
The Sufi Thought of Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili: Reconciling Sharia and Spirituality in Responding to Modern Challenges

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Abstract

Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili (1615-1693) stands as a pivotal figure in the intellectual history of Islam in the Nusantara, particularly for his masterful synthesis of sharia and Sufism during the theological crises of 17th-century Aceh. This study examines the foundational pillars of as-Singkili's Sufi thought and their enduring relevance for contemporary challenges. Employing a qualitative method with an exploratory-phenomenological approach through library research, this study analyzes primary sources including Tarjuman al-Mustafid and 'Umdat al-Muhtajin, alongside secondary literature on his biography and teachings. The findings reveal that as-Singkili's Sufi framework is anchored in six key pillars: reinterpretation of wujudiyah affirming God's transcendence; inseparability of sharia and tasawuf as complementary dimensions; the concept of Nur Muhammad as cosmic center; the Seven Ranks systematizing God-creation relationships; dhikr as primary practice of divine awareness; and ethics as manifestation of tawhid in behavior. His integrative model—Sharia → Tariqa → Haqiqa → Ma'rifa—established a middle path (wasatiyyah) that prevented both antinomian mysticism and rigid formalism, shaping the distinctive moderate character of Nusantara Islam. The study demonstrates that as-Singkili's teachings remain urgently relevant for addressing modern challenges including materialism and consumerism, digital-age individualism and cyberbullying, and the need for holistic character education. His emphasis on spiritual balance (zuhud), self-control (mujabadah), divine consciousness (muraqabah), and ethics rooted in tawhid offers practical frameworks for navigating contemporary complexities while maintaining spiritual integrity. As-Singkili thus represents a timeless model of Islamic moderation whose intellectual legacy continues to provide foundations for building a tolerant, spiritually grounded, and ethically engaged Muslim society

Keywords: *Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili, Sufism, Sharia-Tasawuf Integration, Islamic Moderation.*

Abstrak

Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili (1615-1693) berdiri sebagai tokoh penting dalam sejarah intelektual Islam di Nusantara, khususnya untuk sintesisnya yang hebat antara syariah dan tasawuf selama krisis teologis Aceh abad ke-17. Studi ini meneliti pilar-pilar dasar pemikiran Sufi as-Singkili dan relevansinya yang abadi untuk tantangan kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan eksploratori-fenomenologis melalui penelitian kepustakaan, studi ini menganalisis sumber-sumber primer termasuk Tarjuman al-Mustafid dan 'Umdat al-Muhtajin, di samping literatur sekunder tentang biografi dan ajarannya. Temuan-temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa kerangka kerja Sufi as-Singkili berlabuh pada enam pilar utama: reinterpretasi wujudiyah yang menegaskan transendensi Tuhan; ketidakterpisahan syariah dan tasawuf sebagai dimensi yang saling melengkapi; konsep Nur Muhammad sebagai pusat kosmik; Tujuh Tingkatan yang mensistematisasikan hubungan Tuhan-ciptaan; Dzikir sebagai praktik utama kesadaran ilahi; dan etika sebagai manifestasi tauhid dalam perilaku. Model integratifnya is Syariah → Tariqah → Haqiqah → Ma'rifah, menetapkan jalan tengah (wasatiyyah) yang mencegah mistisisme antinomian dan formalisme yang kaku, membentuk karakter moderat khas Islam Nusantara. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa ajaran as-Singkili tetap relevan untuk mengatasi tantangan modern termasuk materialisme dan konsumerisme, individualisme era digital dan perundungan siber, serta kebutuhan akan pendidikan karakter holistik. Penekanannya pada keseimbangan spiritual (zuhud), pengendalian diri (mujahadah), kesadaran ilahi (muraqabah), dan etika yang berakar pada tauhid menawarkan kerangka kerja praktis untuk menavigasi kompleksitas kontemporer sambil mempertahankan integritas spiritual. Dengan demikian, As-Singkili merepresentasikan model moderasi Islam yang abadi, yang warisan intelektualnya terus memberikan fondasi bagi pembangunan masyarakat Muslim yang toleran, berlandaskan spiritual, dan terlibat secara etis.

