

Reconstructing Tawhid: Tawhid As The Foundation Of Social Reform (An Analysis Of Ibn Taymiyyah's Thought In The Contemporary Context)

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Abstract

This study examines Ibn Taymiyyah's concept of tawhid and explores its reconstruction as a foundation for social reform in the contemporary context. Although tawhid has traditionally been discussed within theological discourse, its broader social, moral, and political implications remain highly relevant for addressing contemporary challenges such as social injustice, corruption, declining public integrity, and moral crises. This research employs a qualitative normative approach using library research. Primary data are derived from Ibn Taymiyyah's principal works, while secondary sources include scholarly books and peer-reviewed journal articles. Data were collected through document analysis and interpreted using content analysis and a hermeneutic approach. The findings demonstrate that Ibn Taymiyyah conceptualizes tawhid as a comprehensive ethical framework encompassing the dimensions of rububiyah, uluhiyyah, and asma' wa al-sifat. Beyond its theological significance, tawhid functions as a normative foundation for justice, accountability, ethical governance, and social solidarity. Reconstructing this concept provides an Islamic ethical paradigm capable of promoting social transformation and responding effectively to the moral, social, and political challenges faced by contemporary Muslim societies.

Keywords: Tawhid; Ibn Taymiyyah; Social Reform; Islamic Ethics; Contemporary Islamic Thought



INTRODUCTION

Tawhid (Islamic monotheism) constitutes the most fundamental principle of Islam, affirming the absolute oneness of Allah as the sole deity worthy of worship and obedience (Wahidi et al., 2025). At its most essential level, *tawhid* places God at the center of every dimension of human existence, encompassing spiritual, moral, and social life. Consequently, *tawhid* extends beyond a purely theological affirmation of divine unity; it also carries profound implications for how individuals understand life, construct social relationships, and organize society (Gaffar & Anees, 2025). Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, *tawhid* has long been regarded as the foundational principle upon which the entire framework of Islamic values, law, and ethics is established (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2024).

Classically, *tawhid* was predominantly examined within the framework of *kalam* (Islamic theology), focusing on debates concerning the attributes of God, the nature of divinity, and the boundaries between faith and disbelief (Hairani & Putri, 2024). As Islamic intellectual discourse evolved, however, Muslim scholars increasingly emphasized that *tawhid* possesses not only theological significance but also a profound social dimension (Pizzi, 2024). Rather than being confined to a doctrinal statement of faith, *tawhid* came to be understood as a comprehensive ethical paradigm capable of shaping individual moral consciousness while simultaneously providing the normative foundation for a just social order. In this perspective, *tawhid* directs believers toward the realization of justice, honesty, responsibility, and collective welfare within society (Saffari, 2023).

Among the most influential Muslim scholars who developed the social implications of *tawhid* was Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328 CE). Renowned as a jurist, theologian, and reformist thinker, Ibn Taymiyyah lived during one of the most turbulent periods in Islamic history. His lifetime coincided with profound political, social, and intellectual crises following the Mongol invasions, which severely destabilized the Muslim world. Beyond their devastating political and military consequences, these upheavals also generated widespread religious fragmentation, moral decline, and social disorder among Muslim communities (Rusdin et al., 2025).

Confronted with these circumstances, Ibn Taymiyyah undertook a critical reassessment of the condition of the Muslim ummah. He argued that the decline of Muslim civilization could not be explained solely by political or military weaknesses but was fundamentally rooted in the deterioration of authentic religious understanding (Maevskaya & Aga, 2021). In his view, many religious beliefs and practices had deviated from the original teachings of Islam and consequently undermined the essence of *tawhid*. He therefore advocated a return to the primary sources of Islam—the Qur'an and the Sunnah—while reaffirming *tawhid* as the



indispensable foundation of both individual faith and collective social life (Asyari et al., 2024).

