

## Tawhid and Qur'anic Interpretation in Early 20th-Century Minangkabau: A Philological-Theological Study of Abdul Latif Syakur's *al-Tawhid* (1882–1963)

*Tauhid dan Penafsiran al-Qur'an di Minangkabau Awal Abad ke-20: Sebuah Kajian Filologis-Teologis atas al-Tawhid (1882–1963) karya Abdul Latif Syakur*

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### Abstract

The Islamic reform movement in early 20th-century Minangkabau, West Sumatra, evolved through three phases. The first phase involved intellectual engagement, followed by military conflict, and later, modernization through education. During the third phase, scholarly production increased significantly. However, reformist literature predominantly concentrated on debates about *tariqa* (religious order) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). Substantive discourse on *tawhid* (oneness of God) was absent, which forms the foundation of *aqidah* (creed). This study explores Abdul Latif Syakur's *al-Tawhid* manuscript (1882–1963) to explore this underexamined aspect of Islamic theological discourse. Employing an integrative qualitative approach (philological-theological and historical analysis), the research explores three aspects: (1) Syakur's construct of integrative *tawhid*, which synthesizes *rububiyyah* (lordship), *ulūhiyyah* (godship), and *asma' wa ḥifāt* (divine names and attributes); (2) his critique of *shirk* (associating partners with God) in both its *jahiliyyah* (pagan-ritualistic) and modern (secular-materialistic) forms; and (3) the role of *ikhlas* (sincere devotion) as a bridge between *tawhid* and social praxis. The findings show Syakur presents a non-polemical approach, integrating Minangkabau's local values (*adat basandi syarak*, or Sharia-based tradition) with Islamic doctrine. He also critiques the tendency to reduce *tawhid* to ritual formalism or a strict separation between religion and state. His concept of modern *shirk* provides valuable insights into current challenges, such as materialism and environmental issues. By integrating education and literacy at an institution informally known as Surau Si Camin, Syakur contributed to a holistic reform that emphasized the unity of *aqidah*, ethics, and social responsibility. This study affirms the relevance of integrative *tawhid* as a framework for conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue in pluralistic societies while revitalizing the intellectual legacy of Islam in the Nusantara region (the Malay-Indonesian archipelago).

**Keywords:** *integrative tawhid, Islamic reform, Minangkabau, tafsir; Abdul Latif Syakur*

### Abstrak:

Gerakan reformasi Islam di Minangkabau, Sumatera Barat pada awal abad ke-20 berkembang melalui tiga fase yang berbeda. Fase pertama ditandai dengan keterlibatan intelektual, diikuti oleh konflik bersenjata, dan kemudian modernisasi melalui pendidikan. Pada fase ketiga, produksi keilmuan meningkat secara signifikan. Namun, literatur reformis umumnya terfokus pada perdebatan seputar tarekat dan fikih, sementara diskursus substantif mengenai tauhid—yang merupakan fondasi akidah—nyaris tidak mendapat perhatian. Studi ini menelaah manuskrip *al-Tawhid* karya Abdul



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Latif Syakur (1882–1963) untuk mengkaji aspek teologis Islam yang kurang dieksplorasi tersebut. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif integratif (analisis filologis-teologis dan historis), penelitian ini mengkaji tiga aspek utama: (1) konstruksi tauhid integratif Syakur yang mensintesis *rububiyyah*, *ulūhiyyah*, dan *asmā' wa sifāt*; (2) kritiknya terhadap syirik jahiliyah (ritualistik) maupun modern (sekular-materialistik); serta (3) peran ikhlas sebagai jembatan antara tauhid dan praksis sosial. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Syakur menawarkan pendekatan non-polemik yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai lokal Minangkabau (*adat basandi syarak*) dengan doktrin Islam. Ia juga mengkritik kecenderungan untuk mereduksi tauhid menjadi formalitas ritual semata atau memisahkan secara ketat antara agama dan negara. Konsep syirik modern yang ia rumuskan memberikan wawasan berharga dalam menghadapi tantangan kontemporer, seperti materialisme dan krisis lingkungan. Melalui integrasi pendidikan dan literasi di lembaga yang secara informal dikenal sebagai Surau Si Camin, Syakur turut membentuk reformasi holistik yang menekankan kesatuan antara akidah, etika, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Studi ini menegaskan relevansi tauhid integratif sebagai kerangka dalam resolusi konflik dan dialog antariman dalam masyarakat pluralistik, sekaligus merevitalisasi warisan intelektual Islam di kawasan Nusantara.

**Kata Kunci:** *tauhid integratif, reformasi Islam, Minangkabau, tafsir, Abdul Latif Syakur*

## Introduction

The Islamic reform movement in early 20th-century Minangkabau (West Sumatra, Indonesia) developed in response to religious practices seen as deviations,<sup>1</sup> including *taqlid* (unquestioning acceptance), *bid'ah* (religious innovation), and syncretism.<sup>2</sup> The movement progressed through three phases. First came intellectual discourse,<sup>3</sup> followed by military conflict between the *Kaum Adat* (Customary Faction) and *Kaum Padri* (Islamic Reformists).<sup>4</sup> The final phase saw modernization through education and literacy, led by Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi and his students.<sup>5</sup> During this period, reformist ideas spread primarily through written

1 M Qadafi, M Iswantir, and A Akbar, “Moderasi Pendidikan Islam Awal Abad 20 Di Sumatera Barat,” *Jurnal Ilmiah* ... 1, no. 3 (2024): 78–83, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.61722/jirs.v1i3.532>; Fitri Yanti, Vita Latifa Aryani, and Nur Salsabilah Alfatih, “Menjaga Keautentikan Al-Qur'an Dalam Keberagaman Indonesia,” *Tadabbur: Jurnal Integrasi Keilmuan* 2, no. 2 (2023).

2 Danil Mahmud Chaniago, Umi Rusmiani Humairah, and Rengga Satria, “Nasionalisme,” *Khazanah: Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 10, no. 1 (May 31, 2020): 25–40, <https://doi.org/10.15548/khazanah.v10i1.293>.

3 Rengga Satria, “Dari Surau Ke Madrasah : Modernisasi Pendidikan Islam Di Minangkabau 1900-1930 M,” *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 2 (December 30, 2019): 277, <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v14i2.2860>.

4 Haedar Nashir, “Purifikasi Islam Dalam Gerakan Padri Di Minangkabau,” *Unisia* 31, no. 69 (2008): 219–30, <https://doi.org/10.20885/unisia.vol31.iss69.art1>; Christine Dobbin, “Islamic Revivalism in Minangkabau at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century,” *Modern Asian Studies* 8, no. 3 (May 28, 1974): 319–45, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X00014669>.