Kata Kunci: Syekh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili, Tasawuf, Integrasi Syariah-Tasawuf, Moderasi Islam

INTRODUCTION

Syekh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili stands as an undeniable intellectual and spiritual beacon in the history of Islamic civilisation in the Nusantara, particularly in the Sultanate of Aceh during the 17th century. More than just a local scholar, his role and ideas transcended geographical boundaries, making significant contributions not only to the spread and deepening of Islam in the Aceh and Malay regions but also extending his influence to the international academic stage. The scholarly network he established with leading Islamic study centres in the Middle East, such as Mecca and Medina, serves as concrete evidence of his intellectual capacity. From there, he absorbed and then disseminated knowledge, which later manifested in monumental works that remain fundamental references in the Malay Islamic scholarly tradition to this day (Hariyadi & Faradits, 2018).

The era of as-Singkili was a time when the archipelago was experiencing the golden age of Islamic intellectualism. He lived during the same period as other great scholars who also contributed to the intellectual landscape of Islam in Southeast Asia, such as Syekh Yusuf al-Makassari from South Sulawesi, who was steadfast in spreading the Khalwatiyyah order and fighting against colonialism, and Syekh Nuruddin ar-Raniri, who was active in Aceh with his teachings that strongly emphasised sharia law and opposed the doctrine of wujudiyah. Interactions, both direct and indirect, as well as the dialectic of thought with these scholars, demonstrate the rich intellectual dynamics of the time. Additionally, his teachers in the Haramain, such as Sheikh Ahmad al-Qusyasyi and Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kurani, were also important figures who shaped the intellectual character of as-Singkili and connected him to global scholarly traditions (Ridwan et al., 2022).

The socio-political conditions in Aceh during the 17th century also shaped the arena of as-Singkili's da'wah and intellectual activities. This period marked the zenith of the Aceh Darussalam Sultanate, yet it also faced internal challenges such as leadership fluctuations and intense religious debates, as well as external pressures from Western colonial powers beginning to threaten the region's stability. In this context, the people of Aceh desperately needed a religious scholar who could provide spiritual and social guidance and maintain unity among the people amid the ongoing dynamics. As-Singkili emerged as a stabiliser and guide, focusing not only on scholarly aspects but also on the moral and social development of society (Imawan, 2022).

One of the most notable features of As-Singkili's intellectual journey was his brilliant ability to reconcile and harmonise the teachings of sharia and Sufism. The era in which he lived was marked by intense debates and polarisation of thought between fuqaha who emphasised the formalities of Islamic law (external aspects) and Sufis who prioritised inner experiences and spiritual closeness to God (internal aspects). Amidst this tension, as-Singkili emerged as a moderate and integrative figure who was able to bridge the two spectrums of thought. He successfully demonstrated that sharia and Sufism are not two conflicting entities, but rather two sides of the same coin that complement and are inseparable in shaping the perfect Muslim (*insan sempurna*). His wise and inclusive approach to addressing these differing viewpoints not only mitigated conflict but also created harmony and balance in the religious practices of society, making him a model of spiritual leadership worthy of emulation by future generations (Aminudin, 2020).

The uniqueness of as-Singkili's Sufi thought lies in several compelling dimensions that make it exceptionally relevant for contemporary discourse. First, his approach to Sufism was remarkably practical and applicable, offering concrete guidance on how to maintain spiritual life while remaining actively engaged in worldly affairs a balance desperately needed in today's fast-paced society. His pedagogical innovation in translating complex Sufi concepts into accessible Malay language demonstrated his mastery in contextualization without compromising the essence of the teachings, making profound spiritual wisdom available to common people. Furthermore, his system of suluk and tariqa essentially constituted a comprehensive character education model that harmoniously developed cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions an approach highly relevant to contemporary educational reforms in Indonesia (Ali Muammar Hasibuan & Hasan Bakti Nasution, 2025; Farmawati, 2021).

