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## Tauhid as a solution to economic injustice: Review of Ali Syariati's thoughts

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### Abstract

Ali Syariati is a modern century Islamic figure who inspires the Islamic world with various ideas and ideas. Syariati important thinking about *tauhid* as a solution to exploitation and economic injustice. This study will discuss tawhid as a solution to exploitation and injustice in the economy. The approach used in this research is philosophical. The data were analyzed with analysis content. The results of the study showed that Ali Syariati invites every human being to eradicate all forms of exploitation and injustice through the concept of *tauhid* as the foundation of one's faith and the spirit of submission only to Allah Swt. With *tauhid* everyone will understand that economic activities carried out must be based on the values of Islamic teachings. There is no zeal to cheat or take away the rights of others or control resources for personal gain as in the symbol of the Qabil group. Syariati makes Qabil a symbol that makes wealth a destination and makes it lawful for all means to control it. While Habil is a symbol of ideal goals in economic practice, a noble group before Allah Swt.

**Keywords:** tauhid, exploitation, injustice, economy

### Introduction

Economic exploitation and injustice are two crucial issues that have always existed in social reality. Various social conflicts then and now are a bit much because of the impact of both problems. To solve it all the various theories, ideas, and ideas and revolutions that appear and develop in various areas of life exploitation and economic injustice remain real, even sometimes organized, politicized, and utilized by certain groups to further fertilize the various status quo in the economic field.

The presence of a group of Bourjois who employ the proletariat using exploitation, inequality, and even oppression, so that there is a monopoly is evidence that there is injustice in the economy. The logical consequence arises that weak and marginalized communities at various times are unable to access existing resources because they are controlled by and for the benefit of a handful of people. So the solution is that there must be a formula that can eliminate it all one of these formulas is Islam. Islam is present not only to convey divine messages but rather more than that to set them free.

Through *tauhid* as the core of Islamic teachings, it is known that the duty of *tauhid* is teaching that frees people from all kinds of exploitation and injustice made by man. Tauhid is the foundation of all principles of human activities related to politics, economy, society, and culture. *Tauhid* erases indocility, worry, and greed and accepts equality, and independence. Tauhid removes dzulm, which is the attitude and behavior of treating a person arbitrarily or persecuted (Zamzam & Aravik, 2016) <sup>[3, 4]</sup>.

This *tauhid* is not just the oneness of God in a narrow sense, but human unity that can only be realized by creating a society without exploitation and economic injustice. This concept is a squeeze on the spirit of Islam in creating justice and virtue (*al-'adl wa al'ahsan*).

### Discussion

#### 1. Biography of Ali Syariati

Ali Syariati was an Iranian scholar of Iran's pre-Islamic revolution and a leading critic of western civilization (Ibrahim & Lateef, 2014) <sup>[12]</sup>. Born in Mazinan, a town on the outskirts of Mashad near Sabzavar, northeastern Khorasan, Iran, on November 24, 1933. Syariati was born from a simple family and grew up with the understanding that morality and ethics are values that elevate his social status and honor, not money (Rehmana, 2000) <sup>[16]</sup>.

His father Sayyid Muhammad Taqi' Syariati was a well-known Islamic thinker and teacher in the city of Mashad, who introduced modern thinking to his students, as well as founder *Markaz Nashr al-Haqaiq al-Islamiyah* (Center for the Spread of Islamic Truths). Zahra's mother was a highly dedicated and hardworking woman who came from a landowner's family. His grandfather, Akhond Molla Qorban Ali, was the head of the religious authority in the Mizinan region (Bayat, 1990) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Syariati absorbed many of his father's radiances which were considered as reformers and knowledge who taught him various systematic and rational perception techniques and filled them with moral and political power (Bano, 2015) <sup>[6]</sup>. Ali Syariati's pride and admiration for his father brought his thoughts to the conclusion that his father was a mujadid, not a heretic who deviated from the old traditions that developed at that time (Syariati, 1996) <sup>[22]</sup>. Entering adulthood, Syariati increasingly busies himself with various activities and devotions, both social, political, and religious. In addition to intensely studying various scientific studies, Syariati is also very actively involved in various movements and organizations. In the 1940s he participated in the "God Worshiper Socialist Movement" and the "Center for the Development of Islamic Da'wah" founded by his father (Syariati, 1988) <sup>[20]</sup>.