Within Ibn Taymiyyah's intellectual framework, *tawhid* is not merely an individual spiritual conviction but a comprehensive normative principle with far-reaching social implications (Kusmanto & Nasrulloh, 2026). Genuine monotheism requires that every aspect of human activity, whether personal or public, be directed toward sincere devotion to Allah. Consequently, *tawhid* serves as the ethical basis for constructing a social order founded upon justice, honesty, accountability, and social solidarity. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, a society that truly embodies *tawhid* will reject oppression, moral corruption, injustice, and all forms of social exploitation because such practices contradict the divine order established by God (Aqbar & Iskandar, 2021).

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah's conception of *tawhid* extends into the sphere of politics and governance. He maintained that political authority constitutes a divine trust (*amanah*) whose primary purpose is to establish justice and safeguard the welfare of society (Amirullah et al., 2026). Political leadership, therefore, must be exercised according to moral principles derived from Islamic teachings rather than personal interests or arbitrary power. In this sense, *tawhid* functions not only as a theological doctrine but also as an ethical and normative foundation for political legitimacy, social governance, and public responsibility (Karingayi, 2025).

In the contemporary era, Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding of *tawhid* as the basis of social reform has become increasingly relevant (Kusmanto & Nasrulloh, 2026). Modern Muslim societies continue to confront complex challenges, including moral deterioration, widening social inequality, corruption, declining public integrity, and the erosion of ethical governance (Putra et al., 2024). Amid the pressures of modernization and globalization, there is an urgent need to reconstruct religious understanding in ways that transcend ritualistic observance and provide meaningful responses to contemporary social realities (Sokolovskyi et al., 2021).

The reconstruction of *tawhid* within the contemporary context is particularly significant because of its potential to function as a comprehensive paradigm of social ethics capable of inspiring societal transformation (Hadita & Thamrin, 2026). When understood as an integrated concept encompassing spiritual, moral, and social dimensions, *tawhid* offers a normative framework for fostering justice, human dignity, moral responsibility, and civil society (Sinaga et al., 2025). Accordingly, Ibn Taymiyyah's thought should not merely be regarded as a historical theological legacy but as an intellectual resource with enduring relevance for addressing contemporary social challenges and advancing Islamic thought in response to changing historical circumstances (Salsabila & Malahayatie, 2026).

Against this background, this article aims to examine Ibn Taymiyyah's conception of

tawhid and to explore how it may be reconstructed as a normative foundation for social reform in contemporary Muslim societies. Furthermore, the study investigates the contemporary relevance of his ideas in addressing current social, political, and cultural transformations. By revisiting Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding of *tawhid* through the lens of contemporary social challenges, this article seeks to contribute to the development of Islamic thought that is not only theologically grounded but also capable of offering practical and ethical solutions to the complex problems confronting modern societies.

METHOD

This study employs a normative qualitative research design based on a library research approach. The primary sources consist of Ibn Taymiyyah's major works concerning the concept of *tawhid*, while the secondary sources include scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and academic literature on Islamic theology, social reform, and contemporary Islamic thought. Data were collected through comprehensive document analysis of relevant literature. The study applies content analysis combined with a hermeneutic approach to interpret Ibn Taymiyyah's ideas within their historical and contemporary contexts. Furthermore, a descriptive-analytical method is employed to reconstruct the concept of *tawhid* as a paradigm for social reform and to assess its contemporary relevance in addressing the moral, social, and political challenges confronting modern Muslim societies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tawhid In Ibn Taymiyyah's Thought

Tawhid occupies a central position in Islamic thought and constitutes the fundamental foundation of the entire system of Islamic belief and religious practice (Fernández, 2024). In Ibn Taymiyyah's intellectual framework, *tawhid* is not merely understood as a theological doctrine affirming the absolute oneness of Allah; rather, it is a comprehensive principle governing every dimension of human existence, including spiritual, moral, and social life (Kusmanto & Nasrulloh, 2026). For Ibn Taymiyyah, a proper understanding of *tawhid* cultivates profound religious consciousness while simultaneously establishing a social order grounded in justice, integrity, and moral responsibility (Rusdin et al., 2025).

