CHAPTER THREE
Moenawar Chalil's Basic Beliefs:
His Concept of Dīn, Islam and Īmān

Muḥammad ʿAbduh's *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* was written with the aim of establishing the position of religious belief and doctrine in modern society. The way in which he approaches the theme of the unity of God in this work represents an attempt to redefine Islam and Īmān. Indeed, the whole final section of *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* constantly speaks of Islam, its beliefs, principles, spirit and extension.[1] The establishment of the "true" definition of Islam was urgent for ʿAbduh, since Islam was constantly under attack by his contemporaries. ʿAbduh had addressed himself to a society permeated with "rationality," a society doubting the validity of Islam as a guide to life.[2] His work, thus, responds to the test of rationality by restating the fundamental position of Islam and by reformulating its doctrines in order to render them more compatible with modern thinking and the needs of the Muslim community of his time.

The restatement of the concepts of Islam and Īmān by Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb gave rise to a movement to purify the faith. He called for the rediscovery of the purity of Islam and the reformulation of the concept of Īmān, which had been infiltrated by polytheistic practices prevalent in his time. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's concern with the reintroduction of the "true" meaning of Islam and Īmān led him to choose theology as the main theme of his work.[3] Unlike ʿAbduh, who was motivated to defend Islam against liberal trends in thought and culture, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's aim was to lead his tribal society back to an essentially unspoiled Islam. Therefore, in his approach of defining Islam

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[1] See the outline of ʿAbduh's *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* in Mahmudul Haq's *Muḥammad ʿAbduh: A Study of a Modern Thinker of Egypt* (Aligarh: Institute of Islamic Studies, Aligarh University, 1970), 81-82 and Muḥammad ʿAbduh's *Theology of Unity*, (trans.) Isḥāq Musaʿad and Kenneth Cragg (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 123-160.

[2] Mahmūd Ayyūb, "Islam and Christianity: A Study of Muhammad Abduh's View of the Two Religions," *Humaniora Islamica*. 2 (1974), 122.

[3] ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *al-Salafiyah wa Daʿwat al-Shaykh Muḥammad Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb* (n.p.: ʿUkāẓ, 1981.), 61-62.

and Īmān Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb provided insufficient rational arguments quoting solely from the texts of the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadīth* in support of the themes that he proposed. This textual-based redefinition of Islam and Īmān has led some scholars to consider *Wahhābism* as lacking in intellectual depth.

The redefining of Islam and Īmān was also attempted by the Indonesian reformists, this in response to the incursion of local traditions into Islamic religious practices and the questions raised by secularist thinkers as to the relevance of religion in the modern era. A. Hassan is one of those who were involved in the re-examination of religious doctrines and beliefs. In his book *At-Tauhied*, he explains his belief in God and man's relationship with the Divine. He also refutes therein the Christian concept of the Trinity, the worship of saints and certain animistic practices prevalent in Java. In *An-Nubuwwah*, Hassan outlines his concept of prophethood to demonstrate to the secular nationalists and the Christians that Islam was progressive and in conformity with scientific thought. *Islam dan Kebangsaan* is another of his works in which he explains his view of man's obligation towards God and his fellow men and demonstrates to Muslims the proper role of Islam in public life.[4]

Chalil's discussion of Islam and Īmān was also motivated by consideration similar to those preoccupying his fellow reformists. He believed that Islam and Īmān had been greatly misunderstood, since people did not define them in light of the prescriptions of the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. Consequently, he argued, many of those who professed Islam were misled by a wrong understanding of the fundamental positions and the theological tenets of their own religion.[5] Chalil found, for example, that people did not know the distinction between Dīn and *agama* (the Indonesian word for religion).[6] He views that the word

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[4] A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied* (Bangil: Persatuan Islam, 1958) idem, *An-Nubuwwah* (Malang: Toko Buku Bupemi, n.d.); idem, *Islam dan Kebangsaan* (Bangil: LP3B, 1984).

[5] Moenawar Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama* (Djakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1970), 12.

[6] Ibid., 19; in this discussion Chalil referred to the definition of *agama* given by Fachroeddin Al-Kahiri in his book, *Islam Menoeroet Faham Filosofi: Choetbah di Radio V.O.R.I* (Bandoeng: n.p., 1938), 3.

agama implies the divine concept as it is formulated within the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. In its technical sense, he explains, *agama* indicates the concept of belief in a supernatural power, the spirits of one's ancestors, idols and gods.[7] This concept of belief is, thus, in direct opposition to the very foundation of divine unity in Islam. By juxtaposing the two terms Din and *agama*, Chalil wants to attribute the concept of *agama* to pre-Islamic religions and Din to the religion of Islam alone. At the same time he corrects those who traced the derivation of the word *agama* to an Arabic root.[8]

In defining the word Din, Chalil resorts to its various meanings as found in the *Qur'an* which he estimates to be about ten in number. In his analysis, Chalil maintains that the word Din mostly refers to the idea of judgment, obedience and regulation, which were promulgated through divine revelation *(Shari'ah)*.[9] He then goes on to quote in particular the *Qur'anic* verse: *"inna al-din 'inda Allah al-Islam"* (the religion before God is Islam) and analyzes the technical meaning of the word Din in the verse quoted above as interpreted by several commentators.[10] In his analysis, Chalil points out that the commentators elucidated the expression Din to mean *al-millah* and *al-shari'ah*. He explains that 'Abduh, for example, said that Din was called *al-millah* because the word Din demanded the enforcement *(taklif)* of its regulations, and *al-shari'ah* because it had a system of regulations *(awda')*.[11] In this regard, Chalil affirms, the word Din in the verse quoted should be equated with Islam, since the latter is often defined as a system of regulations *(awda')* which are deemed to be enforced *(taklif)*.[12]

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[7]Chalil then referred to the definition of *agama* provided by Sutan Mohammad Zain in the latter's *Kamus Moderen Bahasa Indonesia* (Djakarta: Grafika, n. d.), 17.