In 1950 – 1952, at the request of his father, Syariati entered the Institute of Teacher Training (Danesyara-ye-Moqaddamati). At the Institute of Teacher Training, Syariati became interested in politics and became acquainted with young people from weaker economic groups, and for the first time saw the poverty and heavy life that existed in Iran at that time. At the same time, he became acquainted with many aspects of Western philosophical and political thought, as seen from his writings. He sought to explain and provide solutions to the problems faced by Muslim communities through traditional Islamic principles, which are intertwined and understood from the point of view of modern sociology and philosophy. Syariati was also heavily influenced by Moulana Rumi and Muhammad Iqbal.

Furthermore, in 1958, after five months of marriage to Paulan, he entered the Faculty of Persian Literature at Masyhad University, then because of his intelligence and breadth of insight, Syariati obtained a scholarship to continue his post-graduate studies at the University of Paris and obtained a doctorate in sociology and religious history in 1964. While in Paris Syariati interacted with various famous scholars and writers such as Henry Bergson, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Schwartz, attending lectures of Louis Massignon and Henri Corbin, two orientalist and experts on Islamic mysticism. Syariati also attended lectures given by Raymond Aron, Roger Grady (a French communist intellectual who wanted the dialogue between Marxism and Christianity), George Politzer (orthodox communist philosopher), and especially Georges Gurvitch. Gurvitch was a prominent figure in sociology in France at the time and the founder of the dialectical sociological sect (Mukhlis, 2009, Bano, 2015) <sup>[15, 6]</sup>.

After returning from Paris, Syariati succeeded in bringing together Iranians in Europe and America, in a forum for Front National Iran (FNI), an organization aimed at reforming Iran's government. The organization, he led, at the same time increased his notoriety and courage in dismantling the dictatorship and arbitrariness of Iran's ruling government. Because of his criticisms, Syariati then became

the target of Iranian Secret Intelligence (SAVAK) to be arrested and thrown in prison for 8 months (Bayat, 1990, Syariati, 1993) <sup>[7, 21]</sup>. In 1965 Syariati was finally released, then in the spring of 1966 Syariati began teaching at Masyhad University. At first, Syariati was given the task of teaching two courses. Syariati lectures soon became the center of attention at the university. The material, content, language, and way of giving lectures have made it popular with students. Syariati is slowly becoming a source of inspiration for many young people who are proud of Islamic culture but they get that the Islamic culture is not able to provide concrete solutions to existing socio-economic and political problems. Even Syariati also managed to attract students from the upper-middle class who before getting acquainted with him were far from Islamic.

As a result of his movement, Syariati again had to connect with the authorities, the SAVAK Agents forced the University to allow Syariati to accommodate students who joined his lectures so that SAVAK could interfere with student political activities. But the request was rejected outright by Syariati, because he thought students should not be forced to attend classes, if the lecturer could make the class interesting enough, they would flood the classroom.

The university even viewed Syariati lectures as incitement that endangered the ruling regime. After being repeatedly suspected, and spied on both from the university to SAVAK. Eventually, Syariati resigned from the university and went to Tehran, met with Muthahhari, and began teaching at the Husainiyah Irsyad Institute, a well-known institute. His first address was on the evening of October 25, 1968, with the theme *Nasl-e Now e-Masalma* (New Generation of Islam). In 1972 the government shut down Husainiyah Irsyad because it had become a breeding ground for the Mujahideen Khalq, a radical Muslim group that had launched an armed struggle against the Shah regime. After the closure of husseinieh center, Ali Syariati was arrested, and accused of having connections with the Mujahideen. He was released from prison eighteen months later (Bayat, 1990) <sup>[7]</sup>. He was released by the government on 20 March 1975 on special terms stating that he should not teach, publish, or hold meetings, either publicly or privately. The state security apparatus, SAVAK, also observes its every move closely.

