

The Reconstruction of Social Tawheed in the Thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi: A Philosophical Study for the Strengthening of the Social Life of the Contemporary Ummah

Naffa Azima¹ Syamruddin Nasution,² Muhammad Hanif³

¹⁻² State Islamic University Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau

³State Islamic University Imam Bonjol Padang

naffaazima73@gmail.com, syamruddin.nst@uin-suska.ac.id,
muhammadhanif@uinib-ac.id,

Abstract:

This article discusses the concept of social tawhid in the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi as the foundation for building an Islamic society based on divine values, justice, brotherhood, and social responsibility. In Al-Faruqi's perspective, tawhid is not merely understood as a theological belief in the oneness of God, but also as a principle that regulates all aspects of human life, including social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions. This study employs a library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach through the examination of Al-Faruqi's works and relevant literature. The findings reveal that Al-Faruqi's concept of social tawhid emphasizes the integration of faith and social action in creating a harmonious and just society. Furthermore, social tawhid serves as a critique of secularism and the dualism of knowledge that separates religion from social life. Therefore, this concept remains relevant as a foundation of contemporary Islamic thought in addressing the challenges of modernity and moral crises in society.

Keywords: Social Tawheed, Islamic Thought, Strengthening Social Life, Contemporary Ummah, Integration of Knowledge.

1. Introduction

The development of modernity and globalization has brought great changes in people's lives, especially in the social, cultural, and religious fields. On the one hand, the advancement of science and technology provides convenience for humans, but on the other hand, it also raises various problems, such as individualism, materialism, moral crises, and the weakening of spiritual values in social life.¹ This phenomenon causes religion to often be understood only as a personal affair and is no longer used as a basis for building people's lives. This condition encourages the emergence of various contemporary Islamic ideas that seek to restore the role of religion in social life. One of the figures who paid attention to this problem was Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. According to Al-Faruqi, monotheism is not only related to belief in Allah, but also a basic principle in building a just, harmonious, and moral social life.²

¹Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man* (Chicago: ABC International Group, 2001), 15.

² Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), 13.

Tawheed must be manifested in the form of social responsibility, brotherhood, and justice in people's lives.

In addition, Al-Faruqi also criticized Western secularism that separates religion from science and social life.³ This separation is considered one of the causes of the moral crisis in modern society. Therefore, the concept of social monotheism offered by Al-Faruqi is relevant to be studied as an effort to bring back spiritual values in the social life of modern society.⁴

Tawheed has direct implications for the universal concept of human equality. Tawheed in the framework of al-Faruqi also gave birth to the principle of human freedom, namely liberation from all forms of slavery other than Allah, including ideological domination and unjust power.⁵ This principle also has political and cultural implications, namely the need to build a social system that upholds distributive justice, respect for human dignity, and the elimination of exploitative social structures.⁶

In addition, monotheism also functions as an integrative principle that unites various fields such as education, science, and social systems. Al-Faruqi rejects the existence of a dichotomy between religious science and world science, because everything comes from one unit, namely monotheism. Thus, monotheism is the foundation for building a holistic life system that is relevant to modern challenges.⁷

The purpose of the research on the concept of monotheism in the thought of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi is to analyze how monotheism is understood as a basic principle in the view of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, which is not only theological, but also has epistemological and social implications in human life. This research also aims to examine the role of monotheism as the foundation for the integration of science, so that it can unite aspects of religion and modern science in one complete and holistic framework. In addition, this research seeks to explain how the concept of monotheism is used as a basis for building an Islamic education system and civilization that is relevant to the challenges of the times.

The concept of social monotheism in the thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi not only functions as a theological concept but also as a social paradigm that integrates spiritual values with people's lives. According to Al-Faruqi, Tawheed is the main basis for building a social system that is just, ethical, and humanitarian-oriented.⁸ This study hypothesizes that moral and social crises in modern society are caused by the separation of religion from social life as well as the dominance of secular paradigms in science. Therefore, the concept of social monotheism, as al-Faruqi suggests, can be an alternative solution in building a harmonious

³ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Herndon: IIIT, 1982), 7.

