṭāwī telah merespon dengan sangat baik melalui pandangannya dan mencoba untuk memperingatkan setiap Muslim untuk kembali ke jalan, berpegang pada syariat dan menghindari mengikuti budaya Barat secara membabi buta.

**Kata kunci:** *Ṭanṭāwī Jauhari, Barat, Ilmu Pengetahuan*

**Abstract**

Western has an agenda in expansionism and dominance of the world. They have what so called modern life, modern science, and modern world. Being modern means following them and copying everything from them, leaving the culture and living based on what so called human right. Ṭanṭāwī Jauharī was one of the scholars who was aware about the dangers of western expansion and civilization, so by his writing, without any doubt he mentioned the causes of moral degrading of Muslim

and western hidden agenda based on his views. And this article will examine his thoughts and provide several views of him on facing these dangers of expansionism and dominance by studying his book, *Al-Jawāhir*. This article will conclude his views on sciences, marriages, polygamy, financial managements and women fashion in terms of responding to the expansionism and dominance of modern Western civilization and the result showed that Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī has responded very well through his views and tried to warn every Muslim to get back on the track, holding on to the shari'ah and avoid following western's cultures blindly.

**Keywords:** *Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauhari, Western, Science.*

### **Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī; A Brief of His Life**

His Name is Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī. He was born in one small village in Egypt on 1862. He lived in a poor family which was supported by his father's earnings from farming. His uncle had a very good influence on his educational life. He was being educated by his uncle in Islamic way.<sup>1</sup>

Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī was famous as philosopher and scholar, as being said by Ali el-Jambilaty that Ṭaṇṭāwī is an Islamic Philosopher in this modern world. As written in newspaper 'Misr el Fatat' Ṭaṇṭāwī is an Egyptian Philosopher and Muhammad Abd al Jawwad made a comparison between Ṭaṇṭāwī, Margoliouth and Kant.<sup>2</sup>

Ṭaṇṭāwī surprised by what he got during his study in Alquran and Islamic knowledge. He found out many miracles happened in this world was explained very well in Alquran, Ṭaṇṭāwī said that Alquran is the supreme source for all knowledge and sciences, but Muslim scholars failed to understand that.<sup>3</sup> He motivated all Muslims to be more focus in scientific verses like what they do in law verses then Muslim will have more advancement compared to the Western. He said, as a Muslim, we couldn't be just a follower to what the Western has developed. Muslim can develop something, because the sources of sciences in their hand. Alquran talks about sciences in more than 700 verses compared to just 150 verses about Islamic law, and when Muslims can really focused on 150 verses of Islamic law verses by authoring many books in Islamic law, but why not in sciences? <sup>4</sup>.

### **Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī's Intellectual Responses to the Dangers of Western Expansionism and Dominance of Modern Western Civilization.**

The western starts to dominate the world and create their own definition about being modern. As being said by Begotti that modern is an adjective word which

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=طنطاوي\\_جوهرِي](http://www.ikhwanwiki.com/index.php?title=طنطاوي_جوهرِي)

<sup>2</sup> Ahmad 'Abd al-Ḥalīm 'Atiyyah, *El-Khiṭāb al-Falsafī fi Miṣr*, (Cairo: Dār Qubba li al-Ṭibā'ah wa al-Nasyr wa al-Taūzī', 2001), p. 88-90.

<sup>3</sup> Muḥammad Ḥusain al-Ḍahabī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2000), part2, p. 370.

<sup>4</sup> Abd al-Majīd 'Abd al-Salām al-Muḥtasib, *Ittijāhāt al-Tafsīr fi al-'Aṣr al-Rahin*, (Oman: Jam'iyah Umm al-Maṭabi' al-Ta'awuniyyah, 1402-1982), p. 275.

defined:<sup>5</sup>*First*, of or pertaining to present and recent time; not ancient or remote: modern city life. *Second*, characteristic of present and recent time; contemporary; not antiquated or obsolete: modern viewpoints. *Third*, of or pertaining to the historical period following the Middle Ages: modern European history. *Fourth*, of, pertaining to, or characteristic of contemporary styles of art, literature, music, etc., that reject traditionally accepted or sanctioned forms and emphasize individual experimentation and sensibility. From these definitions, can be highlighted that modern is something related to present and recent time, based on the new and rejected everything that accepting traditional.