[8]Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 20

[9]The *Qur'an*, 1: 3; 51: 6; 82: 17; 7: 29; 39: 2; 12: 76; 42: 13; 109: 6; 16: 52; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 15.

[10]Ibid., 20-23; the *Qur'an*, 3: 19;

[11]Muhammad 'Abduh, *Tafsir al-Manar*, vol. 3 (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Misriyah al-'Ammah li-al-Kitab, n.d.), 257.

[12]Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 20-23.

Chalil's interpretation of the word Dīn, which for him meant Islam, merits discussion. He held that the *Qur'ān* used the word Dīn to identify all religions, yet the religion that was revealed to all Prophets was Islam.[13] To support his opinion, Chalil quotes three verses declaring that the *al-dīn al-ḥaq* (Religion of Truth) is Islam. As such, according to Chalil's view, Islam was not one religion among others, but the only one revealed from Nūḥ to Muḥammad and that the other religions could be referred to as Dīn only in so far as they conformed to Islam.[14] Thus, according to Chalil, Islam alone was the *al-dīn al-ḥaq*, because each time the expression *al-dīn al-ḥaq* appears in the *Qur'ān*, it is to confirm that Islam has primacy over all domains of religion.[15]

The idea of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* was often identified with the process of its transmission. Muslim writers usually claimed that Islam was the only religion which had been passed down from messengers to succeeding generations through chains of reliable transmitters. It was due to the merit of its full transmission that Islam deserved the name of *al-dīn al-ḥaq*.[16] The historical clarity of Islam was, however, not a factor mentioned by Chalil, who chooses to speak of Islam's authenticity instead. He emphasizes the latter because he regards it as the main factor behind Islam's survival and resistance against human interpretation. He, therefore, explains that the opposite of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* is *al-dīn al-mubaddal* (a corrupt religion) like that of the *Majūs* (Zoroastrians), the *Ṣābi'ūn* (Sabians), the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book) and the *Wathanīyūn* (Idolaters).[17] Chalil associates the notion of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* with certain characteristics among them the quality of being moderate, a characteristic not shared by the *Ahl al-Kitāb*, who, according Chalil, were

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[13]He quoted a *ḥadīth* which said "We, the Prophets, only have one religion [Islam]." Ibid., 23-25.

[14]It should be mentioned that the setting of Ādam at the head of the line of Prophets was probably a later development of thought, as there are other passages in which Nūḥ appears to be the first in the line of messengers. Arthur Jefferey, "The Qur'ān as Scripture, 2," *Muslim World*, 40 (1950), 117; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 23-24.

[15]The *Qur'ān*, 9: 33; 61: 9; 48: 28.

[16]See, for example, 'Abduh's commentary on *Sūrat al-Tawbah*, 33. *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 9, 338.

[17]Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 28.

exaggerated in their religious practices. It is due to its simplicity and avoidance of excess that Islam may be distinguished from the other religions.[18]

Chalil goes on to say that this character can only be maintained by ensuring that its principles not be corrupted by its religious leaders *(rijāl al-dīn)*. It was due to the modifications, changes and additions imposed by their religious leaders, Chalil argues, that Judaism and Christianity lost their originality.[19] This point leads him into a discussion of how the *al-dīn al-ḥaq* is related to *Qur'ānic* expressions *al-dīn al-qayyim* (the Immutable Religion) or *dīnan ḥanīfan* (the faith of Ibrāhīm).[20] According to Chalil, the concept of *dīnan ḥanīfan* goes back to the original concept of monotheistic religion as voiced by Ibrāhīm. The latter had called for a religion that was unspoiled by deception and falsehood. It is, therefore, with this *dīnan ḥanīfan*, a pure monotheistic religion, that the concept of *al-dīn al-ḥaq* may also be identified.[21]

Chalil then moves on to a discussion of the word Islam. He considers how the word Islam is used in the *Qur'ān* and discovers eight different senses which he divides into three categories of meaning, namely the connection between Dīn and Islam, the interior quality of Islam and conversion to Islam.[22] Chalil further explains the word Islam by quoting the opinions of some *Qur'ānic* commentators. He was keenly attentive to the interpretation of 'Abduh who identified the word Islam with the concept of *al-tawḥīd*

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[18] Ibid.; the *Qur'ān.* 2: 171; 5: 77; 7: 31.

[19] Chalil, *Tafsir Qurān Hidaajatur-Rahmana,* vol. 1 (Solo: Siti Sjamsijah, 1958), .228, 229, 352, 360-361; Yvonne Haddad traces various meanings of Dīn in the *Qur'ān* and some of them show similarities with those put forth by Chalil. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "The Conception of the Term "Dīn" in the Qur'ān," *Muslim World,* 64 (1974), 114-125.

[20] Ibid.: the *Qur'ān.* 6: 161.

