

SHEIKH ABDURRAUF AL-SINGKILI'S THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF TAWHID IN ACEH SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Theological discourse is a unique and interesting field of Islamic studies that has colored intellectual debates and determined the dynamics of the Islamic world, both in the Middle East and in Nusantara. This study examines Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili's theological thought contained in the book 'Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin, which was intentionally written to guide the people of Aceh in their religious understanding during the theological polemic of the time, namely the issue of wujudiyah. This research focuses on the theological thought of the book and its influence on the practice of tawhid in Aceh society. The study found that the theological thought contained in the book is influenced by the Ash'ari theological school, characterized by the mention of Allah's attributes and the rejection of Jabariyya and Qadariyya. At the time, the book had an influence on the understanding of tawhid and the path to Allah, but its influence was lost as it was no longer used as a reference in the development of Islamic knowledge in the dayahs, which are known as the centers of tawhid studies in Aceh. This reality should serve as a reference that Acehnese scholars' theological thought can be re-studied in the development of Islamic studies, both in dayahs and Islamic universities.

Keywords: *Theological discourse, Islamic studies, Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili, Aceh*

ABSTRAK

Diskursus kalam merupakan salah satu kajian keislaman yang unik dan menarik. Sepanjang sejarah umat Islam teologi mewarnai perdebatan keilmuan sekaligus menentukan dinamika intelektual baik di Timur Tengah maupun di Nusantara. Kajian ini mengkaji corak pemikiran teologi Syaikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili yang terkandung dalam kitab 'Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin. Pada masanya kitab ini sengaja ditulis sebagai upaya memberikan panduan penghayatan agama kepada masyarakat Aceh yang saat itu sedang mengalami polemik teologis yaitu masalah wujudiyah. Kitab inilah yang menjadi fokus kajian riset ini yang ditekankan bagaimana corak pemikiran teologisnya dan sejauh mana pengaruhnya dalam pengamalan tauhid masyarakat Aceh. Dari kajian yang telah dilakukan ditemukan bahwa corak pemikiran teologis yang dikandung dalam kitab 'Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin adalah bercorak aliran teologi Asyariah yang dicirikan oleh penyebutan sifat Allah dan penyanggahan terhadap aliran Jabariah dan Qadariah. Pada masanya kitab ini telah memberikan pengaruh dalam pengenalan tauhid dan jalan mendekatkan diri kepada Allah. Namun kemudian pengaruh kitab ini kemudian menjadi hilang karena kitab ini tidak lagi dijadikan rujukan dalam pengembangan ilmu keislaman di dayah-dayah yang dikenali sebagai sentra pengkajian tauhid di Aceh. Kenyataan ini semestinya menjadi sebuah acuan bahwa pemikiran teologi ulama Aceh ini dapat kembali dipelajari dalam pengembangan keislaman baik di dayah-dayah maupun di universitas Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Kalam, Studi Islam, Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili, Aceh*

A. Introduction

Theological thought represents a fundamental area of inquiry within the study of Islamic sciences. The examination of theology constitutes an engaging discourse that continues to evolve in accordance with the dynamics of human thought. As a discipline concerned with the study of God and the patterns of His relationship with humanity, theological discourse has captivated the attention of Muslim intellectuals. Indeed, given that it always leaves unresolved problems throughout human history, theology has emerged as a fascinating area of inquiry. It is worth noting that, in the context of this discussion, the term "theology" refers specifically to Islamic theology. This point is essential in order to distinguish it from non-Islamic theology, given that virtually all religions possess their own unique theological formulations. In the Islamic tradition, experts have employed a diverse range of names to describe theology, although this diversity of terminology is confined to the nomenclature employed and does not extend to the substance of the understanding. These names include, among others, Ilmu Kalam, Ilmu Usuluddin, and Ilmu Tauhid. 'Abd. Al-Rahman Al Iji, for example, has defined Islamic theology as a science capable of proving the veracity of Islamic beliefs and dispelling doubt through the presentation of evidence and arguments. Ahmad Fu'ad al-Ahwani, meanwhile, has characterized Islamic theology as a discipline that reinforces religious beliefs by means of rational argumentation. In light of the foregoing, it is appropriate to understand the term "theological" within the context of this paper as a discipline concerned with the study of God and the various derivatives of His relationship with humanity, as well as a contemporary discursive scientific discipline.¹

