

# THE ROLE OF TAUHID TASAWUF STUDY COUNCIL IN PREACHING THE TAWHÎD AND TASHAWWUF IN ACEH, INDONESIA

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## THE ROLE OF TAUHID TASAWUF STUDY COUNCIL IN PREACHING THE *TAWHĪD* AND *TASHAWWUF* IN ACEH, INDONESIA

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**Abstract:** Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid Tasawuf (MPTT)-The Tauhid Tasawuf Study Council- is a religious institution which in principally related the aspects of *tawhīd* and *tashawwuf* initiated by *sūfī* Shaykh Haji Amran Wali al-Khalidy. The primary aim of this institution is to preach the teachings of monotheism and Sufism in the midst of society. Even though its teaching is not accepted by all segment of societies, MPTT continues to diffuse its teachings, even to several countries in Southeast Asia. This research is a qualitative study to critically examine the existence of the MPTT in terms of *tawhīd* and *tashawwuf* in Aceh. The data was collected through observation, interviews and documentation which then analyzed using Analysis Interactive Model. The results showed that MPTT plays an important role in bringing positive changes to Acehnese society both in the fields of worship and morals. MPTT is able to propagate Sufism teachings by balancing the world's issues and the hereafter.

**Keywords:** MPTT roles, preaching, teaching of *tawhīd* and *tashawwuf*, Aceh

## Introduction

The existence of *tashawwuf* had significant role toward the development of Islam in the entire world.<sup>1</sup> The idea of *tashawwuf* has been a tradition that is continuously developed in human life.<sup>2</sup> The slight shift and different understanding toward *tashawwuf* ideas has been experienced simultaneously by all Muslims in Indonesia throughout the era, especially in Aceh. During the empire of Sultan Iskandar Muda, the mythical and *tashawwuf* ideas had developed.<sup>3</sup> This teaching was run by two great 'ulamâ', Hamzah al-Fansuri with the concept of *wujûdiyyah*, and Syamsuddin As-Sumatrani with the concept of *wâhdat al-wujûd*. The presence of these two great 'ulamâ' could influence the ruler of the kingdom and people and it was popularly recognized in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Then, there were Shaykh Nuruddin Ar-Raniry with the concept of *tashawwuf waḥdat al-syuhûd*, Shaykh Abdurrauf al-Singkili (*martabah ahaddiyah/lâ ta'âyûn, wâddah ta'âyûn awwal, wâhidiyah/ta'âyûn tsâni*) which were very popular in the society and amongst scientist.<sup>4</sup> Since then, there were also other 'ulamâ' in *tashawwuf*, like Abu Hasan Krueng Kalee and Abuya Syekh Muhammad Waly al-Khalidi or commonly known as Abu Muda Waly and so on.

The early *tashawwuf* 'ulamâ' had a broad and reliable intellectual network, even in Mekkah and Madinah as the first Islamic intellectual center that later developed to Nusantara and in Aceh. The transformation and development of ideas were later redefined in Islam, both in *tashawwuf* and other disciplines.<sup>5</sup> Abuya Muda Waly, one of 'ulamâ' in Aceh who had the discipline network to Mekkah and Madinah and 'ulamâ' in Nusantara in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After returning in Aceh, he re-built the *dayah* which previously belonged to his parents, called *Madrasah Tarbiyah Islamiyyah*. Then, he established a new *dayah* at Blangporoh village, Labuhan Haji Barat, Aceh Selatan called *Darussalam Mamba'il 'Ilmi wal Hikâm*.

He also developed the *Tharîqah Naqshbandîyah* and it was continued by his children, one of them was Abuya Shaykh Amran Waly al-Khalidy through a council named Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid Tasawuf (MPTT).

MPTT is an organization that has vision and missions to unite all people through strong relationship (*silaturrahim*), to be close to Allah SWT, and to preserve God's orders and follow the *sunnah* of Rasulullah SAW. Other vision and missions of MPTT are to preach people who were not yet preached, to develop the teaching of *tawhîd tashawwuf* to people in Aceh, and Indonesia generally, even to South East Asian countries in the context of the improvement of *tashawwuf* ideas in the Islamic world.

MPTT is directly led by Abuya Amran headquartered in *pesantren* Darul Ihsan, Pawoh village, Labuhan Haji Tengah sub-district, Aceh Selatan, the province of Aceh. The presence of this council in the midst of society was caused by several factors based on current reality. Reviewing the process of era development that now has been giving the significantly indirect effects. There was a leap, disturbance and swifts in life pattern, the advance of science which affects people positively and negatively. Just like the needs of life, characters and thinking ways, almost all of them were changed. This was examined from daily life of most Acehnese society that has been far and started to forget the religious affairs. Consequently, it will lead to the ignorance and negligence toward observance in worshiping God.<sup>6</sup> The objectives of its establishment were mainly related to current situation of people, according to Abuya Amran, that did not care toward the religious activities, so that he decided to establish the Majlis of *dzikr*. In this case, Abuya Amran expected that the presence of this Majlis in the midst of society could positively affect people to be closer with Allah and improve their morals everywhere they are.<sup>7</sup> The group of people that consistently participated

in this *dzikr* Majlis is people who came from old villagers and some from urban people that had been introduced to the basic knowledge of Islam.<sup>8</sup> Later on, they started to deepen their *dzikr* lesson to achieve the immerse and closeness in worshipping Allah SWT.