[21] See Chalil's interpretation of the verse "They say: Become Jews or Christians, if you would be guided (to salvation). Say, No (I would rather have) the religion of Ibrāhīm the True and he joined not gods with God (in Islam)." Chalil, *Tafsir Qurān Hidaajatur-Rahmana,* 350-353; the word *ḥanīf,* which means one who professes the true religion, was mostly followed by the name of Ibrāhīm and the phrase *min al-mushrikīn,* which indicated that the true religion must be committed to the principle of monotheism. See 'Abduh's commentary on *Sūrat al-An'ām.* 61. *Tafsir al-Manār,* vol. 7, 211.

[22] The *Qur'ān.* 5: 3; 3: 19; 3: 85; 6: 125; 61: 7; 29: 22; 9: 74; 49: 17; Chalil, *Definisi dan Seadi Agama.* 23.

(divine unity). 'Abduh believed, according to Chalil, that Islam was revealed to purify the human heart and mind from belief in superstitions, so that man may be totally free and dependent only on God.[23] According to 'Abduh, a true Muslim was a person who purified himself from the "filth of polytheism" *(min shawā'ib al-shirk)* and whose acts were a reflection of genuine faith *(al-īmān)* in any place and time.[24] Chalil further explains that emphasizing the purity of one's heart and conduct from *shirk* is central in defining Islam, since all rulings prescribed in the *Sharī'ah* are intended to secure *tawḥīd* from anything that could tarnish it.[25] Indeed, Chalil concludes that Islam cannot be isolated from the concept of *tawḥīd* (Īmān), since the two words, Islam and Īmān, are terms frequently used inseparably in the *Qur'ān.*[26]

Chalil takes up the discussion of the concept of Īmān by tracing its meaning in the vocabulary of the *Qur'ān* and by relying on the two *Qur'ānic* verses that employ the word Īmān in the sense of belief.[27] He also employs the definitions provided by the *ḥadīth, athar* and the jurists, all of which suggest, according to Chalil, that Īmān consists of assertion by tongue *(qawl),* internal judgment by heart *(taṣdīq)* and affirmation by deeds *(a'māl).* Thus, Chalil insists that true Īmān is not only witnessed by words *(shahādah bi-al-lisān),* but must be made alive by adherence of the heart *('ahd bi-al-qalb)* and proved by works *(a'māl bi-al-arkān).* These three elements of the act of Īmān were extracted from various sources, one from 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib who is quoted as having said: "Belief in God is assertion by tongue, confirmation by heart and good works," another, which sounds very similar, cited by Chalil from 'Ā'ishah and the final one attributed to the Prophet who said that "Īmān is not merely an adoration of God, but acceptance in one's mind and implementation of one's duties."[28]

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[23]Ibid., 47-48.
[24]Ibid.; See also 'Abduh, *Tafsīr al-Manār,* vol. 3, 257.
[25]Chalil, *Tafsīr Qur'ān Hidāajatur-Rahmaan,* 362.
[26]Ibid.
[27]The *Qur'ān,* 12: 17; 9: 62; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama,* 32.
[28]Ibid.

Chalil then expands this definition of Īmān by adding what was mentioned in the *sunnah* about it, regarding this as an important element. In doing so, he cites the opinion of al-Awzāʿī who insisted that true Īmān could be judged by the conformity of one's acts with the *sunnah* of the Prophet.[29] This was in line with the Ḥanbalī opinion which suggested that Īmān consists of words, works, the right intention *(nīyah)* and attachment to the *sunnah*. This assertion was also supported by some *ḥadīth* scholars who, according to Chalil, did not accept Īmān, unless it denoted one's adherence to all religious orders and avoidance of all the prohibitions *(maʿṣīyahs)* that He had laid down in the message expounded in Muḥammad's *sunnah*.[30]

Lastly, Chalil mentions the opinion of Sahl al-Tustarī, who had held that attachment to the *sunnah* was an important component of Īmān. Making pious statements without good deeds, al-Tustarī argued, was infidelity *(kufr)*, while assertion by the tongue with no internal affirmation was hypocrisy *(nifāq)* and acceptance by the heart without following the *sunnah* of the Prophet was heresy *(bidʿah)*.[31] Chalil does not mention any opinion which considers the implementation of Īmān in overt acts as a secondary element. Such an opinion was not rare among the theologians, particularly those who belonged to the *Māturīdī* school of theology. Even if Chalil were not familiar with the theological principles advocated by the Māturīdīs, he might have become so through some Ashʿarīs, whose opinions received an acceptance in Indonesia. The latter stressed the importance of conviction or internal judgment, saying that a *taṣdīq* in God is an internal judgment of truthfulness, which denotes obedience to God. As such, it does not forcefully require the performance of duties.[32]

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[29]Ibid., 34.
[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid., 51.
[32]L. Gardet, "Īmān," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3 (eds.) B. Lewis et. al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 1170.