⁴ Azyumardi Azra, *Islamic Education: Tradition and Modernization Towards the New Millennium* (Jakarta: Logos, 1999), 56.

⁵ Al-Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), p.63-70

⁶ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *op.cit.*, p. 15.

⁷ Isna Sofia,dkk."*Tauhid, Islamization of Science, and Curriculum Perspective Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi*," *Midaduna: Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2024), p. 30–38,

⁸ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, 35.

community life through the integration of faith, knowledge, and social action.⁹ In addition, this study also assumes that the application of social monotheistic values can strengthen social solidarity, moral responsibility, and human spiritual awareness in modern life.¹⁰

2. Literature Review

2.1 Research on the Concept of Tawheed Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi

Studies on the thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi have been carried out by many academics, especially related to the concept of monotheism and the Islamization of science. Al-Faruqi views monotheism as the main core of Islamic teachings that are the basis of all human life activities.¹¹ Tawhid is understood not only as a recognition of the oneness of God theologically, but also as a principle that governs man's relationship with God, man with his neighbor, and man with the universe. According to Al-Faruqi, all aspects of life must be based on the values of monotheism to create a balance between spirituality and social life.¹²

In Al-Faruqi's thought, monotheism has a very broad dimension of civilization. He emphasized that the crisis of modern Muslims occurred because of the loss of the spirit of monotheism in social and educational life.¹³ The modern education system is considered to be too influenced by the secular Western paradigm that separates science from religion. As a result, science develops without moral and spiritual values, giving birth to various social and humanitarian problems. Therefore, Al-Faruqi offers the concept of Islamization of science as an effort to integrate modern science with Islamic values.¹⁴

Ahmad Fauzi's research explained that the concept of Islamization of science by Al-Faruqi aims to build an Islamic education system that unites religious science and general science.¹⁵ According to the study, monotheism is the main principle in the process of integrating knowledge because all knowledge essentially comes from Allah. Thus, science should not be separated from human ethics and social responsibility. Rosnani Hashim explained that the concept of monotheism, as Al-Faruqi has argued, has a close relationship with the development of modern Islamic civilization. Tawhid is understood as a principle of unity that includes the unity of God, the unity of truth, the unity of science, and the unity of humanity. This thought is also a criticism of Western secularism that separates religion from social life. According to Al-Faruqi, secularism has caused humans to lose their spiritual direction and human values in modern life.¹⁶

⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), 41.

¹⁰ Azyumardi Azra, *Islamic Education: Tradition and Modernization Towards the New Millennium* (Jakarta: Logos, 1999), 56.

¹¹ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992), 15.

¹² Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan* (Herndon: IIIT, 1982), 9.

¹³ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *op. cit.*, 21.

¹⁴ Rosnani Hashim, "Islamization of Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of the Conceptions of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi," *Intellectual Discourse* 13, no. 2 (2005): 119.

¹⁵ Ahmad Fauzi, "The Concept of Islamization of Science by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi," *Ushuluddin Journal* 25, no. 1 (2017): 45.

¹⁶ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993), 41.

2.2 Research on Social Tawheed and Community Life

The concept of social monotheism in the thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi emphasizes that monotheism is not enough to be understood as a mere theological belief, but must be realized in the social life of the community.¹⁷ Tawheed must give birth to an attitude of justice, brotherhood, social responsibility, and respect for human values. Abdul Khobir's research explains that Al-Faruqi's thinking is still relevant to be applied in modern life, especially in the fields of education and society.¹⁸

According to him, the concept of monotheism can be a solution to moral crises and the weakening of spiritual values in modern society. Social monotheism teaches that humans have a responsibility not only to Allah, but also to fellow humans. Meanwhile, Adian Husaini explained that monotheism in Islam has a very broad social dimension.¹⁹ Tawheed is the basis for building a just and harmonious life system. Therefore, the concept of social monotheism, as Al-Faruqi explains, is relevant to answer various modern problems such as secularism, individualism, and the moral degradation of society.