5 H. Rafles, Muhammad Taufan, and Sabiruddin Sabiruddin, “Role of Abdullah Ahmad on the Modernization of Islamic Education in Minangkabau,” *Khalifa: Journal of Islamic Education* 1, no. 1 (2017): 31, <https://doi.org/10.24036/kjie.v1i1.5>; Ihsan Sanusi, “Kebangkitan Islam Minangkabau,” *Majalah Ilmiah Tabuah: Ta'limat, Budaya, Agama Dan Humaniora* 24, no. 2 (December 20, 2020): 148–65, <https://doi.org/10.37108/tabuah.v24i2.354>.

works, shifting the movement from physical conflict to intellectual debate.<sup>6</sup> However, most scholarly writings of the time focused on *tariqa* (religious orders) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). In contrast, *tawhid* (oneness of God)—the core of Islamic *aqidah* (creed)—received little attention.<sup>7</sup> The discourses that several recent researchers in Minangkabau studies make, however, have continued to revolve around *tariqa* and *fiqh*. These researchers include Irina Katkova and Jamaluddin Wan,<sup>8</sup> Arifah Millati Agustina,<sup>9</sup> Hamda Sulfinadia and Jurna Petri Roszi<sup>10</sup>. In this respect, studying discourse on *aqidah* in Minangkabau is immediately important.

From the social movement theory perspective, Minangkabau's reformist dynamics reveal two critical dimensions. First, they reflect the complex interplay between *adat* (customary traditions) and Islam.<sup>11</sup> Second, they demonstrate the strategic mobilization of educational and literacy resources.<sup>12</sup> The lack of *tawhid*-focused studies in 20th-century reformist literature highlights a significant academic gap. Muhammad Amin Brahimi and Houssem Ben Lazreg explained that in the 20th century, Muslim reformers focused on studying *fiqh*, Sufism, and philosophy. Such Muslim reformers as Ayatollah Khomeini, Muhammad Hamidullah, Muhammad Arkoun, and Fazlurrahman have been in the studies' spotlight.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, Apria Putra's study shows that only five percent of Minangkabau ulama's works addressed *tawhid*, while 70 percent focused on *tariqa* and *fiqh*. This imbalance weakened the central role of *tawhid*, especially as distorted local beliefs—such as *shirk* (associating

6 Apria Putra, "Ulama Dan Karya Tulis: Diskursus Keislaman Di Minangkabau Awal Abad 20," *FUADUNA: Jurnal Kajian Keagamaan Dan Kemasyarakatan* 1, no. 2 (2017); Yelda Syafrina, "Fase Dalam Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam Di Minangkabau: Dari Reformis Ke Modernis," *Jurnal Tamaddun : Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 9, no. 2 (December 27, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.24235/tamaddun.v9i2.9039>.

7 Apria Putra, "Ulama Minangkabau Dan Sastra: Mengkaji Kepengarangan Syekh Abdullatif Syakur Balai Gurah," *Diwan* 9, no. 17 (July 18, 2017): 601–24, <https://doi.org/10.15548/diwan.v9i17.133>.

8 Irina Katkova and Jamaluddin Wan, "Sufi Tradition in Contemporary Muslim World: Naqshbandiyya Shaykhs of Sumatra and Their Ideas," *Manuscripta Orientalia. International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research* 29, no. 2 (2023): 52–65, <https://doi.org/10.31250/1238-5018-2023-29-2-52-65>.

9 Arifah Millati Agustina, "Protecting Women's Rights in Exogamous Society: Mahram in Minangkabau Customs," *Al-Ahwal* 17, no. 2 (2024): 205–20, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2024.17204>.

10 Hamda Sulfinadia and Jurna Petri Roszi, "Moderation of Madhhabs in West Sumatra Towards Hadhanah of Minors Whose Mothers Remarry," *El-Usrah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* 7, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 789, <https://doi.org/10.22373/ujhk.v7i2.23941>.

11 Samsul Nizar, *Sejarah Sosial & Dinamika Intelektual Pendidikan Islam Di Nusantara* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2013).

12 Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (McGraw-Hill Publ, 1978).

13 Mohamed Amine Brahimi and Houssem Ben Lazreg, "Post-Islamism and Intellectual Production: A Bibliometric Analysis of the Evolution of Contemporary Islamic Thought," *Religions* 12, no. 1 (January 11, 2021): 49, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010049>.

partners with God) and *khurafat* (superstitions)—diluted Islamic teachings.<sup>14</sup> Given this context, Abdul Latif Syakur's *al-Tawhid* manuscript is one of the few works explicitly focused on *tawhid*. Syakur's *al-Tawhid* manuscript avoids sectarian polemics, offers a unique perspective on strengthening *tawhid* without confrontation, and advocates Islamic reforms subject to interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith.<sup>15</sup> In the global arena, the *al-Tawhid* manuscript has gained significance for resolving international religious-based conflicts arising from theological problems.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the authors' research analysis in the Scopus database in the last five years, *tawhid* (monotheism in Islam) studies can be generally classified under three major categories. First, *tawhid* studies discuss monotheism in classical Islamic theology, which is construed as a normative doctrine in the tradition of *kalam* (study of Islamic theology). This category refers to interpretations of *tawhid* made under a sectarian approach.<sup>17</sup> Second, *tawhid* studies are oriented toward mystical and philosophical aspects of Islam. The second category emphasizes the inner dimension of *tawhid* and transcendent experiences, which are often associated with Sufism and Islamic philosophy.<sup>18</sup> Third, *tawhid* studies as a paradigm of ethics, education, society, culture, etc. This category seeks to formulate *tawhid* as a vision for an ideal society in the contemporary context.<sup>19</sup> The current study shares its orientation with the third

14 Putra, "Ulama Minangkabau Dan Sastra: Mengkaji Kepengarangan Syekh Abdullatif Syakur Balai Gurah."

15 Apria Putra and Chairullah Ahmad, *Bibliografi Karya Ulama Minangkabau Awal Abad Xx: Dinamika Intelektual Kaum Tua Dan Kaum Muda* (Padang: Indonesia Heritage centre, 2011).

16 Ariel Zellman and Jonathan Fox, "Defending the Faith? Assessing the Impact of State Religious Exclusivity on Territorial MID Initiation," *Politics and Religion* 13, no. 3 (September 10, 2020): 465–91, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048319000488>; Ahmad Najib Burhani, "It's a Jihad: Justifying Violence towards the Ahmadiyya in Indonesia," *TRaNS: Trans-Regional and -National Studies of Southeast Asia* 9, no. 1 (2021): 99–112, <https://doi.org/10.1017/trn.2020.8>; A.R.M. Imtiyaz, "The Easter Sunday Bombings and the Crisis Facing Sri Lanka's Muslims," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 55, no. 1 (February 15, 2020): 3–16, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909619868244>.

17 Joseph E.B. Lumbard, "Ahmad Al-Ghazālī's Al-Tajrīd Fī Kalimat Al-Tawhīd: 'A Primer on the Statement of Tawhīd,'" *Journal of Sufi Studies* 13 (2024): 109–54, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22105956-12341345>; Aziz Ençakar, "The Original Author of the Lughaz Concerning Kalimah AlTawhīd Attributed to Birgiwī and Commentaries on This Lughaz," *Islam Tetkikleri Dergisi* 13, no. 2 (2023): 605–31, <https://doi.org/10.26650/iuitd.2023.1219773>; Mehmet Fatih Arslan, "A Better Argument for Tawhīd?: Philosophical Discussions of Divine Attributes in the Sharḥ Al-‘aqāid Tradition," *Sophia* 64 (2025): 169–211, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11841-024-01018-w>.