Second, amidst the onslaught of materialism that measures everything in terms of material possessions and consumerism that encourages unlimited satisfaction, the Sufi values he instilled such as sincerity in every deed, zuhud (detachment from excessive worldly attachments), and self-control (mujahadah) form a solid foundation for addressing the spiritual disorientation that plagues contemporary society. Moreover, in an era of digital-age individualism that erodes social solidarity, his emphasis on fostering strong harmonious relationships between humans and God (habluminallah) and among humans (habluminannas), combined with ethics rooted in tawhid and divine consciousness (muraqabah), offers crucial guidance for navigating online interactions and preventing phenomena such as cyberbullying. These teachings guide humanity to find meaning in life, cultivate empathy, and maintain inner and outer balance amidst the hustle and bustle of modern existence. His integrative approach that harmonizes cognitive understanding, spiritual internalization, and ethical behavior provides a holistic framework for character education that addresses the moral crisis facing contemporary youth. Finally, as-Singkili's success in integrating local Nusantara wisdom with universal Islamic teachings created a unique synthesis that exemplifies the authentic character of Nusantara Islam, demonstrating how Islamization could occur without erasing indigenous cultural identity (Asyiq Billah & Amir, 2025).

Beyond these conceptual contributions, as-Singkili's multifaceted insights are crystallized in his monumental works, which have become milestones in the intellectual

history of Islam in the Nusantara region. Chief among these is the first Malay-language commentary on the Qur'an, *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*. This commentary is a translation and interpretation of the 30 chapters of the Qur'an, compiled using the methods of *bi al-ra'yi* (reasoning) and *bi al-ma'tsur* (tradition), and draws heavily on classical commentaries such as *Tafsir al-Jalalain* and *Tafsir al-Baydawi*. The presence of this tafsir not only enriches the Malay Islamic scholarly tradition but also revolutionarily opened broader access to understanding the Qur'an for the Malay and Nusantara communities, who had previously been hindered by language barriers. Through *Tarjuman al-Mustafid*, as-Singkili became not only a translator of sacred texts but also a bridge of understanding connecting the scholarly traditions of the Middle East with the local context of the Nusantara region. In addition to his exegesis, his works in the fields of fiqh, hadith, and tasawuf further shaped the character of Islamic scholarship in this region, reflecting the maturity of his thought and the depth of his knowledge (Ali Muammar Hasibuan & Hasan Bakti Nasution, 2025).

Given these profound intellectual contributions and enduring relevance, in-depth research on the tasawuf of Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili is both crucial and urgent. This study is not merely an effort to trace historical footprints, but is essential for comprehensively understanding the dynamics of Islamic development in Indonesia—from the historical formation of its civilization, the underlying intellectual nuances, to the timeless relevance of its teachings in addressing modern-day challenges. More importantly, it is hoped that this study will make a significant contribution to strengthening the moderate, inclusive Islamic identity of the Nusantara, rooted in a balance between the physical and spiritual realms, and grounded in the noble local traditions and universal values of Islam as a mercy to all creation (*rahmatan lil 'alamin*). By understanding as-Singkili, we also understand the spiritual and intellectual foundations that continue to shape the distinctive character of Islam in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

Background of Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili's Focus on Sufism

The selection of Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili to study and teach Sufism was influenced by several fundamental factors that shaped his intellectual and spiritual journey, as well as the context of his time. His involvement with Sufism is deeply rooted in the Islamic scholarly tradition of the Haramain (Mecca and Medina) and various centres of study in the

Middle East, where he pursued his education for approximately 19 years (from the age of 27 to 46). His intellectual journey spanned a wide range of locations, beginning in Doha in the Persian Gulf region, several cities in Yemen (such as Zabid, Mocha, and Bait al-Faqih Ibnu Ujail), Jeddah, and culminating in Makkah and Madinah (Rivauzi, 2018).

