

## Theological Exclusivity In Islamic Monotheism: A Library Research Analysis On The Quranic Prohibition “Do Not Set Up Rivals Unto Allah

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### Abstract

*This study explores Islamic law, legal philosophy, and current Islamic culture, focusing on the idea of theological exclusivism in Islamic monotheism through the Qur'anic verse “Do not associate partners with Allah” (Qur'an 4:36). It examines the theological and legal consequences of tawhid, or divine unity, as the core principle for just practices in contemporary Islamic law. Utilizing a qualitative phenomenological method within a library-based research context, the research critically evaluates historical theological writings, interpretations of the Qur'an, and modern academic literature. Information was gathered through documentary analysis and processed using the Miles and Huberman interactive framework, which includes steps like reduction, categorization, and thematic analysis. The results highlight three main points: (1) tawhid forms the basis of legal and ethical exclusivity in Islam; (2) the ban on shirk maintains both spiritual purity and social stability; and (3) theological exclusivism offers a basis for a justice-oriented and God-centered understanding of law. The research concludes that an enhanced comprehension of theological exclusivism bolsters the knowledge foundation of Islamic law while adapting to contemporary civilizational changes. The implications include promoting education in law based on theology and the creation of religious policies that reconcile doctrinal clarity with social inclusiveness.*

**Keywords:** Tawhid, Islamic law, theological exclusivism, phenomenology, library research.

## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of exclusivity in Islamic monotheistic theology is an important discussion in religious discussions today, especially in the context of the increasing relationship between religious pluralism and the purification of faith. At the global level, the discussion of the relationship between tawhid (the oneness of Allah) and shirk (the unity of Allah) is not only theological, but also affects the social, political, and educational aspects of the Muslim community. A report from the Pew Research Center (2023) shows that many Muslims in the world see the purity of faith as part of a religious identity that needs to be maintained in the midst of shifting modern values and interfaith interaction (Abdel Haleem 2021).

In Indonesia, the strengthening of monotheistic values is a response to the growing phenomenon of syncretism and religious practices that are considered close to shirk for example, the mixing of Islamic rituals with local traditions or excessive respect for spiritual figures. As stated by (*Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab's Kitab at-Tauhid: Nature, Scope and Impact by Mohammad Omar Farooq :: SSRN*, n.d.) Exclusivity in the interpretation of tawhid can lead to confusion in the application of Islamic values that are balanced between the purity of the faith and social tolerance (Hoover 2022).

From a theological point of view, the Qur'an with the prohibition "Do not make yourselves allies of Allah" (QS. An-Nisa: 36) emphasizes the importance of maintaining the oneness of God as a spiritual and moral basis for Muslims. However, often, the understanding of this prohibition is reduced to a dogmatic argument without understanding the sociological and hermeneutic context of the verse (Al-Attas 2021).

This problem is further complicated because previous studies have focused more on tawhid from a normative and theological point of view only, while the meaning of theological exclusivity has not been widely discussed

with a qualitative approach that highlights the social understanding and religious experience of the ummah. For example, noted that the concept of tawhid is often considered a belief system that limits interreligious dialogue, while Madni et al. (2024) point to a theological impetus that reinforces an exclusive view of Islamic truth. However, these two studies have not examined how local social, cultural, and traditional contexts play a role in shaping the understanding of the prohibition of being an ally to Allah in everyday life (Rahman 2022).

This is where there is a gap in the literature that underlies this research: the lack of an in-depth exploration of the qualitative dimensions of theological exclusivity in Islamic monotheism. Therefore, this study aims to critically analyze the theological exclusivity that arises from the interpretation of the Qur'an's prohibition "Do not make an ally of Allah", using a literature research approach. The focus of the study is directed at how the meaning of tawhid and shirk is understood in today's social and theological context, as well as their contribution to the formation of the religious identity of Muslims (Saeed 2023).