Within his systematic exposition, Ibn Taymiyyah explains *tawhid* through three interrelated dimensions: *tawhid al-rububiyyah* (the Oneness of Lordship), *tawhid al-uluhiyyah* (the Oneness of Worship), and *tawhid al-asma' wa al-sifat* (the Oneness of the Divine Names and Attributes) (Untung & Nofriyanto, 2016). These categories are not intended to divide the

concept of *tawhid* into separate doctrines but rather to provide a methodological framework for explaining the various manifestations of Allah's oneness and their implications for human life. Consequently, *tawhid* is understood as an integrated concept encompassing humanity's relationship with both God and the created world.

Tawhid al-Rububiyah: Affirming Allah's Absolute Sovereignty

Tawhid al-rububiyah emphasizes that Allah alone is the Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign of the entire universe (Yusof et al., 2025). According to Ibn Taymiyyah, every aspect of existence is subject to Allah's authority and divine will, and no created being possesses the power to create or govern the universe independently of Him (Suleiman, 2020).

This dimension of *tawhid* instills the awareness that human beings are entirely dependent upon Allah. Human existence, sustenance, and destiny are all subject to divine decree and governance. Such awareness nurtures humility, gratitude, and recognition of human limitations before the Almighty (Sukma, 2025).

Nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyyah argues that acknowledging Allah's lordship alone is insufficient to fulfill the essence of Islamic monotheism (Amaliyah et al., 2024). Throughout history, many communities recognized Allah as the Creator while simultaneously engaging in acts of worship directed toward other beings. Consequently, recognition of *tawhid al-rububiyah* must necessarily be accompanied by a sincere commitment to *tawhid al-uluhiyyah* (Andini et al., 2024).

Tawhid al-Uluhiyyah: Exclusive Devotion to Allah

Tawhid al-uluhiyyah represents the core of Ibn Taymiyyah's understanding of Islamic monotheism. It affirms that Allah alone deserves absolute worship, obedience, and ultimate devotion. Every form of worship—whether ritual or non-ritual—must be directed exclusively toward Allah without associating any partners with Him (Rusdin et al., 2025).

For Ibn Taymiyyah, *tawhid al-uluhiyyah* extends far beyond formal religious practices such as prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Every lawful human action performed with the intention of seeking Allah's pleasure constitutes an act of worship. Consequently, this dimension of *tawhid* carries significant implications for social, economic, and political life (Hakim et al., 2025).

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah maintains that genuine devotion to Allah must be reflected in moral conduct and social responsibility. A Muslim who truly understands *tawhid* strives to uphold justice, preserve honesty, and reject oppression, corruption, and moral deviation (Mahanis & Zamsiswaya, 2025). Thus, *tawhid al-uluhiyyah* shapes not only the vertical

relationship between humanity and God but also the horizontal relationship among human beings.

Tawhid al-Asma' wa al-Sifat: Knowing Allah Through His Names and Attributes

Another essential dimension of Ibn Taymiyyah's conception of *tawhid* is *tawhid al-asma' wa al-sifat*, which concerns affirming Allah's names and attributes as revealed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah (Untung & Nofriyanto, 2016). Ibn Taymiyyah emphasizes that these divine attributes must be accepted without distortion (*tahrif*), denial (*ta'til*), speculation regarding their modality (*takyif*), or anthropomorphic comparison (*tamthil*) (Alkhattaf, 2024).

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, understanding Allah's names and attributes has profound spiritual significance. By contemplating attributes such as the Most Merciful, the Most Just, and the All-Wise, believers are encouraged to embody corresponding moral virtues in their daily lives. Such understanding deepens awareness of Allah's majesty and inspires sincere submission and obedience (Solahudin et al., 2025).