18 Krzysztof Kościelniak, "The Neoplatonic Roots of Apophatic Theology in Medieval Islam on the Example of Maqāmāt At-Tuyūr/Mantiq at-Tayr (The Conference of the Birds) by Attār Nīshāpūrī (ca. 1145–1221)," *Verbum Vitae* 41, no. 3 (2023): 647–72, <https://doi.org/10.31743/VV.16185>; Zainul Abidin Abdul Halim et al., "Analisis Kritis Terhadap Karya Ilmiah 'Pemikiran Akidah Syaikh Nāṣim Al-Qubrusī Menurut Ahli Sunnah Wal Jamaah': Kajian Perbahasan Wahdah Al-Wujūd Dan Tauhid," *Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 1 (June 30, 2022): 65–118, <https://doi.org/10.22452/afkar.vol24no1.3>; Andrey Lukashev, "The Monotheism of Actions (Tawhid Al-Af'āl) in the Works by Abd Al-Rahman Jami," *St. Tikhons' University Review* 113 (June 28, 2024): 53–69, <https://doi.org/10.15382/sturI2024113.53-69>.

19 Masturin, Mhd Rasid Ritonga, and Siti Amaro, "Tawhid-Based Green Learning in Islamic Higher Education: An Insan Kamil Character Building," *Quodus International Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 1

category in light of these categories. However, this study has perceived *tawhid* not only as a vision for social ethics but also as a basis for Islamic reform, with a critical reading of Islamic texts (Qur'an and hadith) so that they can be more authentic and contextual.

In this paper, Abdul Latif Syakur —a multi-talented scholar— is described as a *muffasir* in the field of *aqidah*, which is in contrast to Novizal Wendry et al. who approach the figure from a *muhaddith* perspective.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, this paper has three main objectives: (a) To analyze how Syakur's *al-Tawhid* manuscript conceptualizes integrative *tawhid* as a theological response to early 20th-century Islamic reform in Minangkabau; (b) to examine Syakur's intellectual contributions to Minangkabau's Islamic reform movement, especially in balancing local traditions (*adat*) with Islamic doctrine; and (c) to assess the contemporary relevance of *al-Tawhid*, particularly its potential for fostering interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution in pluralistic societies. Accordingly, this study poses three key research questions: How does Abdul Latif Syakur construct *tawhid* as an integrative system encompassing *rububiyyah* (lordship), *uluhiiyyah* (godship), and *asma' wa sifat* (divine names and attributes)? What are the differences between the *jahiliyyah* (pagan-ritualistic) and modern (secular-materialistic) forms of *shirk* according to Abdul Latif Syakur, and what are their implications for contemporary understandings of *tawhid*? What role does *ikhlas* (sincere devotion) play in actualizing *tawhid* according to Abdul Latif Syakur, and why does he emphasize *ikhlas* as an operational bridge in religious praxis?

The researchers base their arguments on three key premises to analyze these questions. First, this study addresses an academic gap in research on the Islamic reform movement in Minangkabau, particularly regarding *tawhid*. The limited focus on theological dimensions in 20th-century reformist literature highlights the need for an in-depth exploration of the *tawhid* concept developed by Abdul Latif Syakur, which remains independent of sectarian polemics. Second, belief distortions, such as *shirk* and *khurafat*, continue to challenge religious practice in contemporary society.<sup>21</sup> This study introduces an integrative philological-theological approach to

(2022): 215–52, <https://doi.org/10.21043/qjjis.v10i1.14124>; Berliana Kartakusumah, Mega Febriani Sya, and Mustholah Maufur, “School Policy and Support in Creating English Learning as a Foreign Language That Contains Character and Tawhid Values,” 2023, 050007, <https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0142466>; Paola Pizzi, “*Tawhid* as Social Justice: The Anthropocentric Hermeneutics of the Syrian Theologian Jawdat Sa'id,” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 26, no. 1 (July 2024): 63–100, <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2024.0569>.

20 Novizal Wendry et al., “Articulation of Hadith in Minangkabau Socio-Religious Contexts: A Study on the Collection of Speeches by Sheikh Abdul Lathif Syakur (1882–1963),” *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, August 27, 2024, 551–78, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol23.iss2.art2>.

21 Yelda Syafrina, “Fase Dalam Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam Di Minangkabau: Dari Reformis Ke Modernis,” *Jurnal Tamaddun : Jurnal Sejarah Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 9, no. 2 (December 27, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.24235/tamaddun.v9i2.9039>.

analyzing Syakur's *al-Tawhid* manuscript, uncovering three key innovations: (1) a non-polemical strategy for harmonizing Minangkabau's local values with Islamic doctrine; (2) a new classification of *shirk*—*jahiliyyah* vs. modern *shirk*; and (3) the operationalization of *ikhlas* as a bridge between *tawhid* and social praxis within the framework of *adat basandi syarak* (Sharia-based tradition). The findings offer a theological framework for interfaith dialogue and conflict resolution in pluralistic societies, shifting the dominant narrative of exclusivity in Islamic reform movements.

This study adopts a qualitative paradigm by integrating textual analysis and historical methods<sup>22</sup> to examine the conceptual construction of *tawhid* in Abdul Latif Syakur's *al-Tawhid* manuscript and the socio-intellectual context that frames it. This step involves a philological analysis of its structure and interpretation, alongside a theological exploration of its integration with Minangkabau's socio-cultural context. The research design is descriptive-analytical,<sup>23</sup> relying on primary sources, including the digital version of *al-Tawhid* from the Research and Development Centre for Religious Literature at the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. This source is further supported by secondary sources, such as literature on Islamic reform in Minangkabau, theological studies on *tawhid*, *shirk*, and *ikhlas*, as well as historical analyses of early 20th-century Minangkabau's social dynamics.<sup>24</sup>

The *al-Tawhid* manuscript being studied in this research is written in Arabic. It is one of the important manuscripts in the study of theology in Minangkabau, Indonesia.<sup>25</sup> The manuscript is housed at Yayasan Bani Latief, located within the Bunayya Early Childhood Education Centre (PAUD) in Ampek Angkek, Agam Regency, West Sumatra. This foundation preserves Abdul Latif Syakur's scholarly tradition and intellectual legacy. To enhance accessibility, the Research and Development Centre for Religious Literature and Heritage has digitized the manuscript under the identification code Lkk\_PYK2015\_Mengatas 11. The authors used the digitized version of the manuscript in the present study.

22 Rachmah Ida, *Metode Penelitian Studi Media Dan Kajian Budaya* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2014); Loso Judijanto et al., *Pengantar Ilmu Sejarah : Teori, Konsep, Dan Metodologi Dalam Kajian Sejarah* (Jambi: PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2024).