From another side, the presence of MPTT in the midst of society has caused some debates through media, between *Fiqh 'ulamâ* and *tashawwuf 'ulamâ* and also between academicians and society in general. Until today, this debate could not be resolved, so that day by day it keep being discussed and debated from either positive perspective and negative perspective. However, the current ideas of *tashawwuf* performed by amongst *'ulamâ* even shared the distinguished understanding in terms of teaching and *tharîqah* developed by them. This was explained in the study report of *Respon Masyarakat Terhadap Ajaran Sufi Syeikh Abuya Amran dan Tasawwuf al-Jili (Studi Tanggapan Masyarakat di Kawasan Utara-Timur Aceh Terhadap MPTT dan Rateb Siribee)*. The study revealed that the courses and teachings of *tharîqah* in Aceh until today is still developing. Throughout the era development, the role of the *tharîqah* leaders' thinking and ideas of each area in Aceh.<sup>9</sup> Simultaneously, the stream of *tharîqah* and *dzikr* Majlis has not been being developed in the local area, but also it played a significant influence outside of Aceh.<sup>10</sup>

In 2009, was noted as the year which was fulfilled by many conflicts or contradictions toward *tashawwuf* course occurred in Aceh. Interestingly, those conflicts were happened amongst the *'ulamâ* *dayah* which was not expected to be happened. Such phenomenon, explained in the journal entitled *Neo-Sufisme, Syariatisme, dan Ulama Politik, dalam Islam Politics and Change Abuya Syeikh Amran*, by Moch Nur Ichwan. Commonly, the differences often took place in the society between *'ulamâ*

*dayah* and moderate group.<sup>11</sup> This case was also discussed by ‘*ulamâ*’ *dayah* with *salafiyah* group in Aceh.

In the book by T. Lembong Misbah, *Gerakan Da’wah Sûfistik: Majelis Pangkajian Tauhid-Tasawuf Abuya Syeikh Abuya Amran Al-Khalidi di Aceh*, the side of MPU Aceh Utara conducted a trial related to the course and teaching of MPTT was considered to be similar to the course of Al-Jîlî about *Insân Kâmil* (perfect human) which MPU later considered it as illegitimate (*haram*), and also forbade the distribution of the book authored by Abuya Amran that had been spread in the society.<sup>12</sup> Such a firm action from MPU stating that that teaching might endanger and threat the morals (‘*aqîdah*’) for Muslims, especially for ordinary people that are still lack of information about religion.

The teaching of *tashawwuf* was commonly understood by some urban people as the drawbacks for the people and to prevent them from worldly affairs. This was completely different from what *sûfî* ‘*ulamâ*’ experienced earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth century where they struggled to balance the *tashawwuf* teaching in social life properly. Then, it caused people to be encouraged to do the religious, social, economic and political activities based on the *shari’at*.<sup>13</sup> The *tashawwuf* course that had grown simultaneously with the development of the dynamic of Islamic ideas, especially in Aceh and generally in Indonesia. This kind of phenomenon has been widely glanced by the people as the effect from the presence of the era that promised the satisfaction upon the needs of life. Furthermore, it was about the activity form of *tashawwuf* ‘*ulamâ*’ in the midst of modern society, based on the current situation that many Acehnese people that were interested in fulfilling the mythical call and willing to abandoned their houses to visit the sacred and holy places in many areas.

From previous several literature studies, it generally described about the development of *tashawwuf* teaching in the Islamic world, solidarity of *dzikr rateb siribee*, the preaches in the *shari'at*, politic, and the response of *'ulamâ dayah* and the people of Aceh Timur-Utara, the critique from MPU Aceh Utara, the understanding of *tawhîd tashawwuf level* in the *tharîqah* of *Khalidiyah Naqshbandîyah* (TKN) through MPTT, and the controversy of *sûfî* teaching of Abuya Amran in the middle of society in Aceh. Meanwhile, this study would focus critically on the existence of MPTT and in preaching the teachings of monotheism and Sufism in the midst of society, especially in Aceh.

### **Methodology**

This study is based on a qualitative research method, combining the literature study and field research. Triangulation was done towards this method. The research instruments employed in this study were meticulous observation, in depth-interviews and documentation. This study used the model data analysis technique by Miles and Huberman,<sup>14</sup> encompassing data reduction, data display and verification/conclusion. The data sources were retrieved from Shaykh Haji Amran Wali al-Khalidy, a prominent *sûfî* scholar in Aceh and his staff as well as his thirty devoted followers in Aceh. Purposive sampling was used in this empirical research in which the researcher intentionally chose individuals or situations likely to yield new instances and greater understanding of a dimension or concept of interest.<sup>15</sup> This type of nonprobability sampling was used because the researcher is sure the selected informants could provide information-rich cases for the in-depth study the researcher envisaged.