Does Īmān increase and decrease? In the *Qur'ān* the increase of Īmān is frequently mentioned. The *Qur'ān* in *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*, 173, for example, states: "Those to whom people said, 'People have gathered against you, so fear them,' this increased their faith and they said, 'Sufficient is God for us, for He is the best Guardian.'"[33] And again in *Sūrat al-Fath*, 4, the *Qur'ān* mentions the possibility of the increase of Īmān by saying: 'It is He who sent tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they may add faith to their faith."[34] On this matter, Chalil was in accordance with the opinion of Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Iṣfahānī, who did not come down on the question of whether the act of Īmān can increase and decrease. Nevertheless, on the question of whether Īmān remains valid when one does not practice what he believes in, al-Iṣfahānī affirmed that in such an instance Īmān would be lost accordingly. In supporting his argument, al-Iṣfahānī quoted a *ḥadīth* which affirmed that 'An adulterer while committing an act of adultery was not a believer *(mu'min)*."[35]

Chalil supported al-Iṣfahānī's analysis that an act of disobedience could cause the loss of Īmān saying that Īmān lay strictly in the external expressions without which it would be lost.[36] By saying so, Chalil did not see that while acts of disobedience certainly diminish Īmān, Īmān itself, nonetheless, essentially remains. The implication of this is that he did not perceive Īmān as susceptible to growth and decrease. Such a view was in contradiction with the doctrine of al-Ash'arī, who believed in that Īmān could both develop and diminish, a view that generally guides the theological approach of Muslims in Indonesia.[37] Rather, his opinion was closer to that of Abū Ḥanīfah, who held that Īmān would neither increase nor decrease. This was despite the fact that Abū Ḥanīfah did not

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[33] The *Qur'ān*, 3: 173.
[34] Ibid., 48: 4.
[35] Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 52.
[36] Ibid., 53.
[37] Unlike the Ash'arīs, the Ḥanafīs denied that Īmān could increase and decrease. W. Montgomery Watt, *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1962), 78.

include actions in his conception of Īmān, as Chalil had done.[38] The fact that Chalil held that Īmān was concomitant with the performance of all rites and duties was intended to challenge those who accepted Islam only as an official religion. This is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where a substantial number of Indonesians were Muslims by confession, but, in fact, rejected most religious rituals and obligations.[39]

Chalil's opinion was also in conformity with the "doctrine" of the reformists, who desired to translate belief into works and acts. They condemned the traditionalists, who sometimes laid more weight on verbal confessions and less on acts. A case in point is the traditionalists' literal translation of a *ḥadīth* which states that whoever pronounces the *kalimah ṭayyibah* ([two] sentence[s] of witness) on his death bed will enter heaven without judgment *(bi-ghayr ḥisāb)*. The reformists, on the other hand, did not accept such a verbal-metaphysical confession and required real actions instead. This was so, because the reformists always persisted in their belief in human responsibility and, therefore, only accepted human acts as proofs of what men confessed.

The essential theological question on which the schools of *kalām* were divided was that of the distinction or non-distinction between Islam and Īmān. In the *Qur'ān*, the terms Islam and Īmān are sometimes used interchangeably, since "Muslim and Mu'min constitute the body of those who escape from hell by embracing Islam."[40] This statement, however, is not absolute, since in some instances the *Qur'ānic* usage seems to suggest that the two held different connotations.[41] Also, one *ḥadīth* states that there was a difference between

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[38]Ziauddin Ahmed, "A Survey of the Development of Theology in Islam," *Islamic Studies.* 11 (1972), 107.

[39]Moenawar Chalil, "Islam Tinggal Nama," *Abadi* (March 5; 1954); this definition of Īmān was not peculiar to Chalil as some theologians shared his view. W. Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1973), 134-135.

[40]The *Qur'ān*. 49: 17.

[41]Jane I. Smith, "Īmān and Islām," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 7. (ed.) Mircea Eliade (London: Macmillan, 1087), 119.

Islam and Īmān.[42] Īmān, which also expresses itself in the performance of rites and duties, lies deeper than Islam, just as the roots of the tree lie beneath the earth. This difference is briefly explained by a tradition in which the Prophet is quoted as having said: "Islam is external, Īmān belongs to the heart". Thereupon he [Muḥammad] pointed to his own heart three times saying: "The fear of God is here." The Ḥanafītes affirmed this distinction between Islam and Īmān. They assume that Īmān and Islam signify two different meanings; the former belief in God and His Apostle and the latter denoting submission thereto.[43]

Chalil's stand differed from that of the Ḥanafītes in that he sees Īmān and Islam as an inseparable entity. His view was based on al-Ghazālī's interpretations of the terms Islam and Īmān. al-Ghazālī said that the two sometimes make up different sets of acts, which he called *ikhtilāf* (difference). While Islam is a submission by action, Īmān is an affirmation by the heart, each has its own norms and does not interact with the other. At that time, however, Islam and Īmān were seen as intertwining in meaning, which al-Ghazālī referred to as *tarāduf* (synonymity). Islam and Īmān, thus, compose two inseparable entities, since the outer expression (Islam) must be generated from the inner affirmation (Īmān). Islam exists because of Īmān and Īmān because of Islam. Nevertheless, on still other occasions the link between the two is not synonymous, but rather accidental, which al-Ghazālī calls *tadākhul* (intervention). In such instances, Islam indicates both inward and outward submission, while Īmān subsists as one component of Islam only.[44] In his analysis of al-Ghazālī's approach to the issue, Chalil supports the second meaning, as proved by his quotation of a number of opinions that were similar to this meaning as given by al-Ghazālī.[45]

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[42]The best known *ḥadīth*, defining Islam as being distinct from Īmān is the one which describes the five duties of Islam *(arkān al-Islām)* and the six pillars of Īmān *(arkān al-īmān)*. For the definition of *arkān al-Islām* and *īmān*, see Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Mu'assasat 'Izz al-Dīn li-al-Ṭibā'ah, 1987), 66, 73.