In the social sphere, *tawhid al-asma' wa al-sifat* also contributes to moral character formation. A believer who recognizes Allah's complete knowledge of all human actions will strive to avoid harming others and maintain ethical conduct. Accordingly, *tawhid* serves not only as a source of spiritual consciousness but also as the foundation of a strong social ethic (Arifah et al., 2024).

Tawhid as the Foundation of Social Life

In Ibn Taymiyyah's thought, *tawhid* extends well beyond theological discourse and possesses profound implications for social organization. It provides the normative foundation for building a society characterized by justice, honesty, accountability, and moral integrity. A community founded upon *tawhid* naturally rejects oppression, corruption, and the abuse of authority because such practices contradict sincere devotion to Allah (Hotimah & Salsabila, 2025).

Moreover, *tawhid* functions as the primary source of moral legitimacy within politics and governance. Ibn Taymiyyah argues that political authority constitutes a trust (*amanah*) whose principal objective is to establish justice and safeguard the welfare of society. Leaders who genuinely uphold *tawhid* recognize that political power is not a personal privilege but a divine responsibility for which they will ultimately be accountable before Allah (Kamil et al., 2025).

At the same time, Ibn Taymiyyah criticizes religious practices that, in his judgment, lack authentic foundations in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. His criticism is directed not at tradition



itself but at preserving the purity of Islamic monotheism from innovations and practices that might compromise its essential principles (Maevskaya & Aga, 2023).

Accordingly, *tawhid*, in Ibn Taymiyyah's perspective, is a comprehensive doctrine encompassing both faith and social life. It serves not only as the foundation of individual belief but also as the ethical basis for establishing a just, morally responsible, and Islamic social order. Through an integrated understanding of *tawhid*, humanity can aspire to create a harmonious and civilized society (Dalillah et al., 2025).

Tawhid as the Foundation of Social Reform in Ibn Taymiyyah's Thought

In Ibn Taymiyyah's intellectual framework, *tawhid* possesses not only theological significance but also a profound social dimension. It constitutes the fundamental principle underlying every aspect of human life, including social organization, economic activity, and political governance. Consequently, *tawhid* is not merely an individual spiritual doctrine but the normative basis for comprehensive social reform aimed at establishing a just, ethical, and Islamically grounded society (Lazuardi et al., 2025; Rusdin et al., 2025).

For Ibn Taymiyyah, faith in Allah cannot be confined to verbal affirmation or ritual observance alone. Genuine faith must be reflected in individual behavior and embodied within the institutions of society. *Tawhid* therefore functions as a transformative principle directing humanity toward justice, honesty, responsibility, and concern for the common good. In this sense, it possesses transformative power capable of reshaping society according to divine moral values (Kusmanto & Nasrulloh, 2026; Lubis et al., 2026).

One of the most significant implications of *tawhid* is the establishment of justice as the governing principle of social relations. Ibn Taymiyyah regards justice as a universal value that must permeate interpersonal relationships, economic transactions, and political institutions. Individuals who genuinely embrace *tawhid* strive to uphold justice because they recognize that every human action is subject to Allah's judgment (Aqbar & Iskandar, 2021).

Beyond promoting justice, *tawhid* also requires the eradication of corruption, oppression, and the abuse of political authority. Ibn Taymiyyah views such practices as violations of divine trust because they contradict the ethical obligations imposed by Allah. Accordingly, a society founded upon *tawhid* seeks to develop institutions capable of preventing injustice while cultivating moral integrity in public life (Huringiin et al., 2026).

Furthermore, *tawhid* affirms the essential equality of all human beings before Allah. Differences in wealth, status, or political power cannot justify discrimination or oppression. This understanding provides the ethical basis for social solidarity, respect for human dignity, and





protection of individual rights. Every member of society bears responsibility for preserving social harmony and promoting justice (Pizzi, 2024).