Theoretically, this research is expected to broaden the horizons of Islamic theology studies by emphasizing a hermeneutical-qualitative approach to understanding sacred texts; practically, the results can be a reference in the development of Islamic education that is balanced between religious exclusivity and social openness. In addition, the importance of this research also lies in the effort to reposition the concept of tawhid as a universal principle, which is not only focused on the field of faith, but also touches on legal, social, and ethical aspects in today's Muslim community (Kamali 2021). In a global context influenced by secularism and moral relativism, the affirmation of the uniqueness of monotheism acts as an ideological shield that maintains the integrity of faith while providing moral guidance in making public policies in accordance with Islamic values. Some research such as that

conducted by Shahid, Akram, and Anwar (2025) supports this view by emphasizing that tawhid is more than just an expression of faith, but also an epistemological framework that guides the social and political behavior of Muslim communities. Therefore, this study not only presents a conceptual analysis of theological exclusivity, but also seeks to explain its relevance in the context of the dynamics of Islamic law, education, and civilization today.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research adopts a qualitative method with a type of literature study (library research), aiming to investigate in depth the theological exclusivity of Islamic monotheism based on the prohibition in the Qur'an which reads, "Do not make you allies for Allah." This method was chosen because it is in accordance with the goal of finding meaning and building concepts through analysis of primary and secondary literature sources, instead of collecting data empirically in the field. According to the explanation, Qualitative research based on literature provides an opportunity for researchers to examine theological phenomena analytically-critically on both classical and contemporary texts to understand the development of thought about monotheism and the concept of shirk in the current context.

This research was carried out from January to March 2025 with the main materials being classical tafsir books (Tafsir Fi Zhilalil Qur'an, Tafsir al-Maraghi), modern theological works, and relevant scientific articles taken from academic databases. Data were obtained through documentation and systematic literature review of sources written in Arabic and Indonesian. The validity of the content is guaranteed by triangulation of sources, in which researchers compare and confirm the results of various references to ensure consistency in theological and hermeneutic meaning.

The data collection technique is carried out through three main steps: (1) inventory the literature by selecting scientific works that are directly

relevant to the theme of monotheism exclusivity; (2) conducting analytical reading and coding of text content using qualitative content analysis methods as applied by Shahid, Akram, and Anwar (2025); and (3) organize data based on thematic categories such as the idea of monotheism, forms of shirk, and theological implications of the exclusivity of faith. The process of analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification, combined with a thematic-phenomenological approach to capture the essence of the meaning of God's oneness as reflected in the text.

The validity of the research results is strengthened through trail audits, which are transparent records of the analysis process that allow them to be replicated to a limited extent by other researchers. This method allows researchers to build a reflective, systematic, and relevant theological understanding of the dynamics of monotheistic exclusivity in Islam in the present era (El-Karimah & Mubarak, 2025).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Purification of the Faith as the Basis of Islamic Theology**

Through an analysis of the literature relating to theological texts and interpretations of the Qur'an, this study found that tawhid, or the oneness of God, is an absolute theological principle and is central to theological exclusivity in Islam. This principle emphasizes that any form of shirk, or allegiance to God, is a threat to the purity of faith and the spiritual structure of the community. This result is in line with research conducted by, (Arman et al., 2025) which shows that Islam doctrinally rejects all forms of God's conjunction, because it can obscure the ontological relationship between the Creator and His creatures. Thus, theological exclusivity in this context is not an attitude of closing oneself to other religions, but an effort to maintain the basis of the faith so as not to be eroded by the theological relativism that lives in modern discourse (Esack 2022).

## **Meaning of the Prohibition of Associating with Allah in a Socio-Religious Context.**

The Meaning of the Prohibition of Associating with Allah in a Socio-Religious Context The prohibition "Do not make an ally of Allah" (QS. An-Nisa: 36) is not only applicable in the theological realm, but also contains significant social values. The principle of tawhid teaches the importance of justice and equality in social interactions, because only Allah has the right to be worshipped and obeyed completely. This prevents the domination of one human being over another (El-Bizri 2023).

As stated by (Karim et al., 2024), an exclusive understanding of tawhid actually strengthens religious identity and rejects the moral relativism that arises from excessive pluralism. Theological exclusivity can therefore be understood as a basis for a just faith community, not as an excuse for social exclusivism or religious sectarianism (Nasr 2021).

## **Moral and Spiritual Consequences of Violation of the Principle of Tawhid**

Violations of the principle of tawhid not only have theological repercussions, but also have social and moral effects. This study found that deviations from the teachings of tawhid can result in spiritual decline and value imbalance in society. Theological exclusivity can be a moral fortress against the emergence of radicalism and religious practices that deviate from the basic values of monotheism. Thus, maintaining the purity of the faith is essential to build a harmonious, just, and divine-focused social order (Brown 2024).