[43]Ziauddin Ahmed, "Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and the Problem of Īmān," *Islamic Studies*, 12 (1973), 265.

[44]Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 44.

[45]Ibid.

Īmān through *taqlīd* (unreasoning imitation) was condemned by Chalil. Īmān, according to him, must be based on an intelligent acceptance, the absence of which rendered the acquisition of Īmān invalid. In order to be fully convinced of their Īmān, Muslims should investigate the signs of the universe and the indication of events that reflect divine existence.[46] Chalil supports this statement with a number of traditions that reported the Prophet as having said that: "Reason is man's custodian *(qiwām al-mar')* and religion is only for man with the [sound] reason."[47] In another instance, he selects a *ḥadīth* which enjoins people to seek logical proofs on matters of Īmān: "Oh men, search for evidence *(a'qilū)* of your God and urge one another with your reason *(bi-al-'aql)*, so that you know what is enjoined and forbidden, because that is the only way to save you on the Day of Judgment." Chalil also advances a *ḥadīth* which associates reason with the level of Īmān, as seen in a *ḥadīth* which reads: "Don't be impressed by a man's Īmān, until you know how his intellect perceives [things] *(mā dhā 'aqadū 'aqluh)*. [48]

Chalil's argument was in line with that of other reformists who condemned uncritical acceptance of Īmān. They were opposed to blind submission to Īmān on the grounds that reason is capable of having a comprehensive knowledge of God. For them, reason has to seek the Creator of this world through His signs, irrespective of the level of reason. According to them, Muslims must shun submission to conjecture and not be content with mere imitation, since a belief that is not supported by proofs and reason will inevitably hamper the progress of their intellectual faculties.[49]

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[46]Ibid., 85-86; Moenawar Chalil, "Bagaimana Berdzikir Kepada Allah," *Abadi* (April 23; 1954).

[47]Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 88.

[48]Ibid. 88-89.

[49]Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, *Refutation of the Materialists*, in Nikki R. Keddie *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Dīn "al-Afghānī"* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), 171; Aminah Muhammad Naṣīr, *al-Shaykh Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb wa Manhajuh fī Mabāḥith al-'Aqīdah* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1983), 84; Muhammad 'Abduh, *Durūs min al-Qur'an al-Karīm* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-'Ulūm, 1980), 72-73.

The view that Imān requires demonstrative reasoning was a classical argument. It became an essential principle in scholastic theology *(kalām)*, which was built on rational demonstration and relied only occasionally on dogmatic traditions. It is well known that the method of *kalām* rested on advancing the rational arguments *(dalil 'aqli)* first, before establishing doctrinal arguments *(dalil naqli)* Imān as defined by Chalil above cannot, therefore, be seen as a reformist definition, but rather as a restatement of the old theological formula dressed up to fit his reformist campaign against *taqlid* and traditions. It should also be noted that the traditionalists, who were regarded as ardent practicers of *taqlid*, also required logical proofs with respect to matters of Imān. Machfudz Shiddiq, the chairman of the Central Executive *(Tanfidhiyah)* Board of the *Nahḍat al-'Ulamā*,[50] explains that since Imān is the foundation of religion *(uṣūl al-din)*, rational arguments are, therefore, of unquestioned necessity. He believes that such requirements are not hard to fulfill even on the part of the least talented man, since logical proofs based on sensible phenomena are in abundance.[51] Unlike Chalil who refers to the *Qur'ān* and *ḥadith* only, Shiddiq, in giving his definition, refers to *al-Luma'*, a text written by a Shāfi'ite scholar. Despite their different methods in deducing the definition of Imān, both reformists and traditionalists came to the same conclusion, i.e. that reason is of prime importance in developing a sense of Imān, even for those who are not trained at all in reasoning, logical proofs or the art of dialectics. This is so because the common people are still capable of reaching logical conclusions through *dalil ijmāli* (inconclusive arguments).[52]

What differentiated the reformists and traditionalists on the issue of Imān was the fact that while the former confined themselves to its cognitive message, the latter went beyond that message by giving to the principle of Imān an emotional dimension. This

[50] For Mahfudz Shiddiq's role in the *N. U.*, see a brief account on that issue in A. Muchith Muzadi, "Al-Maghfur-lah K. H. Machfudz Shiddiq: Tokoh Penegak Khittoh," *Aula* (September; 1991), 47-52.
[51] Machfudz Shiddiq, *Disekitar Soal Idjtihad dan Taqlid* (Soerabaja: Pengurus Besar Nahdlatul Ulama, 1959), 60.
[52] Ibid., 60; A. Hassan, *At-Tauhied*, 3-5.

dimension may be seen in the didactic poems *(manzūmahs)* which were introduced by the traditionalists to disseminate love and appreciation of their religion in the heart of a reciter There are a number of *manzūmahs* that sing of God's omnipotence, names and attributes and of the Prophet's exemplary conduct expressed in theological terms.[53] The *manzūmah*, which is composed in a metrical rhyme-scheme, aims at arousing the emotion of its reciter and at heightening his religious feeling. The intensity of the reciter's emotion was expected to increase the psychological element in his faith, so that the emotional aspect was maintained. Needless to say, the Indonesian reformists rejected the recitation of *manzūmahs*, an example of this being the *Persis'* attack on the tradition of chanting a particular *manzūmah* prior to the *Subh* prayer.[54]