In these various places, he interacted directly with a number of prominent scholars, but in the field of Sufism, the two most influential figures were Sheikh Ahmad al-Qusyasyi (d. 1660 CE) and Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kurani (d. 1689 CE) in Madinah. Both were prominent spiritual guides of the Shattariyyah order and held important positions within the international network of scholars at the time. From Sheikh Ahmad al-Qusyasyi, as-Singkili not only received the chain of transmission for Islamic jurisprudence but also the authorisation to become a successor (khalifah) within the Shattariyyah order. After al-Qusyasyi's death, he continued his studies under Sheikh Ibrahim al-Kurani, who was both a student and successor of al-Qusyasyi. This profound spiritual and scholarly experience affirmed that Sufism was an integral part of comprehensive Islamic education for as-Singkili (Rivauzi, 2018).

Additionally, the socio-religious conditions in Aceh during the 17th century also contributed to the central role of Sufism in as-Singkili's mission. At that time, Acehnese society was engulfed in intense theological debates and controversies surrounding heterodox Sufi teachings, particularly the doctrine of wujudiyyah (unity of being) championed by scholars like Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin as-Sumatrani. These teachings, which emphasized the concept of wahdatul wujud (the oneness of existence) and the notion that all existence is essentially divine manifestation, were perceived by orthodox scholars as blurring the fundamental distinction between Creator and creation a dangerous theological deviation that could lead to the erosion of Islamic law and moral accountability. Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri, who preceded as-Singkili in Aceh, had vehemently condemned these teachings as heretical (zindiq) and even orchestrated the burning of books containing wujudiyyah doctrines, creating deep divisions within Acehnese religious society (Taufikurrahman & Zuhri, 2021). In this volatile situation, there was a need for a scholar who could provide solid spiritual guidance, calm intellectual turmoil, and harmoniously integrate the outward and inward dimensions of Islam. As-Singkili, with his depth of knowledge in fiqh and Sufism, emerged as the ideal figure to address this need. He believed that Sufism, when practised correctly and grounded in Sharia law, is the path to achieving

perfection in faith and character, as well as bringing essential inner peace to individuals and society (Nabilata, 2022)

As-Singkili believed that Sufism, when practised correctly under the guidance of orthodox teachers and grounded strictly in Islamic law, is the path to achieving perfection in faith and character (ihsan), bringing essential inner peace to individuals while maintaining the integrity of Islamic doctrine. His approach sought to establish a middle path (wasatiyyah) that honored both the *zahir* (outward) and *batin* (inward) dimensions of Islam without compromising either, thus healing the theological wounds that had fractured Acehnese religious society (Taufikurrahman & Zuhri, 2021).

The Pillars of Sufi Thought of Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili

An in-depth analysis of the works of Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili reveals several key pillars in his Sufi thought that form the foundation for his moderate and practical approach:

1. **Reinterpretation of Wujudiyah.** Affirmation of God's Transcendence. One of as-Singkili's significant contributions is his reinterpretation of the concept of wujudiyah. In the context of the intense debates of his time, he offered a sharp critique of extreme wujudiyah teachings that tended to blur the boundaries between God (the Creator) and creation (creatures). Through his work *'Umdat al-Muhtajin ila Suluk Maslak al-Mufradin*, as-Singkili firmly affirmed the transcendence of God (*tanzih*), emphasising that although God encompasses everything, there is an essential and fundamental difference between the Creator and His creation. This stance reflects his caution in preserving the purity of *tawhid* from the potential for *shirk* or doctrinal deviation caused by misunderstandings of *ittihad* (union) or *hulul* (incarnation). This approach keeps spirituality firmly grounded within the framework of *sharia* (Arif, 2021).
2. On one hand, it counters antinomian mysticism that claims spiritual attainment exempts one from religious law, a tendency seen in certain contemporary Sufi movements that prioritize subjective experience over scriptural authority. On the other hand, it challenges rigid fundamentalism that rejects all forms of spiritual interiority and mystical experience, viewing them as heretical innovations. In an era marked by religious polarization, where extremist groups exploit theological ambiguities to justify violence while puritanical movements condemn all Sufism as deviance, as-Singkili's nuanced theology provides a

middle path (*wasatiyyah*) essential for fostering moderate, intellectually grounded Islam that honors both the letter and spirit of divine revelation.