In the historical record, the existence of Islamic theology has been a transformative force in achieving social change and ushering in the pinnacle of Islamic civilization. During the golden age of Islam, Islamic theology experienced rapid growth alongside the growth and development of other scholarly disciplines. At that time, theological developments had even extended to philosophical issues resulting from the emergence of rationalism in Islam. It cannot be denied that Islamic theologians contributed to the occurrence of social transformation, characterized by the development of scientific advancements and the promotion of rational thinking.² Even at the peak of theological discussions in Islam, many theologians held esteemed positions in the government, as rulers provided opportunities and facilities for scholars to broaden their knowledge.³

The same situation also occurs in Aceh, where religious thought is closely intertwined with governmental power. Its dynamics always run in parallel with the policies of the ruling authorities. In the context of Aceh, theological discourse also colors the development of Islamic thought, highlighting the conflict between the Wujudiyah sect on one side and the Sunni sect on the other. The theological discussion in Aceh shows a

¹ Lihat, 'Abd. al-Rahman Ibn al-Iji, *Al-Mawaqif fi 'Ilm al-Kalam*, (Beirut: 'Alam al-Kutub, t.t.), hal.7 ; Ahmad Fu'ad al-Ahwani, *Al-Falsafat al-Islamiyyah*, (Kairo: Matba 'at Lajnah al-Ta'lif, 1962),hal.18

²Ahmad Mahmud Subhi, *Fi 'Ilm al-Kalam Dirasat Falsafiyah*, (t.tp.: Dar al-Kutub al-Jam'iyat, 1969), hal.79. Lihat juga Ilhamuddin, *Pemikiran Kalam al-Baqillani: Studi tentang Persamaan dan Perbedaannya dengan al-Asy'ari*, (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1997), hal.5.

³Ahmad Amin, *Duha al-Islam*, (Kairo: Maktabah al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1935), hal.13-15. Lihat juga Harun Nasution, *Islam Ditinjau dari Berbagai Aspeknya*, (Jakarta: UI Press, 1985) hal. 108.

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unique model that brings together the colors of mysticism and theology at the same time. This nuance can still be observed in the pattern of Islamic thought in Aceh today. Numerous scholars have contributed to and influenced the historical development of theology in Aceh. Among these scholars are Hamzah Fansuri, Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani, Nuruddin al-Raniry, and Abdurrauf al-Singkili. The first two individuals were renowned leaders of Islamic scholarship who played a pivotal role in disseminating the theological ideas and teachings of Ibn 'Arabi⁴ throughout the region, primarily through the composition of books and treatises in both Malay and Arabic. As a result of their efforts, they garnered a substantial following, particularly due to Syamsuddin al-Sumatrani's position as the second-in-command in the kingdom, serving as a mufti and advisor to the sultan.

In the subsequent developments following the passing of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the teachings of Hamzah and Syamsuddin, which later came to be known as the Wujudiyah⁵ teachings, were opposed by Nuruddin ar-Raniry, an orthodox religious leader from India. To this end, Nuruddin ar-Raniry wrote books and treatises in both Malay and Arabic. He openly refuted the Wujudiyah teachings and engaged in discussions with the followers of Hamzah and Syamsuddin, both within and outside the palace. At that time, the Aceh kingdom was led by Iskandar Tsani, who was the son-in-law of Iskandar Muda. After a prolonged polemic, these discussions culminated in a fatwa, which declared the Wujudiyah as apostates who could be lawfully killed if they did not repent. Following the issuance of this fatwa, a somber episode unfolded, in which many followers of the Wujudiyah became targets of killings, and books authored by Hamzah and Syamsuddin were collected and burned in the courtyard of the Baiturrahman Mosque.

The last name mentioned is Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili, renowned as an eminent scholar of Aceh, who was dedicated to various fields of Islamic knowledge and simultaneously contributed to the development of the Syattariyyah⁶ Sufi order in the region. Notably, despite sharing general religious views with Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniry, Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili was highly tolerant towards divergent Sufi orders, even if their teachings were antithetical to his own. Therefore, his literary works do not contain any disparagement or objection directed towards those who disagreed with him, unlike the

⁴ Nama lengkapnya ialah Muhyiddin Abubakar Muhammad ibn Ali ibn 'Arabi al-Hatimi al-Ta'iy. Beliau keturunan Hatim al-Ta'iy dan dilahirkan di Murcia, sebelah tenggara Andalusia pada tahun 560 H (1165M) dalam usia 30 tahun, ia keliling Andalus dan kawasan Magribi kemudian ke Timur Tengah di mana ia sering mondar mandir antara Makkah, Yaman, Asia Kecil, Damaskus dan Irak. Pada tahun 620 H ia menetap di Mamaskus di mana ia kemudian meninggal pada 638 H (1240M.). Lihat. Umar Farukh, *Tarikh al-Fikr al-'Arabi*, (Beirut, 1962), hal. 427. Ahmad Daudy, Syekh Nuruddin Ar-Raniry: Sejarah Hidup, Karya dan Pemikiran, (Banda Aceh: Pusat Penelitian dan Pengkajian Budaya Islam IAIN Ar-Raniry, 2006), hal. 3-4.