## Results and Discussion

MPTT was founded by Abuya Amran and few members who actively participated for contributing the ideas. In the beginning, Abuya Amran along with his followers (*jamâ'ah*) committed the ritual of *tawajjuh* as commonly done and later he formed a small *dzikr* Majlis in 2001 at *Pesantren* Nurul Ihsan, Labuhan Haji Tengah, Aceh Selatan.<sup>16</sup> Yet, after several times conducting the event around *pesantren*, the followers had been gradually increased.

In 2004, Abuya Amran issued the certificate of association with No. 14, 2004 in Aceh Besar. However, in the next two years, on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2016, another new certificate of association was released by the same notary, Cut Eva Fitriveni, and the main person who handled it was Tgk. Muhammad Idris Harahap, as the General Secretary.<sup>17</sup> This was necessarily done to form the permanent committee that were truly responsible and actively participating. In order to form a very solid certificate and to guarantee its security, it should be based on the constitutions (*undang-undang*) the formation of religious organization in Indonesia.<sup>18</sup> The early formation of MPTT when there were the followers from the village, sub-district, district and in the provincial level, even the followers were already spread in other branches outside Aceh, like in Sulawesi, Java, Sumatera, Kalimantan, and Nusa Tenggara Barat.<sup>19</sup> Later, the name of Majlis was added with "Indonesia" and it became Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid Tasawuf Indonesia.

The branch offices and its organizational structure had been established in provincial level, district/municipal, sub-district and village (*gampong*). From this structure, its membership was already complete and supported by the post and other facilities. MPTT-I also had a symbol and logo itself, as the fundamental image by hoping the blessing from Allah and his



merciful to preach all the *sūfi* ideas in social life in this modern era. “Nine stars symbolized the 99 of *asmâ Allāh* as the creation of the universe. Meanwhile, the colorful circle indicated the attitude, characters of human, and the reflection from the nature of Allah SWT.”

Based on the historical establishment, its membership structure is still actively existed until today in maintaining the seminar activities and *muzakarah* in national and international scale. As religious council, MPTT has a vision and mission in developing and preaching the ideas of *tawhīd tashawwuf* in the midst of Acehnese society.

The first main objective is providing the formal education and information from the basic level to higher education which directed to the religious values. Second, making plans in sector of people’s benefits that is related to the government or to other religious organizations. Third, maintaining *pengkajian* and the religious study in the governmental institutions and in universities. Fourth, conducting the national and international seminar, symposium, workshop, discussion and sharing session in relation to the Islamic sharing. Fifth, holding the monthly recitation agenda, annual training and socialization to society. Sixth, providing information in the form of preaching (*da’wah/ tabligh*) for parents, adolescents and children. Seventh, creating beneficial business opportunity for the member of MPTT-I and for society who actively participated in getting the opportunity to develop the small-scale business units. Finally, improving the spiritual and religious attitude in daily life by truly worshipping toward Allah SWT.

Another purpose was to guide people in the frame of *Shari’at Islam*, balance the worldly affair and afterlife, in order to balance with the needs of modern era, improve the religious understanding through *da’wah*, social, politic, and education; to teach the

ways to understand the proper teaching of *tawhîd tashawwuf* that was based on the teaching from previous '*ulamâ*'.<sup>20</sup> Next was to create the *ukhuwah*, supervise and develop *ta'âruf* in the path of truth, strengthen the unity and oneness, nation and state; and to uphold the dignity as human being; and to develop the religious principle in daily life.

Furthermore, it also provided the understanding about how to overcome the issues in life from all challenges and tests so that people would always be kind thought toward Allah SWT and also to be protected from the *al-syirk jâlî* and *khafî* (*al-syirk jâlî* is defined as truly defying toward the only one Allah with something else, while *al-syirk khafî* is hidden in human soul). Based on the vision and missions of MPTT that tended to benefit people in religious affair, *mu'âmalah*, and social humanity that often became the standard in daily life. Hence, through the existence of this preach (*da'wah*), at least it could help people in understanding the meaning of real life to the hereafter.

The existence of MPTT in the midst of society as one organization has true path in achieving the objectives and *da'wah* movement that is closely related to religion. The presence of this council was once accused to spread the heresy by the forum of *muhasabah 'ulamâ*' in Aceh Utara.<sup>21</sup> Seeing the figure of Abuya Amran as expertise '*ulamâ*' in *tashawwuf* whose thinking was closely related to the *neo-Sufism* understanding. He attempted to combine the doctrine of *tashawwuf wujûdiyyah* which so far had been related to the philosophical ideas (*tashawwuf falsafî*) or *heterodox* that was misled/defected from the true lesson with the course of orthodoxy which was the true ideas and a teaching that owned the main base in Islam.

From his caring toward the teaching of *wujûdiyyah*, Abuya Amran interpreted or explained under the new way to spread the teaching that was based on the understandings of previous

*tashawwuf 'ulamâ'*.<sup>22</sup> In this case, he and his *tawhîd tashawwuf* teaching became the target of accusation of heresy, even so, those accusations and prohibitions that followed the MPTT were ineffective. Evidently, after the *fatwa* was officially established, surprisingly, even almost every area in the West-South coastal area of Aceh had declared themselves as the city of *tawhîd*, just like Aceh Barat (Meulaboh), Abdya (Blangpidie) and Aceh Selatan (Tapaktuan).