Chalil's perspective on *taqlīd* in Īmān led him to believe that its practice had prevailed long before the coming of Islam among the followers of previous religions. He declares that this practice did not die away and that a theological revision should be constantly undertaken in order to correct the situation. He affirms that the practice of *taqlīd* is based on the belief that the acceptance of Īmān in the eyes of God is dependent on following a religious leader *(ketua agama)* or a holy man *(orang suci)*. He states that holy men have created the notion that ordinary men lack the power to present their own prayers to God and that in order to obtain forgiveness they must depend on the mediation of holy men. Chalil accuses those who wield religious authority of treating others like babies *(bayi)*, since the basic right of ordinary men to exercise heir own rational power is taken over by their so-called superiors.[55]

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[53]There are number of *manzūmahs* famous among which are the *manzūmahs* describing God's twenty attributes *(wujūd, qidam, baqā'* etc.) and exalting the Prophet and his *sahābah (sahuwāt al-badr)*.

[54]The *manzūmahs* were recited, while the prayer attendants were sitting in preparation for the obligatory (congregational) prayers and waiting for the coming of other attendants or the *imām* (leader of prayers). The *manzūmahs* were also commonly chanted in *pengajians* (religious gatherings). See "Pantoen Made in Ba'alwij," *Pembela Islam*, no. 51.

[55]Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama*, 96-98; idem, *Tafsir Qurān Hidaajatur Rahmaan*, 359, 361.

Chalil's approach in linking the practice of *taqlīd* to the followers of pre Islamic religions coincides with that of al-Afghānī, who asserted that in Christianity men are treated differently according to religious hierarchy and race. al-Afghānī also said that only the priests are given control over the acceptance of belief and the forgiveness of sins. Other men, even if they were to achieve a high degree of perfection, would not be allowed to present their own sins before the divine threshold and to seek forgiveness.[56] al-Afghānī's criticism of Christian dogma ultimately sought to affirm that Islam, unlike Christianity or other faiths, was the only religion that removed class distinctions and that, indeed, if there was any distinction in Islam it was based only on intellectual and spiritual perfection.[57] However, unlike al-Afghānī, Chalil's attack on *taqlīd* was an act of revision not affirmation, since it was aimed at redressing the Īmān of his co-religionists. In this respect, Chalil shared more with 'Abduh than al-Afghānī. In his criticism of the practice of *taqlīd*, 'Abduh wanted to free his fellow Muslims from the shackles of *taqlīd* that they had imposed upon themselves due to their belief in the authority of religious leadership *(al-sulṭah al-dīnīyah)*.[58]

Although Chalil gives reason a very high rank with regards to Īmān, he is still traditional in his views that it is revelation and not reason that made the knowledge of God obligatory, as can be seen in the extensive textual citations that he advances. He certainly does not dare to deny or even question the role of revelation or to consider reason as self-sufficient in guiding the human mind towards knowledge of God. It is true that reason can attain knowledge of God's existence, but it is revelation that commands reason to explore the signs of God's creation.[59] In this regard, he does not break away from the theological

[56]Keddie *An Islamic Response to Imperialism*, 171.

[57]Ibid., 172.

[58]Ibid., 130-187 and Muḥammad 'Abduh's "al-Radd 'alā Faraḥ Anṭūn," in *al-Imām Muḥammad 'Abduh* (eds.) Adūnīs and Khālidah Sa'īd (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilm li-al-Malāyin, 1983), 81-82.

[59]Compare this, for instance, with al-Zamakhsharī's opinion on the role of reason in Īmān. Lutpi Ibrahim, "The Relation of Reason and Revelation in the Theology of Az-Zamakhsharī and al-Bayḍāwī," *Islamic Culture*, 54 (1980), 63-74.

paradigm laid down by the early theologians. The fact that his support and that of his reformist counterparts for the possibility that God's existence might be known through investigation "struck" a chord in Indonesian society, does not necessarily mean that they were offering a concept in any way different from that of the early theologians.

Chalil believed that releasing human reason from the bondage of *taqlid* had far reaching implications for the status of rational thought, science and human obligations in Islam. Islam, he affirms, is a pure religion *(agama fitrah)* which does not hamper progress but rather condemns the intellectual stagnation that has arisen as a result of *taqlid.* It greatly encourages its followers to broaden their intellectual vision, in as much as the *Qur'an* repeatedly orders them to use their reason and intelligence in understanding the mystery of creation. Not only is the exercise of reason in Islam intended to consolidate belief in God's existence, but it is also of use in analyzing factors that are conducive to material strength and progress. He further explains that it is on man's power [reason] and not that of any religious authority that achieving progress in his life depends, as implicitly stated by the Prophet.[60]

In Chalil's eyes, every human being is created with a desire for perfection which is expressed in his relentless efforts to pursue that perfection *(mencari kesempurnaan)* in his life. Thus, it is only through the maximum exercise of human reason that progress and perfection can be obtained. Referring to a *Qur'anic* injunction, Chalil argues that God created the whole universe to provide man with the resources necessary for his daily requirements and welfare.[61] Logically, he states, God has also obliged human beings to explore and maintain what has been created for them on earth.[62] In order to accomplish the

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[60]The Prophet has been reportedly said: "In religious matters you have to follow me, but in worldly matters you know them better than I do." In this respect, Chalil also quotes several *Qur'anic* verses underlining the necessity of understanding, intelligence and reflection. Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama,* 107; the *Qur'an* 10: 101; 10: 19.