Syariati rejected these conditions and decided to leave his country and go to England. On 19 June 1977 in Southampton, England Syariati was found dead face down on the floor. A report by health officials released on June 21, 1977, identified that Ali Syariati died of heart failure. Syariati's body was flown to Damascus and buried near the grave of Zainab, Imam Hussain's sister on June 26, 1977 (Rehmana, 2000) <sup>[16]</sup>.

### The Concept of Tauhid Ali Syariati

*Tauhid* is an Islamic-Arabic term that often translates English as "monotheism"; belief in one God as opposed to dualism, Polytheism, or Atheism (Badawi, 1991) <sup>[5]</sup>. *Tauhid* is a system of life view that affirms one unity and singular merges in various aspects of life and life of all that exists, derived and derived from one God alone, which becomes the basis of the unity of his creation in various forms, types, and lives. In general, *tauhid* is understood as an expression of the belief of a Muslim over the oneness of God. The term *tauhid* is constructed from the word *wahada* which etymologically means one (ESA) basis

of the belief that animates man and all his activities (Aravik & Zamzam, 2020).

And the man said, "There is no God but Allah," and that there is no owner of the heavens and the earth and what is in them except Allah. Al-Baqarah [2]: 107) because God is the creator of the universe and its contents (Q.S. Al-An'am [6]: 2) and at the same time its owner, including the human owner and all the resources. Everything in this universe belongs to Allah Swt. Man is only a caliph who holds the mandate of Allah Swt. to use his property (H. Aravik, 2016) [3, 4]. The fact of *tauhid* is a unanimous surrender to the divine will, both concerning worship and *muamalah*, to create a pattern of life by the will of God. *Tauhid* becomes the basis of all concepts and activities of Muslims, both economic, political, social, and cultural (Aravik & Zamzam, 2020).

The concept of *tauhid* in the perspective of Ali Syariati is known as *tauhid al-wujud* scientifically and analytically. In it, *tauhid* is defined not only as theology but as a worldview. Syariati does not dissect the concept of *tauhid* with a theological, mystical, or philosophical approach, but reflects *tauhid* in terms of worldview and ideology. The ontological basis of *Tauhid Wujud* as a worldview is to view the universe as a whole, not divided into the present world and the hereafter, over the natural and the supernatural, or body and soul. *Tauhid al-wujud* sees the whole existence as a single form, a single organism that has consciousness, creation, taste, and intention (Sabara, 2016) [17].

According to Syariati, the worldview of *tauhid* indicates directly that life is a singular form. Life is unity in the trinity of three hypotheses, namely God, man, and nature. *Tauhid* states that nature is a totality of harmony creation. This, of course, differs fundamentally from the worldview that divides the reality of the world into two categories of binerian-dichotomized; material-non-material, physical-ruhani, Khalq-beings, physical-supernatural nature, as well as individual-society (Sabara, 2016) [17]. *Tauhid* is not merely a recognition that God is One, nothing more than one. *Tauhid* is a view of the empire, not a feudalistic view.

Instead, *syirik* is a view of life that sees the universe as a chaotic group, prone to contradictions and heterogeneity. In it, there is a curse that has nothing to do with each other and even conflicts and tends to conflict. As Ali Syariati described in his essay on Hajj, which emphasizes *tauhid* in scripture and practice. Through his writings, Ali Syariati tries to separate himself from those who view Islam as an abstract set of values. Through the hajj, a Muslim tries to get out of himself towards unification with God and the universe, and a Muslim experiences death, at the time of *miqat* and resurrection to continue his mission in the sand between *miqat* and *mi'ad* (Syariati, 2002) [23].