⁵ Wujudiyah adalah suatu istilah Arab yang berasal dari Wahdat al-Wujud yang berarti keesaan wujud. Dalam hal ini sama maksudnya dengan Panteisme yang dalam bahasa Inggris sering dimaknai sebagai Belief that God is in all things (Webster's World University Dictionary), dalam kamus Filsafat istilah ini dijelaskan sebagai "The Doctrine that reality comprises a single being of which things are modes, moments, members, appearance or projections".

⁶ Tariqat Syattariyyah didirikan oleh Abdullah Syattar yang meninggal pada tahun 1415 M. Tarikat ini dimasukkan oleh Syaikh Abdurrauf ke Kerajaan Aceh pada pertengahan Abad ke-17, setelah mendapat izin (ijazah) dari gurunya, Mulla Ibrahim dari Madinah.

works of Nuruddin Ar-Raniry.⁷ During his lifetime, Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili enjoyed a reputation as a highly respected scholar with profound knowledge in diverse fields of study. Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili returned to the Nusantara region during a time of severe political and religious turmoil in the kingdom of Aceh. Due to his exceptional mastery of Islamic studies, the royal authorities ultimately sought and offered him the position of Qadhi al-Malik al-Adil to accompany Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiatuddin's rule. As the royal qadhi, he demonstrated remarkable sagacity in handling various religious and political issues, including the contentious topic of wujudiyyah and political matters pertaining to the leadership of women, such as Sultanahs. It was this sagacity that generated a well-known saying and guiding principle in Acehnese society, "*Adat bak Po Teumeureuhom, Hukom bak Syaikh Kuala.*" Such was the profile of Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili's leadership that influenced the intellectual landscape of Acehnese society, particularly with regard to the domains of theology and monotheism. In his efforts to provide guidance on religious experience for Acehnese society, Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili authored a notable work titled '*Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin*, which constitutes a Sufi treatise on the spiritual journey towards achieving the recognition of Allah. However, this research study primarily focuses on a theological analysis of the book, particularly its exposition of recognizing Allah and His twenty attributes.

If we refer to previous research regarding the thought of Sheikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili, it is generally focused on the study of Quranic exegesis in the book *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. Regarding this style of interpretation, for example, it can be found in the articles of Rukiah Abdullah and Mahfudz Masduki titled "Characteristics of Nusantara Interpretation: Methodological Study of the Book *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* by Sheikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili."⁸ Additionally, there are works related to the book *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, such as Gunawan, John Supriyanto, and Sulaiman M. Nur's writing entitled "The Position of Husbands and Wives in the Book *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* by Sheikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili."⁹ In the realm of Quranic exegesis, Fauzi Saleh has written an article titled "Revealing the Uniqueness of Acehnese Interpretation."¹⁰ From the aforementioned writings, it is apparent that studies on Sheikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili's thought are more focused on Quranic exegesis. Nevertheless, there are also some articles that discuss his Hadith thought, such as Muhammad Imron Rasyadi's writing titled "Hadith Thought of Abdurrauf al-Singkili in the Book *Mawaizat al-Badi'ah*."¹¹ Furthermore, there is an article written by Suparwany titled "Acehnese Hadith Manuscripts: Trends in Writing, Research,

⁷ A.H. Johns, "Malay Sufism as Illustrated in an Anonymous Collection of 17th Century Tracts" *JMBRAS*, vol. XXX, part 2, 1957, hal.10.

⁸ Rukiah Abdullah dan Mahfudz Masduki "Karakteristik Tafsir Nusantara (Studi Metodologis atas Kitab *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* Karya Syaikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili" dalam *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Quran dan Hadits*. Vol.16. No.2. Juli 2015.

⁹ Gunawan, John Supriyanto dan Sulaiman M. Nur yang berjudul "Kedudukan Suami Isteri dalam Kitab *Tarjuman al-Mustafid* Karya Syaikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili" dalam *Al-Misykah: Jurnal Kajian Al-Quran dan Tafsir*. Vol. 3.No. 2 Juli-Desember 2020.