23 Akif Khilmiyah, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Yogyakarta: Samudra Biru, 2016).

24 M. Nawa Syarif, *Ilmu Tauhid: Sebuah Konsep Ketuhanan Dalam Teologi Islam*. (Jakarta: Duta Sains Indonesia, 2024); Brilly El-Rasheed, *Kesyirikan Generasi Jahiliyyah* (Yogyakarta: Alfasyam Jaya Mandiri, 2020); Purwadi, *Hidup, Mistik & Ramalan Prabu Joyoboyo: Wejangan Luhur Untuk Membaca Owah Gingsiring Jaman* (Yogyakarta: Tanah Air, 2006); Samsul Nizar, *Sejarah Sosial & Dinamika Intelektual Pendidikan Islam Di Nusantara*.

25 Taufiqurrahman et al., "The Existence of the Manuscript in Minangkabau Indonesia and Its Field in Islamic Studies," *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 16, no. 1 (2021): 125–38, <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol16no1.9>.

Data collection techniques include literature review to reconstruct the historical-intellectual context, supplemented by source triangulation to verify the validity of findings through comparative analysis with relevant theories.<sup>26</sup> The analysis process is systematically conducted in three stages: (1) identifying conceptual patterns within the text using a thematic approach, (2) interpreting the text-context relationship through contextual hermeneutics, and (3) examining the correlation between structural pressures and movement mobilization strategies through the lens of social movement theory.<sup>27</sup> Methodological triangulation is achieved by synthesizing textual analysis, historical inquiry, and social theory perspectives, producing a holistic synthesis of *tawhid* as an epistemic framework in Minangkabau's Islamic intellectual movement. This multidisciplinary approach facilitates reading the manuscript not merely as a theological doctrine but as a product of the dialectic between thought and the socio-cultural realities of its time. The integration of these methods enables a comprehensive exploration of the manuscript's textual and contextual dimensions as an artifact of thought embedded within a specific historical space.

### Abdul Latif Syakur; Short Biography

Abdul Latif Syakur (1882–1963) was a prominent Islamic scholar and reformist from West Sumatra in the 20th century.<sup>28</sup> Born in Air Mancur, Bukittinggi, he pursued intensive education in Mecca for 12 years under the tutelage of Minangkabau scholars such as Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi, Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id Ba Bashil, Shaykh Mukhtar Atharid al-Shufi, Sayyid Ahmad Syatha al-Makki, Shaykh Usman al-Sarawaki, and Shaykh Muhammad Sa'id Ba Bashil, the Shafi'i Mufti.<sup>29</sup> During his time in Mecca, he also established intellectual networks with figures such as Shaykh Jamil Jambek and Buya Hamka.<sup>30</sup> At the age of 19, Syakur returned to his hometown and, in 1901, founded Tarbiyah Hasanah, colloquially known as Surau Si Camin, a modern educational institution that taught

26 Etta Mamang Sangadji and Sopiah, *Metodologi Penelitian, Pendekatan Praktis dalam Penelitian Disertai Contoh Proposal Penelitian* (Penerbit Andi, 2024), 125.

27 Steven M. Buechler, *Understanding Social Movements: Theories from the Classical Era to the Present* (London New York: Routledge, 2016); Jorge J. E. Gracia, *A Theory of Textuality the Logic and Epistemology* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), <https://archive.org/details/theoryoftextuali0000grac/page/n5/mode/2up>; Wijiran, *Metode Penelitian Sastra: Sebuah Pengantar* (Ponorogo: Uwais Inspirasi Indonesia, 2024).

28 Yosi Nofa, *Haji Abdul Latif Syakur: Pemikiran, Wacana Dan Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam Di Minangkabau Abad XX* (Jakarta: Sakata Cendikia, 2022).

29 Apria Putra and Chairullah Ahmad, *Bibliografi Karya Ulama Minangkabau Awal Abad Xx: Dinamika Intelektual Kaum Tua Dan Kaum Muda*.

30 Bibit Suprapto, *Ensiklopedi Ulama Nusantara: Riwayat Hidup, Karya, Dan Sejarah Perjuangan 157 Ulama Nusantara* (Jakarta: Gelegar Media Indonesia, 2009).

the Qur'an, *fiqh*, and Arabic.<sup>31</sup> The institution pioneered the integration of traditional and modern curricula, attracting students from various regions.<sup>32</sup>

Syakur was a prolific scholar whose intellectual contributions spanned multiple disciplines.<sup>33</sup> Syekh Jamil Jambek affirmed this by describing him as an erudite writer.<sup>34</sup> The scholarly corpus of Abdul Latif Syakur demonstrates a comprehensive engagement with Islamic intellectual traditions, systematically spanning seven principal domains of scholarly inquiry: (1) general Islamic studies, (2) Qur'anic hermeneutics, (3) hadith scholarship and hadithic sciences, (4) *aqidah* and *kalam* theological discourse, (5) *fiqh*, (6) *akhlak* (ethical philosophy) and *tasawuf*, and (7) socio-cultural analysis.<sup>35</sup> His intellectual versatility was acknowledged by the prominent scholar Shaykh Jamil Jambek, who recommended him as a distinguished translator of Arabic literary works for the publishing house Tsamaratul Ikhwan.<sup>36</sup> Upon his demise in 1963 at M. Jamil Padang Hospital, Syakur was interred in a funeral ceremony characterized by significant scholarly and community representation, notably Buya Hamka's presence.<sup>37</sup> His scholarly contributions remain as pivotal reference materials in contemporary Islamic studies, exemplifying a nuanced intellectual synthesis that effectively integrates classical Middle Eastern scholarly traditions with the distinctive epistemological and cultural frameworks of the Minangkabau intellectual milieu.<sup>38</sup>

31 Ridhoul Wahidi, "Konsep Nasionalisme Perspektif Syaikh Abdul Latief Syakur," *Religia (Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman)* 22, no. 2 (2019): 267–80, <https://doi.org/10.28918/religia.v22i2.2191>.

32 Ahmad Taufik Hidayat, *Tafsir Sosial Ayat-Ayat Al-Qur'an Naskah Syekh Abdul Latief Syakur; Edisi Teks Dan Telaah Konteks* (Padang: IAIN Imam Bonjol, 2014).

33 Apria Putra and Chairullah Ahmad, *Bibliografi Karya Ulama Minangkabau Awal Abad Xx: Dinamika Intelektual Kaum Tua Dan Kaum Muda*; Ridhoul Wahidi, "Nida' Al-Qur'an: A Study of the Manuscript of *Tafsir Yā Ayyuha Al-Lāzīna Āmanū* by Shaykh Abdul Latief Syakur 20th Century," *Ishlah: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin, Adab Dan Dakwah* 6, no. 1 (2024): 127–46, <https://doi.org/10.32939/ishlah.v6i1.303>.

34 Ridwan Bustamam, "Karya Ulama Sumatera Barat: Krisis Basis Dan Generasi Penerus," *Jurnal Lektor Keagamaan* 14, no. 2 (2016): 501, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v14i2.510>.

35 Bustamam.

36 Ridhoul Wahidi, "Karakteristik Naskah Kamus Semantik Bahasa Arab Karya Syekh Abdul Latief Syakur" 14, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.33656/manuskripta.v14i1.53>.