3. **The Inseparability of Sharia and Sufism: A Complementary Integration.** As-Singkili firmly rejected the dichotomy between sharia and Sufism, viewing them as two inseparable and mutually reinforcing dimensions of Islamic practice. He articulated this through a classic metaphor: sharia is the trunk and branches (the visible structure), while Sufism is the sap flowing within, giving life and vitality to the whole organism. Without sharia, Sufism becomes an anarchic spirituality; without it, it becomes a rigid formalism devoid of spiritual substance. This integrative vision positions Sufism not as an alternative to sharia, but rather as its refinement and internalization, culminating in the attainment of *ihsan* (Aminudin, 2020). As-Singkili's position bears strong similarities to Imam al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE), who reconciled the tension between *fuqaha* and Sufis; both argued that authentic Sufism must be grounded in orthodox faith and jurisprudence (Bima, 2022; Farmawati et al., 2023). Furthermore, As-Singkili also aligned himself with Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624 CE), who criticized the extremism of *wahdat al-wujud* and emphasized *wahdat al-shuhud*. Both As-Singkili and Sirhindi were concerned about antinomian Sufism that claimed to be immune from sharia, but As-Singkili's approach was more conciliatory and less polemical than Sirhindi's (Firdaus & Sahib, 2021). Although the two are inseparable, As-Singkili draws clear functional boundaries to maintain balance: Sharia focuses on outward deeds (*af'al zahirah*) and legal compliance, setting minimum requirements binding on all Muslims, while Sufism concentrates on inner states (*ahwal batinah*) and spiritual realization, pursuing the optional maximum perfection (*ihsan*) (Kasdi et al., 2023). This complementarity is illustrated through the sequential and cumulative stages of the spiritual journey: Sharia → Tariqah → Haqiqah → Ma'rifah. He asserts that one cannot reach a later stage without strengthening the previous one (Synthesis from Arif, 2021; Aminudin, 2020). As-Singkili's integrative model offers a corrective to the false dichotomy in modern society, which is often trapped at the extremes of rigid formalism ("Islam without a soul") or spirituality without obligations ("soul without a body"). His teachings demand a holistic practice of Islam, producing Muslims who are both law-abiding and spiritually alive, outwardly submissive and inwardly transformed (Nauval Satria Pratama et al., 2024).

4. The Concept of Nur Muhammad: Cosmic Centre and Moral Inspiration. As-Singkili teaches that the Light of Muhammad is the first creation of Allah, serving as the intermediary for the creation of the entire universe. This concept is explored in his mystical treatises, affirming the position of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as the cosmic centre and the initial manifestation of divine light. This concept forms an important foundation for spiritual understanding of the origin and purpose of human creation. In a broader context, understanding Nur Muhammad instils deep love and respect for the Prophet as a perfect example (*uswah hasanah*), which is essential in shaping the character and morals of Muslims (Ihsan et al., 2022). By internalizing that human existence derives from and reflects the prophetic light, Muslims develop intrinsic motivation for moral excellence—creating resilient character resistant to materialism, peer pressure, and moral relativism. For modern character education, this offers a framework where moral excellence becomes the fulfillment of one's cosmic purpose rather than mere rule-following. The concept also counters extremist narratives that reduce the Prophet to a warrior figure, restoring the holistic vision of Muhammad as the perfect manifestation of divine attributes—merciful, just, wise, and compassionate—whose example encompasses all dimensions of human excellence (Ihsan et al., 2022).
5. The Seven Ranks: Systematisation of the Relationship between God and His Creatures. As-Singkili's thought also integrates the concept of the Seven Ranks (*Martabat al-Sab'ah*), a metaphysical framework that explains the process of the creation of the universe through seven levels or phases of emanation. Although he was not the originator of this concept, he popularised and explained it systematically in his work *Kifayat al-Muhtajin* and in the teachings of the *Syattariyyah* order. This concept describes how the absolute existence of God (*Ahadiyyah*) manifests itself gradually until it becomes the physical universe and the creatures within it (*Alam Insan*). As-Singkili uses this concept to explain the relationship between God and creatures in a systematic and hierarchical manner, inviting humans to understand their relative position in the cosmic order. This understanding encourages humility (*tawadhu'*) and awareness of human limitations and dependence in the face of God's majesty (Miswari, 2024). The Seven Ranks cosmology offers profound insights for addressing materialism and ecological degradation. In an age dominated by materialistic worldviews that reduce reality to physical matter and economic value, as-Singkili's hierarchical cosmology restores a sense of sacred order. By teaching