¹⁰ Fauzi Saleh "Mengungkap Keunikan Tafsir Aceh" dalam *Jurnal Al-Ulum*. Vol. 12. No.2. 2012

¹¹ Muhammad Imron Rasyadi "Pemikiran Hadits Abdurrauf al-Singkili dalam Kitab *Mawaizat al-Badi'ah*" dalam *Jurnal Ilmu Hadits* Vol.2. No 1. September 2016.

and Conservation"¹² which relates to Hadith studies. Additionally, Silvia Kartika's writing titled "The Concept of Sufism According to Sheikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili"¹³ is also found.

From the literature above, it is evident that studies related to the theological/Kalam thought of Sheikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili have not been found. Based on the aforementioned background, this article intends to examine Sheikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili's Kalam thought. This article aims to address two main issues: first, to identify the theological thought patterns in the book *Umdat al Muhtajin ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufridin*, and second, to determine its influence on the understanding of monotheism (Tawhid) in Aceh society. If the aforementioned objectives are successfully achieved, then theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the scientific literature in the field of Islamic thought generally, and the development of the subject of Kalam or Islamic Theology, specifically.

B. Discussion

1. General Overview of the Contents of the Book "Umdatul Muhtajin ila Suluki Maslak al-Mufridin"

The book titled *Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk al-Maslak al-Mufridin* is one of the literary works produced by the scholars of Aceh and is written in the Malay language. This book encompasses a vast array of guidance for individuals seeking to acquaint themselves with Allah and engage in His remembrance. The author, Syaikh Abdurrauf al-Singkili, intended for this book to serve as a guide and essential provision for those traversing the path of Allah (salik), with the aspiration of facilitating their journey towards drawing closer to Allah.

In general, the author divided the book *Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk al-Maslak al-Mufridin* into seven chapters, each comprising a specific benefit. The first chapter expounds on the fundamental issue of Tawheed, which relates to the obligation of mukallaf to comprehend the attributes that are inherent in the essence of Allah SWT. The attributes discussed include both obligatory and impossible attributes, as well as necessary attributes. This chapter forms the central focus of this study, which pertains to theological matters. The discussion on Tawheed is the principal theme of this book, as is evident from the following translation:

“...First and foremost, it is mandatory for every person who has reached the age of maturity to identify the items that are obligatory in terms of the rights of Allah the Almighty, the things that are impossible for them, the things that are obligatory for them, the obligations towards all messengers of Allah, the things that are impossible for all of them, and the blessings and peace of Allah be upon all of them. Concerning the necessary attributes of Allah, there are twenty attributes that must be recognized. Firstly, the attribute of existence, which means that He exists

¹² Suparwany ” Naskah Hadits Aceh: Tren Penulisan, Penelitian dan Konservasinya” dalam *Al-Bukhari: Jurnal Ilmu Hadits*, Vol. 1. No.1 Februari 2020.

¹³Silvia Kartika yang berjudul ”Konsep Tasawuf menurut Syaikh Abdur Rauf al-Singkili” dalam *Jurnal Ilmu Sains Islam*, Vol. 1. No.1 Februari 2020.

(*wujud*). Secondly, the attribute of pre-eternity, which means that He has always existed (*qidam*). Thirdly, the attribute of everlastingness, which means that He will always exist (*baqa*). Fourthly, the attribute of being distinct from all created things, being opposite to them (*mukhalafatuhu lilhawadist*). Fifthly, the attribute of self-subsistence, which means that He stands alone without the need for anything else (*qiyamuhu binafsihi*). Sixthly, the attribute of oneness, which means that He is the only one (*wahdaniyah*). Seventhly, the attribute of power, which means that He is capable of everything (*qudrah*). Eighthly, the attribute of will, which means that He intends things to happen (*iradah*). Ninthly, the attribute of knowledge, which means that He knows everything (*ilm*). Tenthly, the attribute of life, which means that He is alive (*hayah*). Eleventhly, the attribute of hearing, which means that He hears everything (*sama'*). Twelfthly, the attribute of sight, which means that He sees everything (*bashar*). Thirteenthly, the attribute of speech, which means that He speaks (*kalam*). Fourteenthly, the attribute of omnipotence, which means that He is all-powerful (*qadirun*). Fifteenthly, the attribute of desire, which means that He has a will (*muridun*). Sixteenthly, the attribute of knowledge, which means that He knows everything (*'alimun*). Seventeenthly, the attribute of life, which means that He is alive (*hayyun*). Eighteenthly, the attribute of hearing, which means that He hears everything (*sami'un*). Nineteenthly, the attribute of sight, which means that He sees everything (*bashirun*). And twentiethly, the attribute of speech, which means that He speaks (*mutakallimun*)."¹⁴