37 Riddhoul Wahidi, Muslich Shabir, and Junaidi, "Syaikh Abdul Latief Syakur's View on Moral Values in *Tafsir Surah Al-Mukminūn*," *ESENSIA Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 27, no. 3 (2018): 259–80, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v19i1.1488>.

38 Ridhoul Wahidi, Riki Rahman, and M Nurkholis, "The Characteristics of Nusantara Tafsir Manuscript : A Methodological Study of QS . Al-Baqarah by Abdul Latif Syakur Development and Education and Training Agency of the Ministry of Religion ( Badan Litbang Dan Diklat Kementerian Agama ) through the Resea" 8, no. 1 (2024): 55–70.

## Tawhid as an Integrative Epistemological Framework: Transcendence and Empiricism

In the construction of Islamic theology, *tawhid* not only serves as the fundamental theological foundation<sup>39</sup> but also evolves into an epistemological framework that integrates transcendental and empirical dimensions.<sup>40</sup> This concept extends beyond the mere acknowledgment of God's oneness in creation<sup>41</sup> to encompass its practical manifestations through acts of worship and contemplation of divine attributes within the realities of life.<sup>42</sup> Its holistic implications encompass a theocentric educational paradigm, an environmental ethic based on ecological stewardship, and a materially and spiritually just societal development.<sup>43</sup> In the classical Islamic philosophical tradition, al-Kindi underscores the integration of *tawhid* with systematic reasoning, emphasizing the synthesis of philosophical inquiry and the consciousness of divine unity.<sup>44</sup> This approach necessitates a critical analysis that remains within the ontological framework of Islam, thereby avoiding the dichotomy between rationality and spirituality. Thus, *tawhid* is not merely an abstract doctrine but an integrative system that bridges faith, ethics, and socio-ecological responsibility while serving as the foundation for critical reasoning rooted in the principle of theocentrism.

Abdul Latif Syakur reconstructs *tawhid* as an integrative system through the triadic framework of *rububiyyah* (the acknowledgment of God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe), *ulubiyyah* (the purification of worship as exclusively for God), and *asma' wa sifat* (the recognition of God's names and attributes without distortion or anthropomorphic interpretation).<sup>45</sup> He critiques the Arab polytheists who recognized *rububiyyah* but failed in *ulubiyyah* by worshipping idols (Qur'an, Az-Zumar [39]: 3) and asserts that the term *ibadah* (worship) in the Qur'an is synonymous with *tawhid*,<sup>46</sup> as interpreted by Ibn Abbas.<sup>47</sup> Syakur also cites Imam

39 Mohammad Taufiq Rahman, *Metodologi Penelitian Agama* (Bandung: Prodi S2 Studi Agama-Agama, 2025).

40 Rokhmatul Hikmat, *Menggapai Bahagia Bersama Di Usia Senja: Pendekatan Spiritual Islami Di Panti Wreda* (Yogyakarta: K-Media, 2025).

41 Ris'an Rusli, *Pemikiran Teologi Islam Modern* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2018).

42 Salamuddin Hadis Purba, *Theologi Islam: Ilmu Tauhid* (Medan: Perdana Publishing, 2016).

43 Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi Dan Modernisasi Di Tengah Tantangan Milenium III* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2012).

44 Nur Amaliyah et al., "Makna Filosofis Dan Saintifik Terkait Tauhid ( Keesaan Tuhan )," *Hamalatul Qur'an: Jurnal Ilmu Ilmu Alqur'an* 5, no. 2 (2024): 525–35, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37985/hq.v5i2.307>.

45 Abdul latif Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Tauhid* (Sumatera Barat, n.d.).

46 Syakur.3.

47 Ibn Abbas, *Tafsir Ibn Abbas*, ed. Muassasah al-Kutub Al-Saqafiyah (Kairo, 1991).

Malik's position on *istiwa'* (God's establishment over the Throne), which must be accepted in faith without speculative questioning.<sup>48</sup> This tripartite framework is non-dichotomous, interwoven to form a theo-anthropocentric consciousness. A fragmented understanding of these three dimensions risks generating theological reductionism, such as formal ritualism devoid of internalized transcendental meaning. The holistic integration of these dimensions necessitates the unification of doctrinal *aqidah* with socio-ecological praxis, positioning *tawhid* as a comprehensive guide to overcoming the religion-life dichotomy while simultaneously critiquing the prevailing religious formalism.

### **Critique of *Tawhid* Deviations: Between *Jahiliyyah* and Modern *Shirk***

Syakur identifies two dialectical forms of *tawhid* deviations: *shirk jahiliyyah* and modern *shirk*. First, *shirk jahiliyyah* does not merely refer to idol worship, as stated in Qur'an, Az-Zumar [39]: 3,<sup>49</sup> but also includes *riya'* (ostentation) in worship, where intentions become tainted by the desire for social recognition, thereby obscuring the essence of *tawhid uluhiyah* and entangling worship in pseudo-anthropocentrism. Syakur emphasizes: Thus, Allah sent the messengers and revealed His revelations to establish the purity of *tawhid* and institute a faith sincere from all forms of polytheistic association (*shirk*) in worship.<sup>50</sup> Second, modern *shirk* is epistemological, manifesting in reducing *tawhid* to a theoretical concept devoid of *sharia* implementation and the dichotomy between *rububiyyah* (God as Creator) and *uluhiyah* (God as the Source of Law). This dichotomy fosters secularism by separating divine authority (private) from human law (public), eroding the theo-anthropocentric principle—the sovereignty of God over all aspects of life.<sup>51</sup> Despite their different manifestations, both *shirk* forms compromise *tawhid*'s integrity, as *shirk jahiliyyah* reduces the transcendence of worship. In contrast, modern *shirk* undermines divine authority through the secularization of values. Syakur observes that modern society is trapped in ritualism devoid of meaning and pseudo-religious secularism due to its failure to comprehend *tawhid* as an integrative system that unifies faith, law, and socio-ecological ethics. Through this critique, he offers a holistic perspective to restore the integration of *aqidah*, *sharia*, and socio-ecological responsibility.

48 Abi Bakr Ahmad bin Husain bin Ali al-Baihaqi, *Al-Sunan Al-Kubra*. 1st Ed. *Al-Sunatu Fi Al-Akhzi Min Al-Azfarri Wa Al-Syarib Wa Ma Zakara Ma'a Huma* (Lebanon: Dar al-Fikr, 2005).

49 *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya* (Solo: Tiga Serangkai, 2015).

50 Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Tauhid*. 3.