In the movement of its preaching way, it also gained the support from several parties, especially from their own families, some of their students, societal figures, governmental institutions and also some academicians and scientists at higher education that were existed in Aceh and Indonesia generally.<sup>23</sup> Even though this movement was not easily accepted, but Abuya Amran along with some important figures were still consistent in running the *tawhîd tashawwuf* teaching in the society. The initiation of spreading this teaching has been operated since 2001, but it was officially realized in early 2004.<sup>24</sup> Then, there was a massive exploration to other areas led by Abi Shahal Tastary Waly, the son of Abuya Amran.

Regarding its journey and the teaching of MPTT which was not completely accepted by many '*ulamâ*' of *dayah* in Aceh because it was considered that the presence of that council/ Majelis was not based on the true ideas of *tawhîd tashawwuf*. As being stated by the late Abuya Jamaluddin Waly in a book entitled "*Aliran-Aliran Menyimpang*", one of them was MPTT. In 2010 the response from *Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama Aceh Utara* also stood against MPTT, stating that the lesson and teaching developed by Abuya Amran was directed to the equalisation between human and God. Hence, the party of MPU Aceh Utara ordered all people who owned the book entitled "*Sekelumit Penyampaian Abdul Karim al-Jili*" should be handed

over to MPU which later to be eliminated so that the teaching could not be developed in Aceh for any longer.

Regarding the controversy spread in the midst of society, MPTT contributed and maintained the relationship with governmental institutions in religious activities. It firstly focused on some issues, especially toward the implementation of *Shari'at Islam* in Aceh. MPTT supported the policy taken by Head of District of Aceh Barat who issued *Perbub No. 10 Tahun 2010* about The Obligation of Wearing Muslimah Attire for Women. This policy did not receive the acceptance from all people which resulted to the pro and cons. Abuya Amran viewed that the policy should be implemented with the current situation of Acehnese people who were already far from Islamic values.<sup>25</sup> In this case, he hoped that this would be the good example for other provinces, but indirectly MPTT has supported the implementation of *Shari'at Islam* in Aceh province or in districts/municipals.

As the social organization which has the Islamic movements in the form of *'amalîyah*, *'ubûdîyah*, and maintains the religious activities through social humanity approach based on Sunnah Muhammad SAW. So, this council has a special direction to achieve its development in various areas. However, this organization should own a specific method that could direct it to achieve those objectives.

MPTT-I has several missions which are to do the socialisation in the midst of society through agenda of *dzikr rateb siribe* from home to home, *masjid*, *mushalla* and around governmental institutions; and also to maintain the collaboration with other religious organisations,<sup>26</sup> and to form the posts in every branch offices even to some South East Asian countries, to deliver the knowledge related to *tawhîd tashawwuf*; to discuss about *syubhat* and the doubt in learning the lesson of *tawhîd tashawwuf*. Serving the society in doing some activities in learning religious

lesson, to create the cadre in preaching the tenet of *tawhîd tashawwuf*, giving the explanation about the noble morals, being *taqwâ*, about *'aqîdah*, *shara'* law and the procedures in doing the prayer appropriately based on the guidance from al-Qur'an and Sunnah.<sup>27</sup> Helping the orphan, the poor, helping each other, persuading all people to improve their awareness toward Islam and urging people who had been negligent and to return to the true path through repent.

The movement of MPTT has two aspects, namely the movement *tashawwuf* and *tharîqah*. These things had been developed in the midst of the people until today. In *tashawwuf* aspect, it taught the good morals that were related to Allah SWT, amongst humans, animals and others.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, in the *tharîqah* aspect, it persuaded people to deeply understand the path to Allah through *mursyîd* so that they would obtain the guidance directly and the *sanâd 'ilm* of Sufism teaching. However, in this movement, Abuya Amran tended to be more Sufism considering the current ear situation that had been forgotten from the Sufism values in social life. Therefore, it needs to be re-developed in order to balance the spiritual and physical needs in their lives.

In achieving the development, it does not only focus on the recitation of *dzikr* Majlis, but also the development of communication amongst *'ulamâ'* outside Aceh. This effort could unite some Sufism *'ulamâ'* in Indonesia in MPTT. In 2009, the meeting was held in Aceh Barat with the followers and some *'ulamâ* of *sûfî* from Aceh and from other parts outside Aceh. This agenda was followed by more than 50 followers of *tharîqah* from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and some followers from Java Island.<sup>29</sup> Then, in 2012, the followers of MPTT from Malaysia held the *muzakarah* event in Tringganu. In that event, Abuya Amran also participated and got the opportunity to deliver a

speech about the understanding of *tawhîd tashawwuf* teaching he developed.