3. Methods

This research uses a type of library research, which is research conducted by collecting data from various written sources such as books, journals, scientific articles, and works related to the thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi. This research aims to examine the concept of social monotheism in Al-Faruqi's thought and its relevance to the life of modern society. The approach used in this study is descriptive-analytical. The descriptive approach is used to explain the concept of social monotheism according to Al-Faruqi systematically, while the analytical approach is used to understand the meaning and relevance of these thoughts in the social life of the community. With this approach, the research not only describes Al-Faruqi's thought but also analyzes the social values contained in the concept of monotheism.

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from the works of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, especially the books *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* and *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from books, scientific journals, articles, and previous research that discusses al-Faruqi's thought, social monotheism, and contemporary Islamic thought. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies, namely by collecting various literature relevant to the research theme. The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using content analysis techniques to understand the content of Al-Faruqi's thoughts on social monotheism. Through this technique, researchers identify, classify, and interpret data so that a deeper understanding of the concept of social monotheism in modern society is obtained.

¹⁷ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, 27.

¹⁸ Abdul Khobir, "The Relevance of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi's Thought to Contemporary Islamic Education," *Journal of Islamic Thought* 39, no. 1 (2020): 72.

¹⁹ Adian Husaini, *Philosophy of Western and Islamic Perspectives* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013), 214.

4. Results

4.1 The Concept of Tauhid in the Thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi

According to Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, monotheism is the main core of Islamic teachings that is the basis of all aspects of human life.²⁰ Tawhid is not only understood as a belief in the oneness of Allah, but also as a principle that governs the relationship between man and God, man and others, and man and the universe.²¹ Therefore, monotheism has a spiritual as well as a social dimension. Al-Faruqi explained that monotheism is the basis of Islamic civilization because all human activities must be based on divine values.²² In this concept, humans should not separate religion from social life, education, or science. Tawhid is the basis of unity, which includes the unity of knowledge, morals, and humanity.²³ Thus, the concept of monotheism, according to al-Faruqi, is comprehensive and covers all dimensions of human life.

4.2 Social Tauhid and Community Life

The concept of social monotheism in the thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi emphasizes that monotheism must be manifested in the social life of the community.²⁴ Tawhid is not only an individual belief, but also gives birth to social attitudes such as justice, brotherhood, equality, and social responsibility.²⁵ According to Al-Faruqi, the ideal Islamic society is a society that is built on the value of monotheism, so that a harmonious and moral life is created.²⁶ Social monotheism teaches that all human beings have an equal position before Allah regardless of race, ethnicity, or social status.²⁷ Therefore, the concept of social monotheism is the basis for building social solidarity and a just community life.

In addition, social monotheism also emphasizes the importance of the relationship between faith and social action. It is not enough for a person to have faith in Allah, but also to show the value of monotheism through good social behavior towards fellow human beings. Thus, monotheism has a moral and social function in the life of modern society.

4.3 Al-Faruqi's Criticism of Secularism

Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi criticized Western secularism that separates religion from social life and science. According to him, secularism causes a loss of spiritual value in human life, giving birth to moral crises, individualism, and materialism. Al-Faruqi also assessed that the dualism of education between religious science and general science is one of the causes of

²⁰ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herndon: IIIT, 1992), 15.

²¹ Ahmad Fauzi, "The Concept of Islamization of Science by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi," *Ushuluddin Journal* 25, no. 1 (2017): 45.

²² Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, 21.

²³ Rosnani Hashim, "Islamization of Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of the Conceptions of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi," *Intellectual Discourse* 13, no. 2 (2005): 119.

²⁴ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, 27.

²⁵ Adian Husaini, *Philosophy of Western and Islamic Perspectives* (Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013), 214.