The worldview of *tauhid* demands that man fear only one power, namely the power of God, other than He is a power that is not absolute false aliases. *Tauhid* guarantees human freedom and glorifies Him alone. This view moves man against all the forces of domination, fetters, and human dissension over man. Because *tauhid* implies one's responsibility before God and belief in resurrection and eternal life, which depends on one's actions while on earth (Badawi, 1991) [5]. *Tauhid* has the essence of an idea that works for justice, solidarity, and liberation in various areas of life, both economic, social, cultural politics, and so on. The logical implication of *tauhid's* worldview is that it

accepts the conditions of a society full of contradictions and social discrimination, as well as accepting the municipality in the community as shirk (Sabara, 2016) [17]. Of course, it must be fought and eliminated, because it is contrary to the truth and *tauhid* as the source. Moreover, Islam prohibits doing *dzalim* in all matters, including the practice of transactions in economic activities persecuted (Zamzam & Aravik, 2016) [3, 4].

For Syariati, *tauhid* stated that nature is a totality of harmony creation. The responsibility of a Muslim is to dig in and accept the demands of reality and move it. *Tauhid* is the basic ideology and the whole universe as a whole (Bano, 2015) [6]. *Tauhid* became the ideology of liberation, which left behind a circle of discussion, interpretation, and philosophical, theological, and scientific debate, *tauhid* entered the affairs of society. In *tauhid*, there are various problems related to social relations. Therefore, all beings and objects in the universe are a reflection of the greatness of God. The worldview of *tauhid* is integral. *Tauhid's* worldview gives people "leeway" to develop their freedom so that people are responsible for every action they do. *Tauhid's* worldview also sees people as human beings who have very high freedom and dignity (Sabara, 2016) [17].

The sorority shows the vertical dimension of Islam, which connects limited and imperfect social institutions with the perfect and infinite *Dzat*. *Tauhid* is a universal paradigm that presents a new world system, both in concept, application, and institution, and a sustainable future in the unity of divine law (Alam Choudhury & Syafri Harahap, 2008) [2]. Aside from the integrated metaphysical concept, *tauhid* is a dynamic belief and revolutionary teachings, because that concept contained the understanding that all human beings are one, both creatures of God's creation of the same dignity and degree before God. Therefore, because of this concept of *tauhid*, any discrimination based on differences in skin color, class of society, the origin of descent, taste, or area of residence cannot be justified (Aravik & Zamzam, 2020) [3, 4]. To recognize the implications of *tauhid*, it is necessary to unite knowledge that the Islamic economy must be able to accept a pluralistic approach to Islamic economic reality (Shalihin, 2017) [18].

### ***Tauhid* As a Solution To Exploitation and Economic Injustice Perspective Ali Syariati**

Economic exploitation and injustice are not new, always present in every historical trajectory of human life. The presence of prophets and apostles sent specifically to the world is none other than to eradicate the root of various exploitations and injustices created by a group of people over others. According to Syariati, the concept of exploitation and economic injustice had occurred during the time of Prophet Adam AS through the figure of Qabil and Habil who killed each other to fight for a woman.

Departing from this event, Syariati saw that the community was divided into two groups. First the Qabil group. The Qabil group is synonymous with ruling groups and landowners. The Qur'an describes the Qabil group as Fir'aun who is called a symbol of political rulers, cruel, violent, and even he appointed himself as God. Besides Fir'aun, Qarun was synonymous with a greedy, greedy, and miserly economist and symbol of capitalism. Similarly, Bal'am is a priest or monk and intellectual who support

tyranny by shedding knowledge and symbols of hypocrisy (Moon, 1983) <sup>[14]</sup>.

They are models of greedy rulers, arrogant, unjust, and oppressors of the weak people always exploitation and injustice including in the economic field. In the historical review, Qabil with ambition and his group sought to seize the masses to strengthen the power and enrich the ruling elite. A vast and large humanitarian mass has been oppressed and enslaved so that Qabil's children and grandchildren can live in excessive pleasure (Dewi, 2012) <sup>[10]</sup>. Thus the eradication of Qabil group is a prerequisite for the creation of an ideal Muslim society as outlined in the principles of *Tauhid* (Moon, 1983) <sup>[14]</sup>.