In 2014, there was a similar *muzakarah* event held in Aceh Barat Daya (Blangpidie) attended by the *'ulamâ* and *umara*.<sup>30</sup> Shaykh Mehmet Fadhil Al-Jailani as the *mursyîd* of *Qâdirîyah tarîqah* and also as the researcher at *Turats Islam Centre, Turkey*, Shaykh Rahmuddin Al-Bantany, the *mursyîd* of *al-Syadziliyah tharîqah*, as the head of *Kerukunan Ulama Nusantara*, Shaykh Ibrahim Muhammad, *mursyîd* of *Syattârîyah Tharîqah Malaysia*, Zahid bin Sidik *mursyîd* of *Naqshbandîyah Tharîqah Malaysia*, Farid Wajdi Ibrahim, the former rector of UIN Ar-Raniry, Banda Aceh; Muhammad Dhauddin Kuswandi, the leader of *Keluarga Besar Wali Songo*, and as the leader of *Majelis Tasbih Surabaya*; Abdul Manan, the director of knowledge upgrading of Uniza Tringganu-Malaysia; and Sulaiman Ibrahim El-Barruhy, lecturer from Ushuluddin Faculty of Universiti Islam Sultan Syarif Ali Brunei Darussalam.

Later, in 2016, there was another *muzakarah* in Jawa Barat (Bogor), and 2018 *muzakarah* in Lapangan Tugu, Darussalam, Banda Aceh attended by *'ulamâ*, *umara*, academicians, scientists, students, youths and society in general.<sup>31</sup> Regarding to this, Abuya Amran also collaborated with some municipal/district and provincial government to reform the whole Aceh as the city of "*tawhîd tashawwuf*". The aim showed that the movement of MPTT was not a personal movement or just a group of people, but also it became a *da'wah* movement together to form Aceh as Islamic area.<sup>32</sup> Based on the explanation above, in every event conducted by MPTT could gain many supports from many parties. It certainly was from the several governmental officials, religious figures, societal figures and the followers, were also supporting and donating the funds or providing the

facilities to run every agenda in Aceh or in other provinces across Indonesia.

During the development of *tawhîd tashawwuf* teaching, the relation and participation from the family party of Ummi Nailis, as the first wife who stayed in the sub-district of Labuhan Haji Tengah and the second wife, Ummi Ros Siti stayed in the sub-district of Blangpidie, Aceh Barat Daya. They both established the branches in almost every area in Aceh which was later called as *Persatuan Perempuan Tawhid Tasawuf* of P2T. This has proven that the support from family member in preaching and spreading the influence of *tawhîd tashawwuf* was actively significant.

To enhance the continuity of every agenda, there were also several committees in every branch established in sub-district, district and provincial level. In sub-district level, there were 50 members including the chief and its main member, in district level, there were 200 members including the chief of the branch called Wali Nanggroe. However, in provincial level, the management has not yet established because its administrator was still assisted by the management in sub-district and district level in maintaining the seminar or *muzakarah* in national and international event.<sup>33</sup> The posts had also been built in every branch in Aceh and they were supported by complete equipment and facilities in order to carry out every activity in seminar event or in *dzikr berjamaah* (*rateb siribee*).

The followings are the strategies used for developing the MPTT and the forms of its events held in the middle of the society:

*First*, providing the input and contributing along with the government's performance, the '*ulamâ*', academicians, students and society in general. *Second*, *supporting* the programs such as religious recitation, education, teaching, coaching, counselling,

and worship implementing. *Third*, preserving the *'aqîda* of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah*, strengthening the implementation of *Shari'at Islam*. *Fourthly*, preserving and nurturing the *sunnah* of *Rasulullah SAW* through *tawhîd tashawwuf*, being *'ubûdiyah* toward Allah, and showing the caring and mercy amongst human for creating peace and welfare and for achieving the happiness in *dunya* and *akhirat*.<sup>34</sup> The process of the development of MPTT in Aceh has been carried out from Labuhan Haji Tengah to Blangpidie, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat, Aceh Jaya, Banda Aceh, Bireuen, Bener Meriah and Gayo Lues. The purpose is to inaugurate the administrators in both sub-district and district level, and also to strengthen the teaching of *tawhîd tashawwuf* in society. The development of MPTT so far has been showing some progresses through the increase of its followers that have directly joined in *tharîqah*, *sulûk*, *tawajjuh*, or those who haven't joined but they were already active in participating in every agenda.

So far, its progress in Aceh, especially in West South coastal area, in Aceh Singkil, Subulussalam, Aceh Tengah, Gayo Lues, Aceh Selatan, Aceh Barat Daya, Nagan Raya, Aceh Barat, Aceh Jaya, Aceh Besar, Banda Aceh throughout the East North areas like in Bireuen, Pidie, Pidie Jaya, Aceh Utara, Aceh Timur and Langsa. Even outside Aceh, like Sumatera Utara (Medan), Sumatera Barat (Padang), Pekanbaru, Riau, Batam, Jawa Barat (Bogor), Jawa Timur, Banten, Nusa Tenggara Barat, Sulawesi (Gorontalo), Manado, Malaysia (Johor, Tringganu, Selangor), Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, Cambodia and Philippines.<sup>35</sup> Its influence has been shown in the figure of its leader coming from the great *'ulamâ'* family, and his teaching that bring human to the better path, its way of *da'wah* which raises the love and caring amongst human, persuading people to repent by giving the picture that Allah will always forgive their sins.



Moreover, in the form of its implementation, understanding *tawhîd tashawwuf* which was rooted from the law of *shari'at*, on the aspect of worship which was reciting the *dzikr* of *Lâ Ilâha Illa Allâh*, participating in religious recitation in routine. In the social aspect, by doing some beneficial activities, not hurting people, keeping the social values in daily life, obeying the order of the leader (if there is still in the noble way), avoiding the enmity, and creating unity without seeing the tribes and position.