²⁶ Abdul Khobir, "The Relevance of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi's Thought to Contemporary Islamic Education," *Journal of Islamic Thought* 39, no. 1 (2020): 72.

²⁷ M. Zainuddin, "Islamization of Science from the Perspective of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi," *Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2018): 167.

the decline of Muslims. Modern science develops without a moral and spiritual foundation, so that humans lose their direction in using this knowledge.²⁸ Therefore, Al-Faruqi offers the concept of Islamization of science as a solution to integrate science with monotheistic values.

Through this concept, Al-Faruqi wants to restore the function of religion as the basis in social and educational life. Thus, science is not only oriented towards material progress, but also towards the value of humanity and spirituality.

4.4 The Relevance of Social Tawheed in the Modern Era

The concept of social monotheism of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi has great relevance in the life of modern society today. In the midst of the development of modernization and globalization, society faces various problems such as moral crises, individualism, and weakening social values. In these conditions, social monotheism can be a solution to rebuild spiritual awareness and human social responsibility. Social monotheistic values such as justice, brotherhood, and social solidarity are very important to be applied in modern life.²⁹ Social monotheism teaches that humans are not only responsible to Allah, but also to fellow humans and the surrounding environment.³⁰ Thus, this concept is relevant in building a harmonious, just, and moral life of society.

In addition, the concept of social monotheism also contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic thought.³¹ Tawheed is no longer understood only as a theological concept, but also as a social paradigm that can answer the challenges of modernity and secularism.³² Therefore, Al-Faruqi's thoughts are still relevant to be used as a foundation in building modern Islamic civilization.

5. Discussion

Based on the results of the research, it can be understood that the concept of social monotheism in the thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi has a broad meaning and is not limited only to theological aspects.³³ According to Al-Faruqi, Tawheed is a basic principle that regulates all dimensions of human life, both in relation to Allah and social relations between fellow humans.³⁴ Thus, monotheism is not only understood as a spiritual belief, but also the basis for the formation of morals, ethics, and social life of the community. In this discussion, it was found that Al-Faruqi tried to connect religious values with modern social reality. According to him, the moral crisis, individualism, and secularism that developed in modern society occurred because humans separated religion from social life and science. As a result, the development of science and technology no longer has a strong moral and spiritual

²⁸ M. Zainuddin, "Islamization of Science from the Perspective of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi," 170.

²⁹ Adian Husaini, *Philosophy of Science, Western and Islamic Perspectives*, 218.

³⁰ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life*, 35.

³¹ Ahmad Fauzi, "The Concept of Islamization of Science by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi," 50.

³² Rosnani Hashim, "Islamization of Knowledge," 124.

³³ Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, *Al Tawhid: Its Implications for Thought and Life* (Herndon: IIIT, 1992), 15.

³⁴ Rosnani Hashim, "Islamization of Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of the Conceptions of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi," *Intellectual Discourse* 13, no. 2 (2005): 119.

foundation. Therefore, al-Faruqi offers the concept of social monotheism as a solution to reintegrate religious values with people's lives.

Al-Faruqi's concept of social monotheism also emphasizes the importance of the values of justice, equality, and social responsibility. Tawheed must be manifested in human social behavior through mutual respect, helping others, and maintaining community harmony.³⁵ In Al-Faruqi's view, the ideal Islamic society is a society that is built on the value of monotheism, so that a just and moral life is created. In addition, Al-Faruqi criticized the dualism of education that separates religious science and general science. According to him, the separation caused Muslims to experience intellectual decline and loss of spiritual identity.³⁶ Therefore, Al-Faruqi offers the Islamization of science as an effort to restore knowledge to the values of monotheism. With this concept, science not only aims to achieve material progress but also to form ethical and socially responsible human beings.