51 Syakur. 3.

## The Role of *Ikhlas* in the Actualization of *Tawhid*

In Abdul Latif Syakur's theological framework, *ikhlas* or sincerity is an absolute prerequisite for actualizing *tawhid*, distinguishing substantive worship from mere ritual formalism.<sup>52</sup> He defines *ikhlas* as ontological purification—an inner purification that eliminates *shirk khafi* (hidden *shirk*) in intention, speech, and action, as reflected in the Qur'an, Al-Bayyinah [98]:5.<sup>53</sup> Citing the hadith recorded by Al-Tirmidhi (Hadith no. 1992), "Supplication is the essence of worship," Syakur underscores *ikhlas* as the teleological axis that directs all human activities, from ritual to social engagement, solely toward God, "Acts of worship ('ibādāt) encompass multiple categories, classified into domains of the heart, tongue, body, and wealth. Among these are the foundational pillars: Islām (submission), īmān (faith), ihsān (excellence in faith), and ṣalāh (ritual prayer) – a hierarchy explicitly outlined in Prophetic traditions."<sup>54</sup> Critical analysis reveals *ikhlas* as the operational bridge between *tawhid uluhiyah* (exclusive devotion) and praxis; without it, worship is reduced to a mechanical routine devoid of transcendental dimension.<sup>55</sup> The absence of *ikhlas* signifies a failure in internalizing *tawhid rububiyyah*, as orientation shifts from God to subjective human interests. Integrating *ikhlas* with *tawhid asma' wa ḥifāẓat* necessitates harmonizing human activity with divine attributes (*Al-'Adl* and *Al-Rahman*), transforming it into an instrument of social and environmental ethics. These findings critique contemporary religious practices that neglect *ikhlas*, leading to a dichotomy between private spirituality and public responsibility. Thus, *ikhlas* is not merely a prerequisite for worship but an existential manifesto that transforms *tawhid* consciousness into a holistic ethical framework, preventing pseudo-anthropocentrism.<sup>56</sup>

## Salafi Thought: Preserving Tawhīd's Integrity

Abdul Latif Syakur appreciates the Salafi scholars' methodology in preserving tawhīd's purity through their rejection of *ta'wil* (metaphorical interpretation) and *tasybih* (anthropomorphism). This thinking aligns with the views of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Abu Hanifah, who asserted that God's attributes must be understood according to textual descriptions without analogy to creation<sup>57</sup> (Syakur 1963). He

52 Syakur. 3.

53 *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya*.

54 Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Tauhid*. 3.

55 Syakur. 3.

56 Umar Sulaiman al-Asygar, *Ikhlas* (Banten: Serambi Ilmu Semesta, 2014). 20.

57 Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Tauhid*. 4.

emphasizes the integration of the triadic *tawhid* framework (*rububiyyah*, *uluhiiyyah*, *asma' wa sifat*) in religious education to prevent the dichotomy between religion and life. Furthermore, he calls for revitalizing the Prophet Muhammad's method in dismantling the paradoxes of *shirk*, as outlined in the Qur'an, Al-Mu'minun [23]: 84–89.<sup>58</sup> Syakur contends that rejection of the *shahādah al-tawhīd*—a rejection implying polytheistic associations—fundamentally stems from a deficient comprehension of the theological term Allāh.<sup>59</sup> This classification of *tawhid* is relevant in addressing the phenomenon of partial *tawhid* in modern contexts, such as acknowledging God as the Creator without committing to divine law. However, further studies are needed to harmonize Salafi's approaches with the challenges of modern science, including cosmological questions about God's existence. These findings affirm *tawhid* as an integrative system that necessitates holistic education and a critique of theological reductionism in contemporary discourse.

### ***Tawhīd* Hermeneutics: Defining Worship's Essence**

Abdul Latif Syakur interprets the verse: "And I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Qur'an, Adh-Dhariyat [51]: 56), wherein the term *liya'budūn* signifies total devotion through *tawhid*—the exclusive recognition of God as the Creator, Sustainer, and Regulator of all affairs without partners (Qur'an, Al-Mujadilah: 4; Qur'an, At-Taubah: 31).<sup>60</sup> He asserts that the meaning of *'ibādah* is not merely ritualistic but a form of total devotion exclusively centered upon Allah. The distinction between *Tawhīd Ulūhiyyah* (Oneness of Divinity) and *Tawhīd Rubūbiyyah* (Oneness of Lordship) is crucial for a proper understanding of genuine religiosity, wherein worship is not fulfilled solely by acknowledging Allah as the Creator, but also by rendering exclusive acts of worship and submission to Him alone.<sup>61</sup> Scholars affirm that the essence of worship is *tawhid*, encompassing the acknowledgment of divine lordship (*rububiyyah*) and servitude (*uluhiiyyah*), alongside the affirmation of divine attributes following the Qur'an and Sunnah. The consensus among jurists emphasizes that divine attributes—such as *Al-Hayy* (The Ever-Living) and *As-Samī'* (The All-Hearing)—must be accepted without *ta'wil* (interpretation), *tamthil* (likening to creation), or *ta'til* (negation), as stated by Imam Shafī'i and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal: "God is not described except as He has described Himself or as

58 *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahnya*.

59 Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Taubid*. 4.

60 Syakur. 5.

61 Syakur. 5.

His Messenger has described Him.”<sup>62</sup> The principle of *lā tasyibh wa lā ta’til* (Qur’ān, Ash-Shura: 11) serves as a guideline, affirming that God’s attributes are real yet incomparable to creation. Deviations, such as arbitrary interpretations of “the Hand of God,” are deemed violations of the Salafi methodology. Thus, valid worship is founded upon pure *tawhid* and adherence to revealed texts without philosophical reductionism.

## Epistemic Authority in Divine Attributes

Understanding God’s attributes in classical Islamic theology has been the subject of profound debate between the textualist-Salafi and the rationalist-Mu’tazilite approaches.<sup>63</sup> The early generations of Muslim philosophers faced complex challenges in integrating Greek philosophical logic with Islamic doctrine, striving to ensure that rational methods did not contradict revelation.<sup>64</sup> The Mu’tazilah emerged as the first rational theological school in Islamic history, primarily due to its grand theological doctrine prioritized reason over scriptural texts more than other ideological currents.<sup>65</sup> This contrasts with the Salafi scholars such as Imam Malik, Abu Hanifah, and Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who emphasized the principle of *bila kayf*—believing in the texts without questioning ‘how.’<sup>66</sup> Abdul Latif Syakur aligns with the views of classical scholars such as Imām Mālik, Abū Ḥanīfah, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, who uphold the principle of *bilā kayf*—affirming the divine attributes as they are without inquiring into their modality. This approach aims to preserve the purity of *tawhīd* and avoid excessive theological speculation.<sup>67</sup> They identified themselves as *Ahl al-Sunnah al-Salafiyah* and *Ahl al-Sunnah al-Khalafiyah*.<sup>68</sup> Imam Malik, for instance, rejected speculation about the meaning of *istiwa’* (establishment) in the Qur’ān, asserting that faith requires acceptance without reduction or distortion.<sup>69</sup> This stance reflects

62 Syakur. 5.

63 Sarkowi, “Teologi Islam: Dari Teologi Klasik Hingga Teologi Kontemporer,” *Jurnal Qolamuna* 4, no. 1 (2018): 133–46, <https://ejournal.stismu.ac.id/ojs/index.php/qolamuna/article/view/122>.

64 Supriyanto, “Periodisation of the Philosophy of Islamic Rationalism in the Perspective of Zaki Naguib Mahmud,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8153>.