This is the discussion of the essential attributes of Allah. These twenty attributes are classified into four categories: *nafsiah*, *salbiyah*, *ma'ani*, and *maknawiyah*. This classification can be found in the following text:

"...Thus, these are the twenty essential attributes of Haq Taala, and all of these attributes are divided into four categories. The first category is called *nafsiah*, which refers to the existence that has been mentioned. The second category is called *salbiyah*, which includes the five attributes that come after the attributes of existence, namely *qidam* to *wahdaniyah*. The third category is called *ma'ani*, which includes seven attributes that come after the *salbiyah* attributes, namely *qudrah* to *kalam*. The fourth category is called *maknawiyah*, which includes seven attributes that come after the aforementioned attributes, namely *qudrah* to *mutakallimun*..."¹⁵

The discussion of Allah's attributes is then continued with the discussion of the impossible and permissible attributes of Allah's essence, which can be found in the following text:

"....In regards to the attributes that are deemed impossible for Allah, there exist twenty attributes that are in opposition to those mentioned. The first attribute is that of non-existence, followed by the attribute of beginning of existence, thirdly, being connected to 'Adam (non-existence), fourthly, being similar to everything that begins to exist, fifthly, the lack of self-sufficiency, sixthly, non-oneness, seventhly, weakness in bringing about something, eighthly, hatred towards what has been created, indicating that Allah does not desire to create it, ninthly, foolishness regarding something, tenthly, death, eleventhly, deafness, twelfthly, blindness,

¹⁴ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, *Naskah Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Sulul al-Maslak al-Mufridin*. Hal. 3-4

¹⁵ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, *Naskah Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Sulul al-Maslak al-Mufridin*. Hal. 4-5

thirteenthly, incapability, fourteenthly, weakness in bringing about something, fifteenthly, hatred towards what has been created, sixteenthly, foolishness regarding something, seventeenthly, death, eighteenthly, deafness, nineteenthly, blindness, and twentiethly, incapability. These aforementioned attributes are considered impossible for Allah. On the other hand, permissible attributes, those that are necessary for Allah, pertain to the ability to perform what is possible or abstain from it. This implies that it is necessary for Him to do it or to refrain from it. Thus, it is not mandatory for Allah to engage in these acts or to desist from them.¹⁶

Furthermore, the discussion pertaining to the obligatory and impossible attributes of the Prophet entails three necessary attributes for all messengers of Allah. Firstly, it is of utmost importance that they adhere to truthfulness (*siddiq*). Secondly, they must be trustworthy (*amanah*). Lastly, they must effectively communicate the message (*tabligh*), which entails the conveying of all matters that they were commanded to convey to all creatures, declaring that these are the necessary attributes of their Lord. It is deemed impossible for them to lie, to be treacherous, or to conceal anything. They must not engage in anything that may reduce their high status, such as becoming ill or other similar matters. They must refrain from any acts that diminish their high status, such as consuming the zakat funds or composing poetry, and so on. As a result, they are not obligated to engage in such actions..."¹⁷

The second chapter of the book explains the concept of "zikir", which is divided into two types: "zikir hasanat" and "zikir darajat". The former refers to the act of earning rewards without the need for any specific etiquette, while the latter requires certain etiquette, the number of which varies among different scholars. This chapter also discusses the etiquette and "kaifiyah" (methodology) of "zikir", including the "zikir sirr" (secret) and "zikir jahr" (loud) methods. Moving on to the third chapter, it discusses the hadiths that highlight the virtues and merits of reciting the phrase "La Ilaha Illa Allah" (there is no god but Allah). In discussing the significance of this phrase, the author mentions the hadith text but does not provide the names of the narrators or adequate transmission reports.

The fourth chapter delves into the effects of reciting "La Ilaha Illa Allah" and how it influences the souls of those who are immersed in the concept of "tauhid" (the oneness of Allah). Sheikh Abdurrauf explains eleven benefits of reciting this phrase, including detachment from worldly possessions, reliance on Allah, modesty, self-sufficiency, humility, generosity, chivalry, gratitude, blessings, ease of acquiring wealth, and understanding the true meaning of what is halal and haram. These benefits can only be achieved through sincere devotion and the sole aim of pleasing Allah. Continuing with the topic of "La Ilaha Illa Allah", the fifth chapter explores the origin of the practice of teaching this phrase from a Sheikh to his disciple, as well as an explanation of the methodology and the "bai'at talqin" (oath of allegiance). It is clear from this chapter that in

¹⁶ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, *Naskah Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Sulul al-Maslak al-Mufridin*. Hal. 5

¹⁷ Abdurrauf al-Singkili, *Naskah Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Sulul al-Maslak al-Mufridin*. Hal. 5-6

the realm of spirituality, the spiritual relationship between a teacher and his disciple is of great importance.