Within the sphere of governance, Ibn Taymiyyah presents *tawhid* as the principal source of political ethics. Political authority should never be regarded as a means of serving personal or factional interests but rather as a sacred trust requiring accountability before Allah. Leaders committed to *tawhid* understand that their authority exists solely to establish justice and protect public welfare (Jalili et al., 2024).

This conception provides a robust moral foundation for good governance. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, an ideal ruler governs with integrity, administers justice impartially, and protects society from tyranny and corruption. Thus, *tawhid* functions not merely as a theological doctrine but also as an ethical framework governing the relationship between rulers and citizens (Amirullah et al., 2026).

Contemporary Relevance of Tawhid

Within the context of modern society, Ibn Taymiyyah's conception of *tawhid* remains remarkably relevant. Contemporary societies face rapid social transformation driven by technological advancement, globalization, and political and economic restructuring. While these developments have generated significant opportunities, they have also produced serious challenges, including moral decline, widening social inequality, corruption, and identity crises within Muslim communities (Lubis et al., 2026).

In response to these challenges, *tawhid* may be reconstructed as a comprehensive paradigm of social ethics capable of providing moral direction for contemporary society. It teaches that human beings bear responsibility not only toward Allah but also toward fellow human beings and the natural environment. This awareness provides the ethical foundation for developing societies characterized by integrity, mutual respect, and social justice (Alshaar, 2022).

Moreover, *tawhid* offers an important foundation for political ethics in contemporary Muslim societies. Many political problems confronting Muslim-majority countries stem from declining moral integrity and the misuse of public authority. By restoring *tawhid* as the guiding principle of governance, political power can once again be understood as a trust dedicated to promoting public welfare and social justice (M et al., 2025).

In addition, *tawhid* provides a universal ethical basis for strengthening human dignity and social solidarity within increasingly pluralistic global societies. It teaches that all people are creations of Allah endowed with inherent dignity deserving of respect. This principle encourages





the development of inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious societies that appreciate human diversity while maintaining moral responsibility (Jameelah & Aiman, 2025).

Reconstructing *tawhid* in the contemporary context does not imply altering the essential teachings of Islam. Rather, it involves reinterpreting the ethical values embedded within *tawhid* so that they effectively address the evolving social challenges of the modern world. Through such a contextual approach, *tawhid* can continue to serve as a source of intellectual inspiration for the development of Islamic thought that extends beyond ritual observance toward comprehensive social transformation (Mahtir et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that Ibn Taymiyyah's concept of *tawhid* encompasses a broad and comprehensive framework that extends beyond theological doctrine to include social, moral, and political dimensions of human life. In his intellectual perspective, *tawhid* functions as the fundamental principle that guides individuals and societies toward the realization of justice, honesty, accountability, and social responsibility. Rather than serving merely as a statement of religious belief, *tawhid* provides a normative foundation for organizing both individual conduct and collective social life according to Islamic ethical values.

An integrated understanding of *tawhid* enables Islamic teachings to function as the ethical basis for social reform aimed at establishing a just, morally responsible, and prosperous society. Within this framework, *tawhid* not only strengthens the spiritual relationship between human beings and Allah but also cultivates the moral consciousness necessary to regulate human interactions and promote social harmony. Consequently, the implementation of *tawhid* extends beyond ritual observance to encompass the pursuit of justice, public welfare, and ethical governance.

In the contemporary context, Ibn Taymiyyah's conception of *tawhid* remains highly relevant in addressing the complex social, political, and moral challenges confronting modern Muslim societies. By reconstructing *tawhid* as a paradigm of social ethics, Islamic thought can make a meaningful contribution to the development of societies characterized by justice, integrity, inclusiveness, and collective well-being. Therefore, *tawhid* should be understood not merely as a theological doctrine but as a transformative ethical principle capable of guiding social reform and fostering a more harmonious, equitable, and civilized human society.



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