### Discussion

The existence of *sûfi* (Islamic mysticism) and *tharîqah* (the order of Islamic Mysticism) had significant role toward the development of Islam in the entire of world such as to the nations that haven't known Islam yet.<sup>36</sup> Especially, the existence and the development of MPTT initiated by a prominent *sûfi* scholar in Aceh, Shaykh Haji Amran Wali al-Khalidy have been recognized in almost entire Indonesia. Its existence has been welcomed nicely and received positive responses by some of '*ulamâ*' abroad like from Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, China, and Turkey. This achievement could not be realized without the effort from its leader, family and other important figures that were loyal in spreading, preaching and developing the teaching of *tawhîd tashawwuf* in society.

Various sources of study found some studies about MPTT in Aceh. This study was conducted in the frame of Islamic thinking and the explanation from *tashawwuf* '*ulamâ*' who owned more knowledge about the development of the teaching of *tashawwuf* in Islamic world. Moreover, there were also several studies which critically examined the related topic of the existence of MPTT, especially in Aceh.<sup>37</sup>

Plenty researchers have studied the development of Islam especially in the sector of *tashawwuf* course which was able to be recognized in other parts of the world. The first arrival of Islam in *Nusantara*, the ideas of *tashawwuf* started to color the life of people whom previously were subscribed to Hindu-Buddha.<sup>38</sup> Western historian, A.H. John mentioned that Sufism '*ulamâ*' were easier to spread the teaching of Islam in society through *tashawwuf* approach.<sup>39</sup> This phenomenon was caused by the close relation of perspective from *tashawwuf* '*ulamâ*' about God and some other understandings which were easily accepted by most of people.

In the book called *Tashawwuf Aceh*, Shadiqin explained the reality of thinking from Acehnese '*ulamâ*' about the issues of religion in socio-religious life which often caused the polemic from the history of Aceh until today. Islam in Aceh was not just Islam as *shari'at*, but also Islam was connected to the teaching of *tashawwuf*.<sup>40</sup> This argument revealed that the '*ulamâ*' in Aceh had a great impact in spreading the ideas and teaching of Islam for the society.

Next, Musliadi in his book entitled *Abuya Syekh Muda Waly Al-Khalidy (1917-1961 M) Syeikhul Islam Aceh: Tokoh Pendidikan dan Ulama 'Arif Billah*. The phenomenon and development of *tashawwuf* teaching in Aceh from the past had caused the conflict and contradiction in the empire of Aceh Darussalam during the regime of Sultan Iskandar Tsani and later on, the conflict still continues until today.<sup>41</sup> On another side, the development of *tashawwuf* teaching could embellish the islands of *Nusantara* and was easily welcomed in the midst of society, especially in Aceh.

Similar event also once happened in the following era in Aceh about the critique toward the teaching of *sâlik buta* which was discussed in the journal "*Sâlik Buta Aliran Tasawuf Aceh*

*Abad XX*”, explained that the response of Abdullah Ujong Rimba towards the existence of *tasawwuf sâlik buta* was stated in his works. This thought received the harsh critique about the comprehension about desire, *i’tiqâd* and symbolism of the use grouped letter in that *sâlik buta*. From that observation, it could become the *shari’at* as the foundation in confirming it, and concluding that the thought of *sâlik buta* was misled and misguided.<sup>42</sup> The teaching of *sâlik buta* had received many followers in Nagan Raya (Beutong Ateuh) which was developed from local people until they became fanatic on it. Based on that phenomenon stating that the practice of this *sâlik buta* was definitive from its *sanâd mursyîd tharîqah*, so they made it up based on their own experience in worshipping Allah SWT. This kind of action was not justified in Islam, because it could lead to the misleading actions without any basis from al-Qur’an and Sunnah.

Furthermore, in Wirianto, “*Abuya Muda Waly Al-Khalidy*”, (*Agama dan Social Humaniora*), the process of taking the *sanâd ‘ilm* of Abuya Muda Waly from ‘*ulamâ* from Mekkah, Madinah and others in *Nusantara*, it was also explained the patterns of the thinking in the sector of *tawhîd tashawwuf* in developing the *Naqshbandîyah Tharîqah* in the midst of Aceh.<sup>43</sup> Here was also explained the figure of Abuya Muda Waly during his journey for learning the knowledge to every corner of the countries followed by the complete *sanâd*. In this case, we also could see that the thinking pattern about *tashawwuf* which later he developed the *Naqshbandîyah tharîqah* through various forms of worship practices like *sulûk*, *tawajjuh* and *samadiyah*. Later, it was continued by his son, Abuya Amran through MPTT until today. The movement of *da’wah* of MPTT does not only focus on the *tharîqah*, but also in the development of *tawhîd tashawwuf* in society.