Chapter six describes the practices that must be followed by a "salik" (one who walks on the path of Allah), such as performing "shalat sunat" (optional prayers) and "wirid" (reciting a certain phrase or verses). Finally, the seventh chapter explains the qualities and characteristics of a person who is dedicated to the path of Allah (*salik*), which include the attainment of spiritual perfection and the radiance of spiritual values due to their closeness to Allah. In conclusion, this book, *Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk al-Maslak al-Mufridin*, provides guidance for those seeking the path of Allah, beginning with the correct understanding of "tauhid" and leading to the development of a character of spiritual perfection due to their closeness to Allah.

2. The Pattern of Theological Thought in the Book *Umdatul Muhtajin ila Suluki Maslak al-Mufridin*

In Islamic theology studies, the theological thought pattern of a particular figure can be identified from the theological issues they present. By examining the discourse presented by Al-Singkili in the book "*Umdatul Muhtajin ila Suluki Maslak al-Mufridin*," it can be seen that one of the theological issues raised is about the attributes of Allah. The discussion on the issue of Allah's attributes is actually recorded in the first chapter of this book. Abdurrauf al-Singkili states that every Muslim who has reached the age of maturity is obliged to know Allah by understanding His attributes, whether they are obligatory, impossible, or required for Allah. Additionally, every Muslim should also be aware of the attributes of the messengers of Allah, whether they are obligatory, impossible, or required for the prophets. In Abdurrauf's view, recognizing the attributes of Allah is a prerequisite to reaching the path of knowing Allah.

The path to Allah begins with acknowledging *Haq Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*, which means attributing Allah to the attribute of oneness through the affirmation of "la ilaha illa Allah." From here, human beings can come to know Allah (*ma'rifatullah*) by recognizing the obligatory, impossible, and required attributes of Allah, as well as believing in the obligatory, impossible, and required attributes of the prophets. All of these are summed up in the statement "la ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasullullah."¹⁸ Below is an excerpt from the book "*Umdatul Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufridin*" about the twenty obligatory attributes of Allah:

¹⁸ Abdurrauf Al-Singkili, '*Umdatul Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufridin*, ttp. tth. Hal. 3.

ستقم در قدس سلل صفة بق واجب يك حق تعالى ايت رو فوله صفة فتم
وجود اريت ادكف و قد يم اريت سيد ي كليل بقا اريت كليل
لامفة مخالفة تعالى للحوادث اريت يرسله ان اي دغنى سليل بق بهاس
كليم قيام تعالى بنفسه اريت يردير اي دغنى سند اريت كاتم واحد
واحدانية اريت اسى كتوجه قد تم اريت كواس ككف و لا عفت
ارادة اريت بر كهندي كك مكلن عم اريت تاه كسفوله حا حياة ار
اريت هيدق كعبلى سمع اريت منفر كك و بلى بصر اريت طيهت
ككك يلمى للام اريت بر كانه لامفة با ر قادس اريت بق كواسى

In the context of Islamic theology, a significant debate surrounds the question of whether God possesses attributes, which are understood as having an existence separate from the essence, or substance, of God.¹⁹ While some maintain that such attributes exist, as is the case with the Ash'ari sect, they do not posit that attributes exist outside of the essence itself. In contrast, other schools of thought, such as the Mu'tazilah sect, reject the notion of attributes for Allah entirely. Central to the teachings of the Ash'ari sect, also known as the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, is the discussion of Allah's attributes, which they hold to be a defining characteristic. According to this sect, Allah possesses both essence and attributes. Allah's essence is understood to be One, in the sense that it is indivisible and not composed of parts or elements. Moreover, no entity is deemed to be equivalent to Allah's essence, and therefore, no individual can claim to fully comprehend or know Allah's essence.²⁰ Furthermore, Allah's attributes are regarded as evidence of His perfection, and are considered to be obligatory attributes that number twenty, while the impossible attributes attributed to Allah are also twenty, and the necessary attribute is one.