*Tauhid* in Ali Syariati's view is a universal unity between God, nature, and man. *Tauhid* in society is also used as a principle of justice that rejects all contradictions. Also, *tauhid* is also the foundation of all principles of human activities related to politics, economy, society, and culture (Rehmana, 2000) <sup>[16]</sup>. *Tauhid* erases indocility, worry, and greed and accepts equality, and independence. The principle of *tauhid* can free people from misery, squalor, and discrimination through moral growth. The system of values and norms that will usher in the behavior of its people, in shaping the personalities, behaviors, and attitudes of Muslims who are always inclined to the issues of humanity, justice, kindness, and honesty, with that power, Islam will become an ideological force capable of creating a more advanced, civilized and humane social order. Since the enforcement of justice and the extermination of this form of discrimination have been laid down by the Qur'an, even one of the main objectives of prophetic treatises is to uphold justice. Even the Qur'an places justice equal to virtue and piety (Q.S. Al-Maidah [5]: 8).

*Second*, the Habil group, a group that is synonymous with weak communities, this community is often exploited, used as slaves, and squeezed for the benefit of the ruler. Although they are called weak and oppressed groups in the view of the Quran including the noble and noble people of a person is not measured in terms of his position, wealth, ethnicity, or nation but the level of piety to Allah Swt.

It is this Habil group that must be freed from the various shackles of the industry of exploitation and injustice. By referring to surah al-Qashash [28] verse 25, Syariati sees that exploitation and injustice arise from order. Such entity includes political, economic, and intellectual infestation. The political order that manifests in the form of a class is suppressed by the power of another class inflicted by political tyranny; economic order is caused by the practice of economic exploitation manifested in the form of a class robbed of its wealth and sucked up by another class; and intellectual oppression occurs because other groups of thought and intelligence are forced to be foolish (Mukhlis, 2009) <sup>[15]</sup>.

To eradicate it all Syariati offers the concept of *tauhid* as a spirit of human liberation from submission other than to Allah Swt. *Tauhid* with ideal values contained in it brings the spirit to be able to realize that noble goal. Because *tauhid* is the main source of Islamic ethics and becomes the philosophical foundation of Islamic economics. *Tauhid* is the main element that binds man to his god to become a person by the nature of his creation. In the economic context, *tauhid* encapsulates the essence of the whole essence of Islamic economics which teaches people how to relate and deal with others about God (Choudhury,

1983) <sup>[8]</sup>. The implication is the emergence of human behavior (morals and ethics) that only obey and fear the oneness of Allah Swt. who is the only creator of the universe in which there are economic resources and wealth for human beings, as well as all resources to meet the needs in the world including the need for economy and life.

*Tauhid* will lead people to economic religiosity. Economic religiosity is a projection of faith, sharia, and morals in economic activities. The three dimensions are integrated into the Islamic worldview (Choudhury, 1998) <sup>[9]</sup>. Economic religiosity directs economic practices to economic practices by the Qur'an and Sunnah such as economic well-being in the framework of Islamic moral norms (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 60; Al-Maidah [5]: 87-88, and Al-Jumu'ah [62]: 10), brotherhood and universal justice (Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13, and Al-A'raf [7]: 158), a fair and equitable distribution of income and wealth (Q.S. Al-An'am [6]: 125, al-Nahl [16]: 7, and al-Zukhruf [43]: 32), and individual freedom in the context of social benefit (Q.S. al-Ra'd [13]: 36, Luqman [31]: 22).