Another term which related to modern is modernism as Begotti highlighted Modernism as:<sup>6</sup> modern character, tendencies, or values; adherence to or sympathy with what is modern, a modern usage or characteristic, or a deliberate philosophical and practical estrangement or divergence from the past in the arts and literature occurring especially in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and taking form in any of various innovative movements and styles. Or like what Habermas said that everything was distinguishing traditional and present is called Modernism.<sup>7</sup>

And the last term they related it to modernity, as usually refers to a post traditional and post medieval historical period; which many cultures around the world moves from the feudalism system to capitalism and secularist.<sup>8</sup> Modernity has its own nature that we can distinguish it from traditional, such being well explained by Shireen as follows:<sup>9</sup>*First*, The emphasis on reason and rational thought as the means to knowledge rather than revelation. *Second*, a greater emphasis on the here and now, or in other word, this world rather than the hereafter. *Third*, Its emphasis on the people as the source of political legitimacy rather than on a divine or divinely ordained source such as the church or the king.

Since their emphasis is on reason, rational thought, living in this world and people as a source of political legitimacy, they left the revelation and divinely sources behind, because divine book is so called traditional regarding to them. At the same time western did the advance work in sciences, and had an excellent thought according to humanity and equality between genders based on their reasons and their rational thought.

Their works and thought were well spread all over the world as they become dominance technologically and economically. All of the sudden, people put their attention to them and started to make them as an idol in everything including sciences, education, fashion, living style and etc. The people start to leave their divine sources

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<sup>5</sup>Caio Begotti, *Definition of Modernism and Critical Approach*, (2010), p : 5.

<sup>6</sup>Caio Begotti, *Definition of Modernism and Critical Approach*, 2010.

<sup>7</sup>Jurgen Habermas, *Modernity versus Postmodernity*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Caio Begotti, *Definition of Modernism and Critical Approach*, 2010.

<sup>9</sup>Shireen T. Hunter, *Can Islam and Modernity be reconciled?*, (Insight Turkey, Vol.11/No.3/2009), p. 3-5.

which so called ‘traditional’ and unscientific to something more rational and reasonable according to them.

Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī was alert by this. Leaving divine sources and following western blindly will put this *ummah* into dangerous. He tried to bring the *ummah* back to the Alquran which is the ultimate divine source and proved that Alquran is not as ‘traditional’, irrational and unscientific as they thought. Moreover, Alquran is a book of sciences and its verses can be applied to answer many modern issues such as gender issues, women fashion and polygamy. And his views toward these issues are mentioned as follows:

### **His views in sciences.**

On the introduction part of his book, *Al-Jawāhir*, he said that westerners believe in many Gods, God the Creator, God the Destroyer, God of Envy and God of Mercy, like being told in John Lubbock’s History book. By simply studying the story of Loki (God of Envy) and Wilder (God of Mercy) the Western can produce one important science about plants and its growing.

As mentioned, that Muslim has a supreme source of sciences, they also should be the one who can produce any sciences about creations, they should be able to compete and not just being satisfied with any sciences produced and created by the westerners. For example, when they read Allah’s word in Alquran like what stated in al-Nahl: 3-18. This verse mentioned about the creations. *First*, about the creation of the heavens and earth, also He multiplied all its outcomes subjected to the benefit of human. *Second*, about how He created human from *nutfah*. *Third*, about the creations of the grazing livestock which has a numerous benefits such warmth (to be used as clothing material), and as a food. He also created a horses and donkeys, which can be used as transportation to carry loads and as adornments as well. *Forth*, He sent down rain from the sky as it a source of life which can be drank by human, animals and also plants. And by this rain, the crops grow, and various plants as well such as palm trees, grapevines, olives and all fruits for the benefits of human. *Fifth*, the creation of day and night together with moon and sun, and also the stars, all together subjected to His commands. *Sixth*, about the creation of the sea and subjected it for human to eat from it tender meat and extract from it the ornaments which can be wear as adornments. *Seventh*, about how He set the mountains to the earth and it keeps earth from shaking.

Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī said that Allah had clearly stated His power in creating those creations in very detail and of course, in that creation there are many sciences provided. As Muslim, they can simply extracted the sciences from this verse, but Muslim never do that, what Muslim do is just followed what the West has produced and keep being follower.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī, *Niẓām al-Ālam wa al-Umām*, (Cairo: Maṭba’ah Madrasah Wālidah ‘Abbās al-Ūlā, 1323-1905), p. 10-14.

### His View on Marriage.

As human created in *fitrah* so they will have an interest one another. However, there are 'terms and conditions' applied to both gender in term of interaction. And as coupling and dating become regular between young generations, it will lead them closer to *zina*. And it's well known that *zina* is the mother of sin and it will destroy their future generation. For this problem, Ṭaṇṭāwī suggested a marriage as an answer. He supported a marriage in early age. He said, every Muslims whosoever reached 18-20 years old can perform marriage to avoid themselves from committing *zina*. However, the Westerners keep influencing Muslim to postponed marriage which is a halal way in managing the relationship between two genders. Many reasons can applied to delay marriage, such as education and financial problem.