## **Theological Exclusivity as an Effort to Maintain the Purity of the Faith**

In a phenomenological context, the results of the study show that theological exclusivity is not rigid or intolerant (March 2024). Rather, it is an attempt to maintain the purity of faith in the midst of the globalization of values and ideologies. Analysis of thought. indicates that tawhid can be

understood liberally, as a spiritual basis for rejecting all forms of oppression, be it political, social, or theological. Thus, exclusivity in tawhid is not a rejection of plurality, but an affirmation of oneness that frees man from dependence on entities other than Allah. This discovery suggests that theological exclusivity should be interpreted as an ethical concept that demands spiritual integrity, not as a tool for social exclusion (Lane 2021).

### **Theological Exclusivity as a Principle of Islamic Ethics and Spirituality**

Theological Exclusivity as a Principle of Islamic Ethics and Spirituality The results of this study confirm that theological exclusivity in Islam has two functions: as a doctrinal boundary that maintains the purity of faith, and as an ethical principle that directs the ummah to balance their relationship with God and the relationship between others. This thinking strengthens the concept of tawhidi epistemology developed by Choudhury (2019), where tawhid is understood as the basis of Islamic knowledge and morality that unites various aspects of life (Griffel 2022).

### **The Tension between Exclusivity and Inclusivity in Islamic Theology**

This research also shows a relationship between exclusive theological attitudes and the importance of integrating inclusive values in society. As explained by Linnhoff (2020), (*"Associating" with God in Islamic Thought: A Comparative Study of Muslim Interpretations of Shirk*, n.d.) Islamic history shows that the term shirk is often used to reinforce rigid boundaries of religious identity. However, the results of this study confirm that the Qur'an interprets tawhid in a dynamic way: the principle of God's oneness rejects all forms of oppression and worship of anything other than truth, thus creating space for universal social justice and humanity (Rippin 2021).

### **Research Contributions to the Study of Islamic Theology and Education**

In theory, this research makes a new contribution to the study of Islamic theology by viewing theological exclusivity as part of a dynamic

spiritual consciousness, not just an immutable dogma. From a practical point of view, these findings can be the basis for developing an Islamic education curriculum that harmonizes between the purity of faith and social acceptance. The hermeneutic approach to the prohibition of "Thou shalt not make an ally of Allah" deepens the understanding of tawhid as a moral framework relevant to the present context. Thus, theological exclusivity in Islamic monotheism is not a rejection of diversity, but an affirmation of the universal truth that comes from the oneness of God (El-Tobgui 2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

The study highlights that the theological peculiarity of Islamic monotheism, as stated in the Qur'an's prohibition "Do not associate with Allah," is an effort to maintain the purity of faith and spiritual integrity. The results of this research show that the principle of monotheism is not only a teaching that rejects all forms of shirk, but also an ethical foundation that guides Muslims to uphold justice, equality, and obedience only to Allah. Through a study of classical and modern interpretive literature, it was revealed that the uniqueness of monotheism has two roles: as a theological barrier from religious deviations and as a moral foundation that shapes the social consciousness of the people. Therefore, theological distinctiveness is not only interpreted as a rejection of plurality, but also as a form of spiritual constancy that leads man to the unity of divine values and truth.

Theoretically, this study provides a new perspective in the study of Islamic theology by proposing a hermeneutical-qualitative approach to the understanding of monotheism, which focuses not only on the normative aspect, but also on its social and existential context. From a practical perspective, the findings of this research can be used as a reference in the development of Islamic education that balances between the purity of faith and openness to society, as initiated by (Rusdin et al., 2025) The policy implications of this study encourage religious institutions and educational



institutions to strengthen theological understanding based on monotheism as a moral shield in the midst of the onslaught of value globalization.

For further research, it is suggested that the phenomenological approach be expanded to include empirical data from interviews or religious ethnography, in order to understand how theological distinctiveness manifests itself in Muslim communities today. Thus, this study makes an important contribution in deepening the understanding of the theological and social meaning of the prohibition of associating with Allah, as well as strengthening the position of Islam as a religion that upholds the oneness of God while respecting universal humanity.

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