that material reality (Alam Insan) represents only the final, outermost manifestation of vaster spiritual reality, Muslims are liberated from the tyranny of materialism the delusional belief that wealth and possessions constitute ultimate fulfillment. This cosmological perspective cultivates spiritual *zuhud* (detachment) through proper hierarchical understanding: the material realm is legitimate but subordinate to higher spiritual realities, producing a healthy relationship with the world using it within ethical bounds but not worshipping it. (Miswari, 2024; Rivauzi, 2018).

6. *Dhikr: The Primary Practice of Divine Awareness*. In As-Singkili's Sufi system, *Dhikr* plays a central role as the primary practice for affirming God's oneness and freeing oneself from heedlessness (*ghaflah*). In his book *Fath al-Mubin* or treatises on the *Syattariyyah* order, he emphasises the importance of *Dzikir* as an effective means to draw closer to Allah, strengthen inner spirituality, and cultivate divine awareness in every aspect of daily life. *Dhikr* is not merely understood as a repetitive verbal ritual but rather as an internalisation of the values of *tawhid* that transforms one's behaviour, attitudes, and worldview into more Islamic ones (Wendi Parwanto, 2023). In an era of digital distraction and attention fragmentation, as-Singkili's emphasis on *dhikr* as continuous divine awareness (*muraqabah*) offers a critical corrective. Modern life's "continuous partial attention" erodes spiritual consciousness and ethical awareness. As-Singkili's practice of *dhikr* as cultivating God-consciousness throughout daily activities functions as Islamic mindfulness that produces heightened presence where every action is permeated by divine oversight. This addresses two key digital-age challenges: First, individualism—*dhikr* cultivates awareness that "Allah is with you wherever you are" (Q 57:4), creating relational consciousness that counters digital culture's self-contained bubbles and opens hearts to genuine human connection. Second, cyberbullying *muraqabah* creates an internal moral compass that regulates behavior in anonymous online spaces. (Wendi Parwanto, 2023; Hariyadi & Faradits, 2018).
7. *Ethics. The Manifestation of Tawhid in Behaviour*. As-Singkili asserts that ethics must be firmly rooted in the testimony of *tawhid* and reflected in every aspect of a Muslim's life. In his teachings spread across various works, including those of a *fiqh* nature such as *Mir'at al-Tullab* (though this is more *fiqh*-oriented, *akhlak* remains an integral part of the *sharia* practices he teaches), he demonstrates that *akhlak* is not merely social ethics or a collection of manners, but a tangible manifestation of deep faith and authentic practice of

tauhid. He encourages Muslims to display noble akhlak in every social interaction, whether within the family, the broader community, or in national and political life. Spiritual perfection is measured by the perfection of akhlak. (Damanhuri, n.d.). As-Singkili's insistence that ethics must be rooted in tawhid addresses the moral crisis and character education failure where people know right from wrong but lack internal motivation to choose right. His framework presents ethics not as external code but as natural expression of tawhidic consciousness when Muslims internalize tawhid, ethical behavior flows organically from recognition that all actions occur before Divine Reality, creating ethical integrity rooted in ontological truth. For character education, this shifts focus from behavior modification to spiritual formation where ritual practices become ethics laboratories. His emphasis on intention (niyyah) and sincerity (ikhlas) addresses moral hypocrisy by prioritizing internal states over external compliance students ask "Is my heart pure before Allah?" rather than "Will I get caught?" His insistence that akhlak encompasses family, community, and political life counters compartmentalization where people maintain different ethical standards for different spheres, providing resources for addressing corruption, prejudice, and injustice while offering moral foundations transcending cultural relativism (Damanhuri, n.d.; Nauval Satria Pratama et al., 2024).