"فإن الفرنجة يقصدون تقليل النسل وتقليل الزواج وإكثار السفاح والفساد في الإسلام فاحذروهم أيها المسلمون، فليحذر المسلمون الذين يحكمهم الفرنجة أن يوحوا إليهم من هذا فإنهم يريدون الزنا وقلة النسل وضياع البلاد."

This is what he said in his book. The Westerners want to control the birth, marriage, and spread the damages and dangers in Islam which were *Muslimin* have to aware about. They only wants Muslim to commit *zina* and control the birth of their kids so that they can decrease their number of population.

Ṭaṇṭāwī suggested early marriage in Muslim community to avoid them from committing *zina* as coupling and dating became regular activity between genders nowadays. According to him, every Muslims who has reached the age between 18-20 years old are appointed to perform marriage. And for those who postponed marriage in that age, by many reason such as education or financial matter, Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī offered a simple way to be done by government by forcing every single Muslim men to pay an amount to the Government to be used to feed the needy as a punishment of their neglecting to marriage. And for the women, by helping their *wali*, they can search and choose whom they want to marriage by themselves, even they couldn't find any single man to marry, they can be the second, third, or fourth for those who omnipotent and capable in term of wealth.<sup>11</sup>

As analyzed from Ṭaṇṭāwī's though, that the westerners had successfully penetrated their doctrine among Muslim to decrease their population by any ways, one of them is by postponing marriage through any issues as higher educations, high paid works, high *mahr* and dowry. On this stage, marriage becomes very expensive, as *mahr* was determined by how high their education was or by how high the position of their family held in community. And when marriage becomes expensive, *zina* becomes cheap. In what Ṭaṇṭāwī suggested, he put an awareness to all man who reach certain age to get marriage, and of course, getting marriage is not as a simple as that. The full

<sup>11</sup>Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī, *Al-Jawāhir fi Tafṣīr al-Alqur'ān al-Karīm*, (Egypt: Syirkah Maṭba'ah Muṣṭafā al-Bāb al-Ḥalabī, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1350H), part 3, p.12.

awareness and attentions of family needed due to this issue. Family, community and government needed to educate their members about the importance of marriage as guided by God and His messenger.

Muslim community nowadays lack of this awareness. The topic about marriage is taboo to be discussed early in family. Moreover, many family member who disclaim their liability as a *wali* for female member in family which cause another problems. So, increasing the awareness of being responsible man and optimizing the role of *wali* are what Ṭaṇṭāwī suggested to build a better community.

### His View on Polygamy.

Polygamy has a scary face to our community nowadays. The major cause is those who uneducated well about practicing polygamy was playing a role. Polygamy is being seen in intimidating way especially to women. When man can show off their power, women can lost their right by approving polygamy. Even worse, Islam as a religion which promote polygamy had attached to this problem.

According to Ṭaṇṭāwī, there are no any verses in Alquran which forbidding from marrying more than four. But Sunnah and *Ijma'* which are specifying to only four wives. He asserted that avoiding polygamy is one of Western's agenda. They were envy with what they saw in South Africa that a man has ten wives, he didn't need to work because his wives did so, a man just sit in the house, eating and drinking, but the number of population was increasing. By seeing that, the Westerners want to control the population, they spread the negative side of polygamy, and made them day by day leaving this practice.<sup>12</sup> They spread the rumors that our Prophet is a pervert and player because he has more than four wives as permitted in Islam. And to answer this statement, he said:

"لقد أجمع المسلمون أن النبي ﷺ من خصوصياته أن له الزيادة على أربع، ومع هذا الإجماع ترى أنه اختار من نسائه أربعاً أذكر منهن عائشة وحفصة، فأما الباقيات فإنهن رضين أن يكنّ أمهات المؤمنين وسامحن في أمر المبيت عندهن، فكان النبي ﷺ اقتصر على أربع في الحقيقة فأصبح كالأمة وإن لم يطلق الباقيات لأسباب أوضحتها في الكتاب المذكور، انتهى المقصود"<sup>13</sup>

The Prophet has a special permission to have more than four wives, but he didn't take it for a granted, he only chooses four of them like Aisha and Hafsa, and the rest were willing to not having any overnight turn and "*umm al-mukminin*" status was sufficient for them. So by this statement, Ṭaṇṭāwī can deny the rumor spread by the West. Moreover, polygamy could be a solution to those who unmarried because as known that the population of woman is larger than man in many causes such as war, disease and so on.

<sup>12</sup> Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī, *Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Alqur'ān al-Karīm*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī, *Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Alqur'ān al-Karīm*, p. 12.

It was a good move from *syekh* Ṭaṇṭāwī by defending the Messenger from the rumors. As this kind of bullies and rumor spread widely all over the world through media now a days and Muslim should learn how to defend themselves and their religions. And also to interact to polygamy as a solution to problems mentioned, and not humiliating a *sharia* by practicing a polygamy in a wrong way.