[61]Ibid., 1: 29; Chalil, *Definisi dan Sendi Agama,* 100-105.

[62]Moenawar Chalil, *Islam dan Economie* (Djogjakarta: Penjiaran Islam, n.d.), 96-97.

duty of exploiting the wealth of the earth and of maintaining it, science has to be developed and studied. The *Qur'ān* itself even declares, Chalil explains, that since God endowed human beings with a little knowledge, so man is recommended to pray for the increase of that knowledge. Therefore, in Islam the possessors of knowledge are favored with a prominent place and are distinguished as a special class. This means, Chalil further states, that worldly progress which can only develop in a climate of freedom of thought and scientific advances has a sound basis in Islam.[63]

In Chalil's view, Islam is an all-embracing religion that encompasses both spiritual and material matters. It regulates all kinds of mundane activities, such as transactions, commercial enterprises *(urusan syarikat)*, agriculture, trade and others.[64] He challenges the traditional image of austere Islam, stating that Islam is not a religion for those who flee from worldly pursuits. Islam, he explains, is more than merely an institution that seeks spiritual enjoyment through *du'ā', dhikr* (repetition of God's names through certain formulas), *salāh*, etc.[65] Again, Chalil cautions his co-religionists that earthly progress should be pursued through their own endeavors and not through imitation *(taqlīd)* of the previous generations, whose glory and achievements were appropriate only to their own time and place. He supports this assessment with the *Qur'ānic* injunction stating, "That was a people that has passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did and you of what you do. Of their merits there is no question in your case."[66]

In connection with the role of reason, Chalil condemns misconceptions regarding *ikhtiyār* (effort). He affirms that all the miseries and misfortunes inflicted upon Muslims are the outcome of their own deeds. His opinion on *ikhtiyār* should be connected with his concept of *du'ā'*, since both point to his views on the dynamism and work-ethos

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[63]See his interpretation of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*. 31-33 in his *Tafsir Qur'ān Hidaajatur-Rahmaaan.* 126-129.

[64]Chalil, *Islam dan Economie* 14-15.

[65]Ibid. 17.

[66]Ibid. 107; the *Qur'ān.* 2: 141.

prescribed by Islam. In elaborating on the meaning of *ikhtiyār*, Chalil cites a *Qurānic* injunction that was popular with the reformists: "Verily God will not change the state of a people until they change their own state."[67] According to Chalil's opinion, Muslims often fail to interpret correctly the concept of *ikhtiyār*. *Ikhtiyār*, he states, should be understood as essential in life, for without it everything would come to a standstill and progress would never be realized. What one usually fails to understand, in his view, is the fact that in the operation of *ikhtiyār*, reason *('aql)* is a determining factor, since it is reason alone that controls the person who exercises the *ikhtiyār*. Furthermore, Chalil states that *ikhtiyār* consists of two components, one being the outer and the other the inner element. The latter, to which reason belongs, should be elevated to a position superior to that of the former, due to its capacity to distinguish between right and wrong, a capacity which directs the outer component on the road to success. Chalil further states that change in man must come about through his own reason and it is up to every individual to view himself critically, for he cannot blame anyone other than himself for his failure.[68] As such, Chalil's concept of *ikhtiyār* aims at promoting the idea of "change through reason and action" which constituted a prerequisite to human progress.

Pursuing worldly progress was an important issue in the reformist tradition. It was out of confidence in the ability of man to realize his ends through struggle and effort that Chalil attacked the practice of *zuhd* (abstinence).[69] Chalil states that *zuhd* was commonly misunderstood as abstinence from worldly things and detachment from all that God has created. In adopting this practice, he argues, Muslims become apathetic in the pursuit of

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[67]The *Qurān*, 13: 11; 'Abduh invokes this verse repeatedly in *al-'Urwah al-Wuthqā*. See Vatikiotis' comment on this issue in P. J. Vatikiotis, "Muhammad 'Abduh and the Quest for a Muslim Humanism," *Islamic Culture*, 31 (1957), 115.

[68]Moenawar Chalil, "Arti Ichtiar Sepandjang Pimpinan Agama Islam," *Abadi* (April 30; 1953); idem, "Pendjelasan Arti Tawakkal," *Abadi* (June 26; 1953); idem, "Peraturan Allah Atas Segenap Bangsa Dan Hubungannja Atas Kaum Muslimin," *Dawlah Islamyah* (October; 1957), 26.

[69]Ibid., 33.

worldly progress and inevitably leave many fields of life untended.[70] *Zuhd* in its true meaning, Chalil further remarks, seeks to place all material accomplishments within the framework of divine grace. He consolidates his opinion by quoting a *ḥadīth* which states: "*Zuhd* is not to declare lawful what is forbidden and not to neglect material pursuit, but *zuhd* is that you do not regard wealth in your hands superior to God's power." In fact, *zuhd*, Chalil states, is not an abandonment, but a search for and pursuit of material achievements, as 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib has said: "Whoever strives in the world with the intention of seeking it for God's sake is exercising the practice of *zuhd.*"[71] Material gain itself, therefore, is not condemned, but is prescribed by textual injunctions. What is condemned by Islam, Chalil confirms, is the accumulation of wealth which denies a share to others or excessive attachment to worldly comforts and pleasures that divert one's attention from God.[72]