Moderation and Reconciliation of Sharia and Sufism

Having established the foundational pillars of his Sufi thought, we now examine how as-Singkili's integrative approach manifested in his principle of moderation and reconciliation. In his principle of moderation, as-Singkili firmly asserted that true Sufism must not and will never contradict Sharia. He viewed Sharia as the primary foundation and external framework that every Muslim must adhere to like rails guiding a journey. Meanwhile, Sufism is the inner dimension that enriches, refines, and gives deep meaning to every implementation of Sharia. Thus, the practice of true Sufism must always be based on the laws of Sharia; without Sharia, Sufism will lose its legal footing and potentially fall into heresy or deviation (Yulisman & Zaidan, 2018).

As-Singkili offers an ideal model of integration that places the Sharia as the external framework and Sufism as the inner spirit. He encourages Muslims to perform external acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and zakat with full awareness, sincerity, and deep spiritual understanding. This aims to produce a complete personality, not only obedient in terms of

law and ritual, but also possessing a gentle heart, noble character, and a spiritually pure soul. This model has become a hallmark of Islam in the Nusantara region (Rijal & Umiarso, 2017).

As-Singkili's approach of moderation and reconciliation had a significant impact that transcended his time. First, he succeeded in creating religious social harmony in Acehese and Nusantara society, which at the time was vulnerable to division due to differences in religious understanding. The integration of sharia and Sufism proposed by as-Singkili became the main reference in building a tolerant, inclusive, and balanced religious life. Second, this integration model fundamentally shaped a distinctive Islamic identity in the Nusantara, where the outward and inward dimensions go hand in hand. Religious traditions in Aceh and other regions became more adaptive to local wisdom while remaining committed to authentic Islamic principles, blending the spirit of fiqh with the gentleness of Sufism. Third, Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili's reconciliation ideas continue to inspire Muslim scholars and intellectuals to this day. In facing the challenges of modernisation, religious pluralism, and the phenomena of radicalism and puritanism that often pit these two dimensions against each other, as-Singkili's thought offers a strong foundation for building a moderate, tolerant, and strong-charactered Muslim society, both outwardly and inwardly, making it an intellectual legacy that stands the test of time. (Nauval Satria Pratama et al., 2024).

The Relevance of As-Singkili's Thought in the Modern Era

Beyond its historical significance, as-Singkili's Sufi framework offers profound solutions to contemporary challenges. This section examines three critical areas where his teachings remain urgently relevant.

1. **Countering Materialism and Consumerism through Spiritual Balance.** First, in the face of the tide of materialism that measures happiness solely by material possessions and unceasing consumerism that drives the fulfilment of unlimited desires, as-Singkili's thought offers an antithesis in the form of a balance between material and spiritual aspects (Elkarimah & Sa'dullah, 2023). This does not mean rejecting the world or shunning the pleasures of life, but rather placing the world in its proper proportion as a bridge to the afterlife, so that it does not become the ultimate goal that binds the soul (Aminudin, 2020). This understanding fundamentally teaches humanity not to become slaves to material objects but to use them wisely and responsibly. Its implications extend to a sustainable and ethical lifestyle, where consumption is based on need rather than mere desire, and encourages practices of sharing and social responsibility as an antithesis to selfish

accumulation of wealth (Rivauzi, 2018). Furthermore, this idea is reinforced by self-control (mujahadah an-nafs), which is the persistent struggle against excessive desires and instinctive urges, which are often the main triggers of impulsive consumerism. Mujahadah trains individuals to have self-discipline in managing their desires, delaying instant gratification, and prioritising spiritual needs over material demands. This is a process of building a strong character, capable of resisting the temptations of a consumer culture that offers fleeting and superficial happiness.