The relevance of Ismail Raji al-Faruqi's thought is still very visible in modern life today. In the midst of the development of globalization and modernization, society faces various problems such as moral crisis, materialism, and weakening of social solidarity.³⁷ In these conditions, the concept of social monotheism can be the basis for rebuilding spiritual awareness and human values in the life of modern society. Thus, this discussion shows that the concept of social monotheism, as al-Faruqi argues, is not only relevant in the religious field, but also has a great contribution in the social, educational, and contemporary Islamic civilization.³⁸ Tawheed is a paradigm that unites faith, science, and social life so that it can create a harmonious and just society.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the concept of social monotheism in the thought of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi is not only interpreted as a belief in the oneness of Allah, but also as a basic principle in all aspects of human life. According to Al-Faruqi, Tawheed has a social dimension that emphasizes the values of justice, brotherhood, equality, and social responsibility in people's lives. Thus, monotheism is not only spiritual but also the basis for the formation of a harmonious and moral social life.

In addition, Al-Faruqi criticized secularism and the dualism of science that separated religion from social and educational life. According to him, the separation caused a moral crisis and a loss of spiritual values in modern society. Therefore, Al-Faruqi offers the concept of Islamization of science as an effort to integrate science with the values of monotheism. The concept of social monotheism, as al-Faruqi also has great relevance in modern life today.

Social monotheistic values can be a solution to various modern problems, such as individualism, materialism, and the weakening of social solidarity. Thus, Al-Faruqi's thought made an important contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic thought,

³⁵ Abdul Khobir, "The Relevance of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi's Thought to Contemporary Islamic Education," *Journal of Islamic Thought* 39, no. 1 (2020): 72.

³⁶ Ahmad Fauzi, "The Concept of Islamization of Science by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi," 48.

³⁷ Adian Husaini, *Philosophy of Science, Western and Islamic Perspectives*, 218.

³⁸ Rosnani Hashim, "Islamization of Knowledge," 124.

especially in establishing a balanced relationship between religion, science, and the social life of the community.

7. References

- Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993.
- Al-Faruqi, Ismail Raji, *al Tawheed: Its Implications for Thought and Life*. Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1992.
- Al-Faruqi, Ismail Raji. *Islamization of Knowledge: General Principles and Work Plan*. Herndon: IIIT, 1982.
- Al-Faruqi, Ismail Raji. *Islam and Culture*. Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1980.
- Azra, Azyumardi. *Islamic Education: Tradition and Modernization Towards the New Millennium*. Jakarta: Logos, 1999.
- Esposito, John L. *Islam and Politics*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998.
- Fauzi, Ahmad. "The Concept of Islamization of Science by Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi." *Journal of Ushuluddin* 25, no. 1 (2017): 44–56.
- Hashim, Rosnani. "Islamization of Knowledge: A Comparative Analysis of the Conceptions of Al-Attas and Al-Faruqi." *Intellectual Discourse* 13, no. 2 (2005): 117–132.
- Husaini, Adian. *Philosophy of Science from a Western and Islamic Perspective*. Jakarta: Gema Insani, 2013.
- Khobir, Abdul. "The Relevance of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi's Thought to Contemporary Islamic Education." *Journal of Islamic Thought* 39, no. 1 (2020): 70–79.
- Moleong, Lexy J. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2017.
- Nasr, Hossein. *Islam and the Plight of Modern Man*. Chicago: ABC International Group, 2001.
- Rahman, Fazlur. *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Sugiyono. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung: Alfabeta, 2018.
- Sukmadinata, Nana Syaodih. *Educational Research Methods*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2016.
- Zainuddin, M. "Islamization of Science from the Perspective of Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi." *Journal of Islamic Education* 4, no. 2 (2018): 165–176.
- Zed, Mestika. *Literature Research Methods*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2014.
- Madjid, Nurcholish. *Islam, Modernity and Indonesianness*. Bandung: Mizan, 2008.
- Shihab, M. Quraish, *Membumikan al-Qur'an*, Bandung: Mizan, 1996.
- Sardar, Ziauddin. *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures*. London: Pluto Press, 2003.
- Wan Daud, Wan Mohd Nor. *The Educational Philosophy and Practice of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas*. Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1998.