Similar statement was also stated in his thesis “*Pendidikan Tasawuf Syekh Muhammad Muda Waly Al-Khalidy*”. The education of *tashawwuf* in educating people to become kind people at *Pesantren Blangporoh*, Labuhan Haji Barat, Aceh Selatan which was capable in producing many great ‘*ulamâ*’ to become the pioneer to develop this teaching in Aceh.<sup>44</sup> Abu Muda Waly succeeded to educate the next generations to carry the next teaching of Islam for the society. His way of teaching should be imitated and exemplified through many evidences that he kept developing in the Islamic *da‘wah* either in establishing the *pesantren* or religious organizations in order to transform the ideas and knowledge of Islam.

Moreover, MPTT was also discussed in the book of Misbah, *Gerakan Dakwah Sufistik: Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid-Tasawuf Abuya Syekh Amran al-Khalidi di Aceh*. The presence of MPTT had led to the pro and cons, especially for the brotherhood of the late Abuya Muhibuddin Waly, Alm. Abuya Jamaluddin Waly and with MPU Aceh and other ‘*ulamâ*’ at *dayah* also followed to respond.<sup>45</sup> In early movement of MPTT, the understanding of *tawhîd tashawwuf* which directed to the book of *Insân Kâmil* authored Syekh ‘Abd al-Karîm al-Jîlî was directly criticised by Alm. Abuya Jamaluddin Waly as his step brother of Abuya Amran through a book entitled “The Misleading Thoughts (*Ajaran-ajaran menyimpang*)” until today it was still being discussed by many people in Aceh. However, as the time passed by, this Majlis is still developing and getting its popularity in Indonesia.

Besides getting the responses from family members, the similar thing also came from few ‘*ulamâ*’ *dayah* and western-northern people in a study report conducted by research centre of UIN Ar-Raniry entitled “*Respon Masyarakat Terhadap Ajaran Sufi Syekh Abuya Amran dan Tasawuf Al-Jili (Studi Tanggapan Masyarakat di Kawasan Utara-Timur Aceh terhadap MPTT dan*

*Rateb Siribee*). An extraordinary phenomenon occurred in the middle of Acehnese society toward the ideas introduced by Abuya Amran had received such responses from 'ulamâ' of *dayah* or from people in Aceh.<sup>46</sup> In this phenomenon, the thought about *tashawwuf*, Amran was influenced from the idea of *tashawwuf* which led to the *tashawwuf* of *falsafi Hamzah al-Fansuri* and Syamsuddin al-Sumaterani in the context of *wahdat al-wujûd*. This statement could not be fully trusted, because if we study and understand truly so it will show the similarities towards other thoughts of other 'ulamâ'. Hence, there should be further investigation towards the derivation and the relationship with the understanding of 'ulamâ's thoughts previously in Aceh about the idea of *tashawwuf*.

During the tense circumstances about the ideas of Amran's *sûfi*, there was also response from MPU Aceh Utara explained in an article, "*Fatwa Sesat dan Pentingnya Dialog*". The response from MPU Aceh Utara which revealed that those ideas were *harâm* towards the book authored by Abuya Amran. The book was entitled as: *Sekelumit Penjelasan tentang Ajaran Tauhid-Tasawuf Abuya Syekh H. Abuya Amran dan Beberapa Ucapan Abdul Karim al-Jili dalam Kitabnya al-Insân al-Kâmil fi Ma'rifat al-Awâkhir wal-Awâ'il*. In this case, MPU Aceh Utara considered that the content of the book could cause the misleading actions (*'aqîdah*) of Islamic people in Aceh, especially people who still had a limited knowledge about religion. Here also suggested that the distinguished understanding about courses of *tashawwuf* has begun since in the past. Consequently, there were conflicts and contradictions which led to the murder which was accused to be deviated from *Shari'at Islam*. Even so, that understanding still could be understood or interpreted by others that are experts, so that it could not be easily wrong or led to the misleading actions.

Regarding to the phenomenon described above, another opinion was also delivered by Shadiqin in a journal, “*Tasawuf di Era Syari’at: Tipologi Adaptasi dan Transformasi Gerakan Tarekat dalam Masyarakat Aceh Kontemporer*”. This article explained the pattern of adaptation from few Acehnese people in following the movement of MPTT led by Abuya Amran. The movement mostly developed in a more mature society of a village or urban elderly people who had a traditional educational background. They commonly had a basic knowledge about the teaching of Islam before, so what they needed was a concrete spiritual practice which could mediate them to get closer spiritually to Allah SWT.<sup>47</sup> This obtained a great influence toward people following MPTT carried by Abuya Amran. This kind of phenomenon could be seen from the enthusiastic level of villagers and urban people to seek the religious values and the peaceful soul.

Similar finding was also revealed in a journal from Ichwan, entitled “*Neo-Sufisme, Syariatisme, dan Ulama Politik Abuya Shaykh Amran Waly dan Gerakan Tauhid-Tasawuf di Aceh*”. The movement of MPTT had similar approach to the ideas of Neo-Sufism which was pioneered by Abuya Amran as its leader. This teaching tended to focus on the worldly affair which later balanced with the afterlife matter, because it emphasized on the spiritual reflection in form of *dzikr* that was often practiced in congregation both in Aceh and other areas.<sup>48</sup> The influencing level of MPTT in various elements, either in the governmental institutions or in local parties in Aceh. This could not be separated from the cooperation to gain the support and security in preaching the teaching of *tawhîd tashawwuf* in the midst of society. The understanding of this teaching is similar to the previous *tashawwuf* teachings, but it shared a different procedure and practice and the way it was understood and balanced with the current development. In controlling this teaching, Abuya

Amran kept maintaining the approach of worship in form of *dzikr* done in groups or commonly recognized as *rateb siribee* held in the event of *muzakarah* in national and international level.