2. In addition, a deep understanding of the Seven Dignities a hierarchical concept that describes the stages of creation, from the absolute reality of God (Ahadiyyah) to physical manifestation (Insan Kamil) plays a crucial role. This concept reminds humanity of the limitations of the material world and the transient nature of everything except God. By understanding their relative position and that of the world in relation to God, humans can avoid excessive material worship and worldly pleasures. This holistic approach effectively helps overcome the tendency to live solely for the fulfilment of momentary desires, returning humans to the search for true meaning and unlimited inner wealth, as well as to spiritual satisfaction that is far more lasting than the illusory happiness of material consumption. This fosters the development of individuals who are content (qana'ah) and grateful for the blessings they receive, freeing themselves from the shackles of material competition and the endless cycle of desire that often serves as a source of anxiety in the modern era (Nauval Satria Pratama et al., 2024).
3. Addressing Digital Age Challenges: Individualism and Cyberbullying. Secondly, the Sufi teachings of Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili offer a crucial solution in responding to modern challenges such as the growing individualism and problematic impacts of the digital world, including the phenomena of cyberbullying and polarisation that divide society. His teachings fundamentally promote the development of universal values such as empathy, compassion, and strong social solidarity, serving as an antithesis to the alienation of the digital age. (Ihsan et al., 2022). Through the practice of dhikr, which is not only understood as a verbal ritual but also as a continuous awareness of the divine presence (muraqabah), the individual's soul will be enlightened and achieve inner peace. This peaceful inner state effectively cultivates sensitivity and compassion towards others, while significantly reducing tendencies towards selfishness or aggression, which often serve as triggers for cyberbullying and conflicts in digital spaces. Practically speaking, the

implementation of this teaching in the digital age can take concrete forms: ethics rooted in tauhid encourage individuals to apply polite, constructive, and compassionate communication ethics on social media, avoiding hate speech, the spread of hoaxes, or divisive provocation. Awareness of ihsan cultivates a strong internal filter before sharing or commenting on content, ensuring that every online interaction reflects noble human and spiritual values (Hariyadi & Faradits, 2018).

4. Foundations for Character Education and Holistic Human Development. Finally, as-Singkili's Sufi thought, particularly its emphasis on ethics as a manifestation of monotheism and the importance of remembrance (*zikr*), provides a strong foundation for the development of character education and spirituality in the modern era. Amidst the onslaught of information, disinformation, and complex moral challenges, education that focuses solely on intellectual intelligence (hard skills) is insufficient to shape a well-rounded individual. As-Singkili's teachings integrate cognitive dimensions (understanding of knowledge), affective dimensions (internalisation of values), and psychomotor (application in behaviour), shaping a generation that is not only intelligent in science and technology but also possesses strong personal integrity, noble character in line with the example of Prophet Muhammad SAW, deep spiritual awareness, and excellent mental resilience in facing stress and life pressures.

CONCLUSION

Sheikh Abdur Rauf as-Singkili's contributions to Islamic civilization in the Nusantara represent a masterful synthesis of sharia and Sufism that addressed the theological crises of 17th-century Aceh. Emerging amid extreme wujudiyyah teachings and rigid formalism, he established a middle path (*wasatiyyah*) that honored both the *zahir* (outward) and *batin* (inward) dimensions of Islam. His Sufi thought is anchored in fundamental pillars, reinterpretation of wujudiyyah affirming God's transcendence, inseparability of sharia and tasawuf as complementary dimensions, the concepts of Nur Muhammad and Seven Ranks providing cosmological frameworks, centrality of *dhikr* as divine consciousness practice, and ethics as *tawhid*'s manifestation in behavior. His hierarchical integration model: Sharia → Tariqa → Haqiqa → Ma'rifa—prevented both antinomian mysticism and spiritual sterility, demonstrating that authentic Sufism strengthens rather than weakens commitment to Islamic law.

As-Singkili's reconciliatory approach created lasting impacts: fostering religious harmony in divided society, shaping Nusantara Islam's distinctive moderate identity, and establishing an enduring intellectual legacy. His thought remains urgently relevant for contemporary challenges offering spiritual balance against materialism and consumerism through zuhud and mujahadah, addressing digital-age individualism and cyberbullying through ethics rooted in tawhid and muraqabah, and providing holistic character education integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions to produce balanced individuals (*insan kamil*). As-Singkili thus stands as an exemplary model of *wasatiyyah*, whose wisdom continues to illuminate the path toward a moderate, spiritually grounded, and ethically engaged Islamic life in the modern world.

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