It is imperative to emphasize that the notion of Allah's attributes, which transcend human understanding, was not formulated by either Imam al-Asy'ari or Imam al-Maturidi, but rather by subsequent scholars of monotheism. Imam al-Asy'ari affirmed that Allah has attributes that can be recognized through His actions, and the existence of these attributes cannot be denied. It is evident from His actions that Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, and All-Willing. In the same vein, these actions reveal that Allah possesses knowledge, power, and will.²¹ According to the belief of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, the attributes of Allah do not constitute His essence, nor are they separate from it. Consequently, Allah's attributes are inextricably intertwined with His essence under all circumstances. Allah knows through the attribute of Knowledge, wills through the attribute of Will, and so on, as opposed to the Mu'tazilites' belief that Allah knows, wills, and acts through His essence.

Conversely, the Mu'tazilites staunchly repudiate the idea of Allah having attributes, as they deem that belief in Allah's attributes would result in the existence of multiple

¹⁹ Harun Nasution, *Muhammad Abduh dan Teologi Rasional Mu'tazilah*, (Jakarta: UI –Press, 1987) Hal. 71

²⁰ Ahmad Daudy, *Kuliah Ilmu Kalam*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1997), hal. 120

²¹ Al-Syahrastani, *Al-Milal Wa al-Nihal*, (Kairo; Maktabah Taufiqiyah, t.t), hal. 107.

eternal beings (ta'adud al-qudama'), thereby compromising the purity of monotheism. The Mu'tazilites contend that Allah does not possess attributes and argue that the belief in Allah's attributes would contradict the divine majesty. They reject all notions that lead to polytheism. If it is posited that Allah has attributes, then there exist several elements within Allah, namely, His essence and the attributes that adhere to it.²² If it is maintained that Allah has twenty attributes, then Allah will be composed of 21 elements. This would engender the existence of multiple eternal beings, whereas the theological postulate is that only one eternal being exists.

In everyday life, belief in the attributes of Allah can guide human beings to emulate His attributes in accordance with their position as creatures. The most commendable human beings are those whose qualities and behavior reflect the attributes of Allah. By endeavoring to emulate Allah's attribute of al-Rahman, a believer can spread love and compassion to all creatures around them. By emulating Allah's attribute of al-Rahim, a believer can show kindness to fellow believers while believing that there is no happiness except in attaining Allah's mercy on the Day of Judgment.²³ The explanation of ma'rifatullah through the introduction of Allah's attributes is sufficient to indicate that the theological framework presented in Abdurrauf al-Singkili's *Umdatul Muhtajin* adheres to the al-Asy'ariyah or Ahlussunnah wa al-Jama'ah school of thought. This is because the mainstream understanding of Allah's attributes is not the dominant characteristic that distinguishes it from other theological schools, especially the Muktaizilah and Qadariyah.

3. The Influence of Umdat Al-Muhtajin Book on the Understanding of Tawheed in Aceh Society

As denoted by its title, *Umdatul Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslaj al-Mufridin*, which translates to *The Guide for Individuals on the Path to Allah*, it is apparent that Abdurrauf endeavored to construct a manuscript that would serve as a guiding light for readers to become acquainted with Allah and His messenger. This literary work was penned amidst a period of religious turmoil in Aceh, which pitted the wujudi Sufi against the fiqh-oriented scholars. It was in this context that Abdurrauf authored a manuscript entitled '*Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin*, a Sufi work expounding upon the process of spiritual journey for individuals seeking to attain gnosis of Allah. However, the present study's focus lies in analyzing the theological underpinnings of this manuscript, particularly with regard to the knowledge of Allah and His twenty attributes. Such efforts are significant in that they provide guidance on monotheism to the society of that era.

The influence of the book '*Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin* was concurrent with the influence of the figure of Sheikh Abdurrauf in the history of the Aceh kingdom. As we are aware, he served for a relatively long period as the qadhi Malikul Adil (mufti) from the reign of Sultanah Tajul Alam Safiatuddin Syah to the reign of Kamalat

²² Richard C. Martin, Marx Woodward dan Dwi S. Atmaja, *Post Muktaizilah: Genealogi Konflik Rasionalisme dan Tradisionalisme Islam*, (Yogyakarta: IRCiSoD, 2002), hal. 332.

²³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Kumpulan 101 Kultum Islam*, (Tangerang: PT. Lentera Hati, 2016), hal. 89.