### His View on Financial Management

Islam has a special way in financial management. There are several requirements to those who want to handle a management of finance. Like, adult, healthy, and mature. In al-Alquran, Allah said, "And give not unto the foolish your property which Allah has made a means of support for you, but feed and clothe them therewith, and speak to them words of kindness and justice" (Q.S. Al-Nisā': 5). On this part, Ṭaṇṭāwī were commenting that, Allah has forbidden us to give any property to the foolish and to the women until they reach an age of maturity and a good management of financial, but sadly, we as Muslim gave our property to the Western willingly.

It was them, the Western people who have money to open many factories in our countries, many Muslims become workers there, working out of loud for them, and we buy everything which they manufactured, foods, clothes and garments. And who has a biggest percentage of profit? It was them, the Westerners. And the Muslim was not aware about this. Like what Ṭaṇṭāwī said in his book:

"والمسلمون غافلون نائمون فلا يصدقون أن مصارف البلاد التي أنشأت حديثا تقوم مقام المصارف الإفرنجية ويتركون تلك الأموال عند الفرنجة ولا ينتفعون بها في تجارة أو شركة أو زراعة بل يتركون أنفسهم عالية على أوروبا التي تأخذ ما لهم كأنهم قاصرون."<sup>14</sup>

On his point of view, Thanthawi is like willing to say that if Muslim followed what Allah has ordered in the Alquran by choosing the right person that qualified to manage the finance, Muslim will be independent financially and the their standard of economic will increase, without being attached to any western product, factories, or manufactures.

### His View on Women Fashion

About women fashion, Alquran has explained very well about *aurah* and kind of attire should be worn by every *muslimah*. But, sadly truth that, many muslimah were attracted by fashion which is non *shariah* compliance in order to being called fashionable and modern. Ṭaṇṭāwī said that the western has a hidden agenda to destroy Muslim family through fashion. He said, from the first, there are tailor who made the costumes special for the singers. By seeing these singers with their stylist costumes appears on TV, newspaper, magazines, and shows, our Muslim women started to follow their attires. By seeing the future market, the West started to sell such type of

<sup>14</sup> Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī, *Al-Jawahir fi Tafsir al-Alquran al-Karim*, part 3, p. 13.

clothes, and our Muslim women started to have their fashion, following their styles and left Islamic dressing.<sup>15</sup> According to this problem *Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī* commented the respond of Muslim Men, he said:

"والرجال غافلون والأمراء نائمون بل راضون."<sup>16</sup>

Yes, this is the response, the men was careless and the government was sleeping but they were willingly supporting. Men are supposedly lead women especially those who under their care to the mercy of God by obeying His command in worshipping and also in terms of attire, on the contrary, they allowed their wives and daughters to show their beauty legally in a wrong way even they supported them to do it. As the definition of beauty was degraded to a lower points. It seemed that their beauty need to be approved by many peoples, until the Men feel very proud if their females (spouses/sisters/daughters) are fashionable and reveal their beauty for everyone.

### Conclusion

*Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī* was trying to fight with the reality of Muslim nowadays, they were following the West more than their own guidance. *Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī* wants muslim to be aware about everything that happened today was one of Western's efforts to make a muslim no longer attached with their religion, by following what they called modern, started from sciences, fashion and any other sensitive parts like family matters, muslim generations will be easily dragged away from Islam. From his several idea we can see that *Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī* were not affected by modernity and following the west, but he was trying to warn every Muslim to keep still on the track, return to the guidance and more concern about sciences.

His tafsir, *al-Jawāhir*, was considered as a sciences *tafsir*. And there are several views from another scholar on this kind of *tafsir*. As being said by Adz-Dzahabi, that one of the reason to reject this kind of tafsir is because *Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī* try to interpret the Alquran based on modern sciences which were not available yet among Arabs at that time and there is no any connection at all with Alquran.<sup>17</sup> And what he did considered as abusing the verses of Alquran and bringing it away from the supreme purposes which is as a guidance to human being.<sup>18</sup> But as *Syeikh Ṭaṇṭāwī* said earlier, beside as book of guidance, al-Alquran also can be seen as a book of sciences which can lead muslim to their bright future, and this tafsir can be considered as his brilliant work on this field.

*Wallahu 'alam.*

<sup>15</sup> Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī, *Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Alqur'ān al-Karīm*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Ṭaṇṭāwī Jauharī, *Al-Jawāhir fī Tafsīr al-Alquran al-Karīm*, part 3, p. 14.

<sup>17</sup> Muḥammad Ḥusain al-Ṣahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, part2, p. 372.

<sup>18</sup> Abd al-Majīd 'Abd al-Salām al Muḥtasib, *Ittijāhāt al-Tafsīr fī al-'Ashri al-Rahin*, p. 277.



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