As was the case with other reformists, Chalil's attitude towards *ṣūfism* was hostile. He denounced the *ṭarīqah (ṣūfī* order) as having no religious basis whatsoever in Islam. All the major *ṭarīqahs*, such as the *Qādirīyah*, the *Nashqbandīyah*, the *Dasūqiyah*, the *Shādhilīyah*, the *Tijānīyah* and others, he states, came into being in the fifth and sixth centuries of the *Hijrah* long after the Islamic era *par excellence*. He points out that the advent of the *ṭarīqah* coincided with the "golden age of Islam", when the faithful had lost their grip on the pristine teachings of Islam, the *Qur'ān* and *sunnah*. What the *ṭarīqah* introduced, such as *dhikr* and other *ṣūfī* formulas, were ritual innovations *(bid'ah)*, according to Chalil, which were performed neither by the Prophet nor by his *ṣaḥābah* (companions) nor even by his *tābi'ūn* (the following generation).[73] In his reflections on the emergence of the *ṭarīqah*, Chalil isolates the *ṭarīqah* from the context of its gradual

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[70]Moenawar Chalil, "Zuhud Sepandjang Pemimpin Islam," *Abadi* (July, 17; 1053); idem, "Ratjoen Jang Berbahaja Bagi Oemmat Islam," *Pembela Islam*, no. 56, 25-27; idem, *Islam dan Economie*, 44.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid., 44-45.

[73]Moenawar Chalil, "Apa Arti Thariqat Itu?" *Abadi* (February 19; 1954).

development. He does not view it as a crystallization of spiritual tendencies rooted in ascetic practices apparent in early Islam. Asceticism emerged in response to the change in the economic circumstances during the Umayyad period, when there was an influx of wealth from the conquered lands. Chalil's view that the prime mover of *tarīqah* was man's inability to cope with the pressure of worldly progress is not entirely correct either. He fails to realize that, apart from the pressure of worldly life, the *Qur'ān* itself speaks of the relationship of individuals to God in an intense and passionate way, which is conducive to the birth of mystical experience.[74] As for his attack on the practice of *dhikr*, Chalil does not discuss the *Qur'ānic* text which, indeed, enjoins on every Muslim the practice of recollecting God, a practice which was translated into the tradition of *dhikr* by the *ṣūfīs*.[75]

It is due to the reformists' attack on *ṣūfīsm* as a deviation from the practice of the Prophet and the *salaf* that controversy over the *tarīqahs* arose. Citing Ibn Khaldūn's opinion on *ṣūfīsm*, Siradjuddin Abbas, a leading traditionalist scholar, challenged this notion saying that *ṣūfīsm* was historically rooted in the religious practices of the *ṣaḥābah* and the *salaf*. The practice was later shaped into an established form in the second and the third centuries of *Hijrah* in response to the society's increased appetite for worldly life.[76] Yet, Abbas did not discuss the central issue raised by Chalil concerning the absolute obedience of a *murīd* (disciple) to his *shaykh* (master), which was part and parcel of the basic rules of *ṣūfī* life.[77] The *shaykh's* absolute authority over his disciples could prove very dangerous due to possible misuse.[78] It was on the issue of the *murīd-shaykh* relationship that a bitter conflict between the reformists and the traditionalists broke out in

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[74] The *Qur'ān*. 2: 115; 50: 16.

[75] Ibid., 33: 41.

[76] Siradjuddin Abbas, *40 Masalah Agama*, vol. 3 (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1992), 34-35;

[77] Chalil. *Definisi dua Sendi Agama*. 23.

[78] Ibid.

west Sumatra in the early twentieth century, signaling the beginning of a more intensive reform movement in Indonesia.[79]

Chalil's discussion of Dīn affirmed that Islam was not one religion among others, but the one and only Dīn revealed throughout the chain of prophethood extending from Nūḥ to Muḥammad. The concept of Dīn in Islam should not be confused with other belief systems, which may be described by other terms, such as *agama* or the like. The disconnection of Dīn from non-Islamic elements was an initial step for Chalil in his attempt at purifying the faith, before building a fresh understanding of Islam and Īmān and making further endeavors to purify Islam of other non-Islamic elements. Islam should be defined in reference to the concept of *tawḥīd*, he advocated, which constitutes the core of the system of belief in Islam. Apart from that Islam is not only a complete submission to God, but also a comprehensive system of living. The division of life into sacred and profane is dedicated to God and nothing that is so dedicated can be profane. This is particularly true, since Islam, according to Chalil, obliges its followers to be active players in secular life. Because Islam is an all-embracing religion, it is impossible to deny that Islam is a true guide for human life, if correctly defined and understood.

Chalil was an advocate of the purity of Īmān, which alone can validate the whole fabric of religious life. For him, true Īmān means its confession by the tongue and its expression by acts. It is only by saying and acting that man can find a true basis for his relationship with God. As Īmān is the essence of the spiritual message of Islam, the meaning of Īmān must be correctly understood. Anything that can distort the right conception of Īmān should be eliminated, so that Īmān will always be prosperous and pure. Īmān was considered by Chalil as the first thing inscribed in human minds. If one's mind

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[79]Karel A. Steenbrink, *Pesantren, Madrasah, Sekolah: Pendidikan Islam dalam Kurun Moderen* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1986), 147.

were to become idle and adulterated, it would be no longer possible to distinguish between good and evil, and adversity and misfortune would then overtake one from all sides.