Syah.²⁴ However, whether the influence of this book can still be significantly felt today is a matter of difficulty for researchers to ascertain. This is at least due to two main reasons: first, the practice of tauhid (Islamic monotheism) is an abstract concept that is difficult to identify clearly. Second, there are many other works of scholars that have also contributed to the construction of tauhid in Acehnese society, which has undergone a long historical journey. Nevertheless, several facts have been discovered in the research conducted regarding the existence of the Acehnese society's understanding of tauhid, especially in the regions of Aceh Besar and Banda Aceh. Generally, the cultivation of aqidah (Islamic creed) among the community is conducted through informal and formal religious teachings. The prevailing pattern of aqidah that has been taught and believed generally is the Asy'ariyah school of thought.

The author contend that the primary source of Islamic theology (tauhid) education for the Acehnese community is derived from traditional Islamic boarding schools known as "dayah" or "pesantren." However, several interviews conducted revealed that not all Islamic scholars (tengku) who teach in these institutions are familiar with the book *Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin*, although a few of them do have knowledge of it. As Teungku Bakhtiar pointed out, this book is highly comprehensive, well-written, and fascinating, indicating that its author possessed an extensive knowledge of Islamic theology. Thus, it is appropriate for the Acehnese people to study this book, but its scarcity makes it difficult to access. Therefore, the lack of availability of the book in the community is the primary reason for its limited use.

It is noteworthy that *Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin* is not taught specifically in Acehnese dayah since, in general, these institutions focus only on Arabic-language books. Tengku H. Tamlikha explained that the content of *Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin* is a synopsis of Arabic-language Islamic theology books that are taught in dayah. Consequently, even though the book is not studied directly, its content is understood through Arabic-language Islamic theology books. Since the content is almost identical and the author of *Umdat Al-Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak Al-Mufridin* derived it from commonly studied Arabic-language books, this explains why the teachings in dayah are based on several Arabic-language books such as *Umm al Barahin* (also known as *al-Durrah*) by Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yusuf Al-Sanusi (d. 895/1490), *Hasyiyah atas al-Sanusi* by Muhammad al-Dasuqi (d. 1230/1815), and *Kifayatul Al'Awamm* by Muhammad bin Muhammad al-Fadhali (d. 1236/1821).

During the research, it was discovered that there is a clear similarity between the content of *Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Suluki Maslak al-Mufridin* and the Meurokon tradition that developed within the Acehnese community. The researcher speculates that the texts recited during the Meurokon tradition were taken from the book *Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Suluki Maslak al-Mufridin* written by Sheikh Abd al-Rauf al-Singkili. The discussion on the nature of Allah is nearly identical; the only difference lies in the language used. While *Umdat al-Muhtajin Ila Suluki Maslak al-Mufridin* uses Malay, the Meurokon text is recited

²⁴ Mohd Syukri Yeoh Abdullah dkk, *Mesej Umdat al-Muhtajin ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufridin: Panduan Individu Menuju ke Jalan Allah*, (Selangor: One Touch Creative Sdn.Bhd. 2009), hal. 46.

in Acehnese with a particular rhythm. This tradition may have been the medium for conveying Sheikh Abdurrauf's messages on Islamic theology to the Acehnese community.

C. Conclusion

The book 'Umdatul Muhtajin Ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufridin' is a work of Sheikh Abdurrauf, a prominent scholar of Islamic knowledge in Aceh. The book was written specifically as a guide for believers to gain a correct understanding of Tawheed (the Oneness of God). The book adopts a theological approach that is aligned with Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah, a school of thought attributed to the theological ideas of Abu Hasan al-Asy'ari, which is commonly accepted by scholars of Tawheed in Nusantara. An indication that the book has a Sunni character is its discussion of Tawheed through the introduction of the attributes of Allah and His Prophet as the first step in believing in the Kalimah la ilaha illa Allahu, Muhammad Rasulullah.

In its history, this book has had a significant influence on the understanding of Tawheed among the people of Aceh, particularly during a period of conflict between the Wujudiah school of thought and the Fiqh scholars in Aceh. Sheikh Abdurrauf's work served as a guide in establishing a firm theological foundation. However, this book is no longer considered a reference in the Islamic boarding schools (dayahs) for at least two reasons. Firstly, the book is written in Malay, whereas the focus in dayahs is more on Arabic language books. Secondly, the scarcity of the book in the community makes it a rare manuscript. Additionally, it is suspected that the book's substance has been adapted from other Arabic books that have been taught in dayahs. This fact may serve as a basis for reconsidering the importance of local scholars' writings, such as Sheikh Abdurrauf's, to reignite local intellectual enthusiasm. Nevertheless, it has been found that the book's Tawheed content is similar to the traditional text that has been passed down through generations in the community of Aceh Besar. Perhaps, it is through this tradition that Sheikh Abdurrauf's message on Tawheed has been conveyed to the community until now.

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