65 Thanach Kanokthet, “The Policy Development of Social Welfare for Elderly Health Care in the Community: A Case Study of Phitsanulok Municipality, Thailand,” *Asian Social Science* 14, no. 7 (2018): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v14n7p1>.

66 Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Tauhid*. 5.

67 Syakur. 6.

68 Abul Yazid Abu Zaid Al’Ajami, *Aqidah Islam Menurut Empat Madzhab* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2012).

69 Kholidurrohman, *Studi Komprehensif Tafsir “Istawa” Allah Ada Tanpa Tempat* (Banten: Nurul Hikmah Press, 2018).

the Salafi commitment to avoiding anthropomorphic analogies while preserving God's transcendence (*tanzīh*).

In *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, Abu Hanifah affirms that God's attributes, such as 'hand' or 'face' are literal rather than metaphorical (Magnīsāwī, Abū-Ḥanīfa an-Nu'mān Ibn-Ṭābit, and Ibn-Yūsuf 2014).<sup>70</sup> He rejects the Mu'tazilite *ta'wil* (metaphorical interpretation), which interprets *istiwa'* as dominion (*istaula*), and opposes the notion that God is present everywhere.<sup>71</sup> Al-Ash'ari, as a synthesizing figure, repudiates anthropomorphism while maintaining that God's attributes exist separately from His essence, such as knowledge, power, and life.<sup>72</sup> His approach seeks to mediate between the extremities of the Salafi stance and Mu'tazilite rationalism while remaining critical of philosophical speculation, which he considered to undermine the *tawhid al-asma' wa al-ṣifāt* doctrine.<sup>73</sup> As emphasized by Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, the consensus among Salafi scholars rejects *ta'wil* and insists on adhering to the text without analogical reasoning.<sup>74</sup> According to Abdul Latif Syakur, "Whoever interprets any part of this matter has indeed opposed the Prophet (peace be upon him) and separated himself from his community. For they are the righteous ones who do not engage in analogy but rather believe in what is found in the Book and the Sunnah."<sup>75</sup>

Criticism of Mu'tazilism is not only theological but also epistemological, as it is perceived to replace the authority of revelation with reason.<sup>76</sup> Imam Shafī'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal affirm that God's attributes are absolute and transcendent, rejecting inquiries into *kayfiyyah* (modality) as *bid'ah* (innovation).<sup>77</sup> This opinion is affirmed by Syakur, who states: "Allah—He possesses true reality, and there is nothing like unto Him, neither in His essence, nor in His attributes, nor within His creation. And whenever He is described in terms of deficiency or imperfection, Allah is indeed exalted above such notions."<sup>78</sup> Imam Malik even expelled a questioner who insisted on

70 Imam Abu Hanifa's Ahmad Ibn-Muhammad al-Magnīsāwī, Abū-Ḥanīfa an-Nu'mān Ibn-Ṭābit, and 'Abd-ar-Rahmān Ibn-Yūsuf, *Sharh Kitab Al Fiqh Al Akbar Lil Imam Al Azhim Abi Hanifah An Nu'man Bin Tsabit* (Lebanon: Dar al Kutub al Ilmiyah, 1984).

71 Badrudin, *Firqah Dalam Dunia Islam: Sejarah, Doktrin Dan Pemikiran* (Serang: A-Empat, 2015).

72 Badrudin.

73 Supriadin, "Sejarah Abu Hasan AL Asy'ari Dan Doktrin Teologinya," *Sejarah Abu Hasan AL Asy'ari Dan Doktrin Teologinya* 9 (2015): 61–79, <https://doi.org/10.24252/v9i2.1301>.

74 Abi al Hasan Ali bin Ismail Ashari, *Al Luma' Fi Al Radd 'Ala Abi Al Ziyagh Wa Al Bida* (Bairut: Dar al Kutub al Ilmiyah, 2000).

75 Syakur, *Manusrip Al-Tauhid*. 6.

76 Supriadin, "Sej. Abu Hasan AL Asy'ari Dan Doktrin Teol."

77 Mizaj Iskandar, *Sejarah Sunni-Wahabi: Titik Temu Perbedaan Dan Persamaan* (Aceh: Naskah Aceh, 2015).

78 Syakur, *Manusrip Al-Tauhid*. 7.

discussing *istiwa'*, declaring such speculation to be *zandaqah* (heresy). The principle of *dār' al-ta'ārud* (avoiding contradiction) underscores that reason must submit to revelation in matters beyond human capacity.<sup>79</sup> Thus, the Salafi approach not only preserves the purity of doctrine but also prevents methodological disintegration that could potentially fracture the unity of the Muslim community.

### **Abdul Latif Syakur's Contribution to Integrative *Tawhid* and Minangkabau Islamic Reform in the 20th Century for Contemporary Indonesia**

Abdul Latif Syakur played a crucial role in formulating integrative *tawhid* through his triadic framework—*rubūbiyyah* (divine sovereignty), *ulūhiyyah* (exclusive servitude), and *asma' wa sifāt* (affirmation of God's names and attributes without distortion)—as a response to the theological and social challenges in early 20th-century Minangkabau.<sup>80</sup> He emphasized the integration of these three dimensions to prevent reductionism, whether in the form of ritualism devoid of meaning or the secularization of values.<sup>81</sup> Syakur critiqued modern *shirk*, such as the separation of divine authority from public law, which he identified as the root of secularism and social inequality.<sup>82</sup> His thought spurred Islamic reform in Minangkabau by underscoring the unity of *aqidah* (creed), *sharia* (law), and socio-ecological ethics, in alignment with Minangkabau's holistic scholarly tradition.<sup>83</sup>

This concept remains relevant in contemporary Indonesia in addressing the dichotomy between religion and the state, environmental crises, and corruption—issues that reflect a failure to internalize *tawhid*. This failure is evident in the prevalence of religious formalism unaccompanied by an ethical commitment to social justice and sustainability. *Tawhid* is often understood narrowly as a mere ritual formality, while the substance of *tawhid* as a foundation for public morality—as Abdul Latif Syakur stated—is marginalized. As a result, Muslim society has lost the spiritual orientation that should be the primary driving force in religious life. Anri Naldi et al. recommended in their research that *tawhid* value must be integrated into religious life to make a holistic religious understanding of disaster mitigation policies,

79 Abur Hamdi Usman Umar Muhammad Noor, “Al-Bantānī and the Interpretation of Sifāt Verses in Marāh Labid,” *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 2 (2023), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.7661>.

80 Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Tauhid*. 7.