The concept of *tauhid* being the basic body of economic knowledge, at this level, is called Islamic economic theology. The theology of Islamic economics based on *tauhid*, teaches two main points, namely:

*First*, God provides many natural resources to meet the needs of human beings who all belong to Allah Swt. (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 284; al-Maidah [5]: 17; al-Hadid [57]: 7). Human beings are only given the mandate to manage, benefit, and maintain their sustainability (Choudhury, 1998) <sup>[9]</sup> as part of the role of the caliphate, human beings can utilize that many resources for their needs. And if you count the favors of Allah, you will not be able to count them." Ibrahim [14]: 34).

*Second*, *tauhid* as the foundation of the Islamic economy means that all the resources in this world are the creation and belongs to God in absolute. Allah is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Human beings are only trustees to manage those resources to realize the prosperity and welfare of human life fairly.

Natural resources, flora, and fauna are subjugated by Allah SWT as a source of economic benefits for mankind (Q.S. Al-An'am [6]: 142-145, and An-Nahl [16]: 10-16). So in managing these resources, people must follow god's rules in the form of Islamic sharia. Consequences as trustees, then in the property owned by each individual there are rights of others that must be issued by the command of God, in the form of zakat, infaq and alms and other ways to carry out the distribution of income by the concept of the brotherhood of mankind (Aravik & Zamzam, 2020).

Formally, *tauhid* helps build problems about the interactive and dynamic unity of knowledge caused by the cohesive linkage between micro-enterprises and businesses as a community entity (Alam Choudhury & Harahap, 2009) <sup>[11]</sup>. Moreover, the foundation of *Tauhid* is an Islamic religion whose source of awareness, morality, responsibility, and free will can move its people into a liberating force from the determination of oppressive multitheism ideologies (Shepard, 1987) <sup>[19]</sup>. To create an egalitarian and classless society, avoiding the accumulation of wealth and instilling in its adherents a strong sense of compassion, compassion, and attention to others (Mahomedy, 2013) <sup>[13]</sup>.

With the principle of *tauhid*, then everyone must exist at the point of controlling the appetite where the fulfillment of needs is only centered on the aspect of need not want in a

way that is not excessive (Q.S. Al-A'raf [7]: 31) let alone wasteful (Q.S. Al-Isra' [17]: 26-27), there is no scarcity by always being grateful for all the gifts of Allah Swt. (Q.S. al-Lail [92]: 19-21), seeking the enjoyment of life in this world and the Hereafter (Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 201), and balanced in the invading of property (Q.S. al-Furqan [25]: 67). So that the exploitation of resources for profit without prioritizing morals can be minimized or even eliminated, production efficiency to maximize the profit that has the potential to ignore the welfare of all people can be reviewed, profit disparity and fertilize the nature of materialism that is contrary to sharia rules does not occur as applicable to the economy of capitalism and socialism.

Also, as the caliph of God on earth (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30) man is required to work as a fardu demand for each human being without discriminating against one another (Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]: 13), to achieve happiness of individuals and communities (Q.S. al-Taubah [9]: 105) is always based on the Islamic faith (Q.S. Al-Asr [103]: 1-3), so get compensation and have to pay it before dry sweat (Q.S. Al-Qashash [28]: 27-28), not by usury (Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 275) let alone monopolize for the benefit of a handful of people (Q.S. Al-Hasyr [59]: 7).

### Conclusion

By paying attention to the above discussion, it can be concluded that Ali Syariati is one of the Muslim intellectuals who is concerned with the eradication of exploitation and economic impartiality. Through the concept of *tauhid* Ali Syariati invites every human being to eradicate it all by fully understanding the concept of *tauhid* as the foundation of human faith and the spirit of submission to only one God, namely Allah Swt. By saying that everyone will understand and understand that economic activities carried out must be based on the values of Islamic teachings, in which various practices that lead to economic injustice and exploitation are prohibited even forbidden. Ali Syariati pointed directly to the group that plays an important role in creating economic inequality, namely the Qabil Group. A group that makes wealth an intrinsic goal of life, and finishes it by justifying various means, as long as everything is successfully mastered. This group is symbolized by the figures of Fir'aun, Qarun, and Bal'am, whose every trajectory of the times is always there and real existence

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