In addition, regarding to the worship approach in form *dzikr*, there was also a discussion about the meaning and the level of *tawhîd dzikr* explained in a journal from Rahmawati entitled “*Makna Zikir bagi Jamaah Tarikat Naqshbandiyah Khalidiyah Majelis Pengkajian Tauhid Tasawuf di Kota Gorontalo*”. The level of understanding toward *dzikr* amongst the followers of TNK MPTT could be variative.<sup>49</sup> This journal also revealed that the understanding toward *tawhîd dzikr* consisted of two forms, namely *tawhîd ‘aqidah* and *tawhîd tashawwuf* which owned different meanings in every mention when doing the *dzikr*. In the first level, it was started by emphasizing some points, which were Allah as the mightiest and highest form, most powerful, and the creator and controller of all His creatures. Human was created just to worship Allah. Then, in *tawhîd tashawwuf*, it emphasized that every worship activity must be clean from any dirt, either in term of *shari’at (najis)* or in *akhlâq (tashawwuf, tazkiyat al-nufûs, heart and other morals)*.

In article entitled “*Islam dan Tasawuf di Indonesia: Kaderisasi Pemimpin melalui Organisasi dan Matan*”. During the independence of Indonesia, the ‘*ulamâ* of *tashawwuf* played a significant role in strengthen the position of Islam in society. The various roles, namely: *tashawwuf ‘ulamâ’* as the forming factor and the model of state function, as the guide of the path to the development of economy and as the fortress in defending country from colonialists.<sup>50</sup> In early freedom, the *tashawwuf ‘ulamâ’* often contributed in deciding the destiny of the nation. Many ‘*ulamâ’* coming from many areas were invited directly by the president Soekarno. One of representatives from Aceh was Abuya Muda

Waly was believed to stabilise the leadership values in Islam and to strengthen the sense of nationalism and love for nation.<sup>51</sup> To conclude, the *tashawwuf* 'ulamâ' were not just preaching and spreading their Sufism, but also had a nationalism concept in defending Indonesia.

The correlation to this was also explained in an article that *tashawwuf* 'ulamâ' and their cadres had been provided with the spiritual lessons and love their country, so that they had nationalism and patriotism soul in combating the Dutch colonialism. The determination of heroic figures for national independence did not come for nothing. Eventually on August 17<sup>th</sup> 1945, Indonesia was proclaimed as independent country.<sup>52</sup> From the explanation above, it can be concluded that there was a great and massive role and influence coming from 'ulamâ' in defending and preserving the integrity of NKRI.

## **Conclusion**

Based the discussion above it could be concluded that MPTT has brought changes in people's lives, especially in the South West areas, in terms of worship aspect, social and moral. It also persuaded people to do the worship truly, guide people in frame of *shari'at Islam*, balance the worldly affair and hereafter, so it will not stand against the current development. MPTT also collaborated with governmental institutions and student organizations, to fully support the implementation of *shari'at Islam* in Aceh, to propose the programs such as religious study, education, teaching, mentoring, coaching, counselling, strengthening the 'aqidah of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamâ'ah* and celebrating the birth day of prophet Muhammad SAW every year through *dzikir* and *samadiyah*. The development of Islamic ideas in Aceh has re-charged the spirit of *tasawwuf* teaching that once had been



developed by previous *tashawwuf* 'ulamâ'. Such an idea is connected to the *tawhîd* teaching with the *tashawwuf* 'amalîyah through the approach of *tharîqah* in form of *dzikr* done in congregation in the actual life of Aceh society in particular and amongst the Indonesian and even in some South East Asian countries in general.

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## Endnotes:

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<sup>47</sup> Shadiqin, "Tasawuf Di Era Syariat: Tipologi Adaptasi Dan Transformasi Gerakan Tarekat Dalam Masyarakat Aceh Kontemporer."

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<sup>52</sup> Kemenhan, "Menhan Hadiri Konferensi Ulama Sufi Internasional Di Pekalongan," 2019, <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2019/04/08/menhan-hadiri-konferensi-ulama-sufi-internasional-di-pekalongan.html>.

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GENERAL COMMENTS

**Instructor**

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PAGE 1

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PAGE 2

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PAGE 3

---

PAGE 4

---

PAGE 5

---

PAGE 6

---

PAGE 7

---

PAGE 8

---

PAGE 9

---

PAGE 10

---

PAGE 11

---

PAGE 12

---

PAGE 13

---

PAGE 14

---

PAGE 15

---

PAGE 16

---

PAGE 17

---

PAGE 18

---

PAGE 19

---

PAGE 20

---

PAGE 21

---

PAGE 22

---

PAGE 23

---

PAGE 24

---

PAGE 25

---

PAGE 26

---

PAGE 27

---

PAGE 28

---

PAGE 29

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PAGE 30

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