81 Azyumardi Azra, *Pendidikan Islam: Tradisi Dan Modernisasi Di Tengah Tantangan Milenium III*.

82 Syakur, *Manuskrip Al-Tauhid*. 7.

83 Hadis Purba, *Theologi Islam: Ilmu Taubid*.

environmental management, and community empowerment.<sup>84</sup>

Syakur's notion of *ikhlas* (sincerity) as a teleological axis<sup>85</sup> also serves as a critique of the prevailing religious formalism today. In religious life in Indonesia, formalism is often evident in Islamic expressions that focus on outward appearances—such as the strengthening of religious symbols, the ceremonial nature of mass worship, and the measurement of religiosity through ritual intensity—but lack a commitment to justice, honesty, and social responsibility. This fact creates a paradox: increasing indicators of “religiosity” do not always correspond to increased moral integrity in the public sphere. Many Muslims do not respect followers of other religions, even to the point of conflict. Bambang Qomaruzzaman attributes the root cause to theological factors.<sup>86</sup> According to Syakur's thinking, integrative *tawhid* is relevant as a framework for conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue in pluralistic societies. Thus, his intellectual legacy not only strengthens Minangkabau's Islamic identity but also offers an integrative paradigm that harmonizes spirituality, social justice, and ecological sustainability in the modern era.

The concept of integrative *tawhid* proposed by Abdul Latif Syakur in this study bears similarities to the work of Paola Pizzi, who examines the thought of Jawdat Sa'id. Through a hermeneutical analysis of the Qur'an, *tawhid* is interpreted as a social construct to achieve global justice and equality. Consequently, this process necessitates a shift from theological to sociological interpretation.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, *tawhid* has been positioned as a central element in various aspects of human life, as demonstrated in the works of Masturin et al.,<sup>88</sup> and Nurhidayati and Adriyanto.<sup>89</sup> These studies propose *tawhid* as a foundational principle in educational practices, intended to cultivate individuals who are both intellectually capable and spiritually grounded. Such research highlights the urgency of *tawhid* as a framework for addressing human problems, reinforcing the relevance of Syakur's perspective in this study.

<sup>84</sup> Anri Naldi et al., “Tawhid of The Sky and Tawhid of The Earth: Theological Reflections of the People of Medan Post-Natural Disaster,” *Pharos Journal of Theology* 106, no. 106.2 (March 2025): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.214>.

<sup>85</sup> Umar Sulaiman al-Asygar, *Ikhlas*.

<sup>86</sup> Bambang Qomaruzzaman, “The Theology of Non-Violent Islamic Education Based on Al-Sira Al-Nabawiyya,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77, no. 4 (2021): a6268, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6268>.

<sup>87</sup> Pizzi, “*Tawhid* as Social Justice: The Anthropocentric Hermeneutics of the Syrian Theologian Jawdat Sa'id.”

<sup>88</sup> Masturin, Ritonga, and Amaro, “Tawhid-Based Green Learning in Islamic Higher Education: An Insan Kamil Character Building.”

<sup>89</sup> Nurhidayati and Andhy Tri Adriyanto, “The Role of Tawhidic Paradigm in Knowledge Creation Process,” *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems*, 2022, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08812-4\\_32](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08812-4_32).

One of the significant limitations of this study lies in the *al-Tawhīd* manuscript authored by Abdul Latif Syakur (1882-1963), as the primary data source is a single manuscript. The absence of other manuscript variants may hinder the thorough application of comparative philological methods, especially stemmatic criticism, reconstruction of textual genealogy, and identification of possible changes in the manuscript transmission process. Therefore, the historical validity of this study is strongly supported by a hermeneutic approach to the available single text. Such a limitation has, however, created valuable opportunities to explore the extent to which the theological construction in *al-Tawhīd* is not made normatively in a vacuum, yet it is deeply rooted in the socio-religious dynamics of Minangkabau society in the first half of the 20th century. Interpretations of *tawhid* offered by Abdul Latif Syakur do not merely aim to explain theological concepts metaphysically but reflect ideological responses to the surrounding social, political, and cultural realities. As such, this article indicates a dialectical relationship between text and context, where *tafsir* not only shapes theological consciousness but also acts as a means of articulating resistance, promoting social reform, and rebuilding the relationship between the local *adat* (customary traditions) and *sharia* in the Minangkabau society.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge some methodological limitations of this study reflectively. The researcher's subjectivity in constructing Abdul Latif Syakur's intellectual narrative, particularly in incorporating the Minangkabau historical context within a contemporary conceptual framework, may lead to interpretative bias. In addition, translating local theological terms into modern academic language presents linguistic and epistemological challenges involving the risk of simplifying the complexity of the manuscript's original meaning. Therefore, future research can be oriented towards philological studies of other primary manuscripts of his works, comparative studies of cross-regional interpretations that trace local-global dialectics in the meaning of *tawhid*, and a more in-depth exploration of theological discourse under a critical discourse analysis approach. By expanding the scope of the approach, Abdul Latif Syakur's legacy of thought can be more fully reconstructed and mobilized as a conceptual basis for addressing contemporary challenges in the fields of theology, ecology, and Islamic social order.

## Conclusion

The current study highlights Abdul Latif Syakur's intellectual contributions (1882-1963). Abdul Latif Syakur's triadic *tawhid* framework—*rubūbiyyah*, *ulūhiyyah*, and *asmā' wa ṣifāt*—emerges as an integrative epistemology unifying divine transcendence with socio-ecological praxis. This system resolves critical dichotomies:

rejecting shirk jāhilī and modern shirk while positioning ikhlāṣ as the teleological core that transforms worship into ethical agency. The Salafi insistence on textual fidelity (*bilā kayf*) and rejection of *ta’wīl* further fortify ontological integrity against anthropomorphism and Mu‘tazilite rationalism, affirming worship’s essence as holistic devotion.

These findings demonstrate *tawhīd*’s capacity to bridge revelation and rationality: Syakur’s model integrates creed (*‘aqīdah*), law (*shari‘ah*), and ecological ethics into a unified theo-anthropocentric paradigm. Crucially, it counters contemporary crises—religious formalism, environmental degradation, and secular fragmentation—by anchoring socio-political action in *tawhīd*-consciousness. However, the framework’s efficacy hinges on contextual adaptability, particularly in reconciling Salafī literalism with cosmological inquiries, revealing tensions between hermeneutic rigidity and evolving empiricism.

This study’s reliance on Syakur’s singular manuscript, *al-Tawhīd*, precludes stemmatic philology and obscures textual evolution. Future work must, therefore, expand philological analysis through a comparative study of Syakur’s unpublished Minangkabau manuscripts, map regional hermeneutics via Southeast Asian–Middle Eastern *tawhīd* discourse comparisons, and apply critical discourse analysis to test *tawhīd*’s viability in resolving anthropogenic crises, ensuring Syakur’s legacy informs both theological and planetary challenges.

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## Authors’ Contribution

Ridhoul Wahidi proposed the title and the method used to write this article. Benny Afwadzi carried out the writing, discussion, analysis, and compilation with all the formats as required by the *Jurnal Studi ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadith*. Supplementing discussions were done by Syafril and Riki Rahman. In addition, cross-checking and suggestions for submission to a suitable journal were made by Ridhoul Wahidi, who finally suggested that the article should be submitted to *Jurnal Studi ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadith* for its reverend and quality publication. That was how the article was finally arranged and submitted for consideration and publication.

## Conflicts of Interest

With full assurance, on behalf of all authors, I, the corresponding author, state that there is no conflict of interest. I also declare that We have no significant competing financial, professional, or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of the work described in this manuscript.

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