

## CONCEPT OF *KHIDMAH* FROM SYED MUHAMMAD NAQUIB AL-ATTAS IN INDONESIAN ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** Prof. Naquib Al-Attas that the servant is obliged to perform service (*khidmah*) to Allah SWT. With this practice of *khidmah*, humans are called 'abd (servants). The practice of this *khidmah* is with worship, namely doing something that is ordered and living according to His rules. So, the meaning of din has four dimensions, namely indebtedness, surrender, the power of law, and natural tendencies. In many discussions about *khidmah*, it is only interpreted narrowly, namely only in the field of education, especially education in the life of Islamic boarding schools. This dissertation research proposal analyzes the concept of *khidmah* in a more comprehensive dimension and will contribute to the epistemology of Islamic psychology, *tasawuf*, and philosophy of Islamic education. This is at the same time novelty and will contribute to the study of thought, because this research will provide novelty in which the study of the concept of *khidmah* is comprehensive and philosophical. Because most *khidmah* studies are only partial in one scientific discipline, this dissertation will examine it philosophically (evidence gap and knowledge gap). This research is one of the few studies that conducts a philosophical study of the concept of *khidmah* and its contribution to the epistemology *tasawwuf* and Islamic philosophy of education.

**Keywords:** *Khidmah*, *tasawwuf*, Islamic philosophy of education

### Introduction

Caliph Harun al-Rasyid once sent his son to learn knowledge and manners to a scholar. One day, he visited his son, then saw the teacher washing his feet during ablution. While his son was seen pouring water on his teacher's feet. Witnessing the incident, the caliph reprimanded his son's teacher and said to him, "I sent you so that you teach him knowledge and you educate him with manners. Then why didn't I tell him to pour water with one hand, and wash your feet with the other?". The story above was told by Imam Az-Zarmuji in his book, *Ta'lim Muta'alim*. For some people today, this story may seem excessive. Whereas people with such a mindset do not understand the concept of service in education (Ardiyansyah, 2017). Although basically the concept of *khidmah* is not only known in the world of education but in all sectors of life, because like the meaning of *khidmah* in language it means to serve (LIPIA, 2017).

According to Prof. Naquib Al-Attas that the servant must perform service (*khidmah*) to Allah SWT. With the practice of this service, people are called 'abd (servants). The practice of service is worship, that is, doing something that is

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four dimensions, namely indebtedness, self-surrender, legal force, and natural inclination.

In many discussions about service, it is only interpreted narrowly, i.e. only in the field of education, especially education in pesantren life and the word service cannot be missed in the dictionary of santri life. Because the behavior of service is believed to be the best way to achieve the satisfaction of the kiai, a pious and muttaqi figure who is believed to have closeness to Allah swt. But actually this concept of khidmah has a wide meaning as the author wrote in table 1 from many previous studies that the author found shows that this concept of khidmah has a wide meaning and value, for example what was conveyed by [Ateeq A. \(2020\)](#) that service means khidmah or service of/to the congregation ; [Eva F. Amrullah \(2011\)](#) states that khidmah means service or providing service which involves physical labor ; [Farhan Hanif Siddiqi \(2019\)](#) stated that the service of honoring the voices for the services provided ; [Fariza, et.al \(2018\)](#) that the role of Social Services with Deviant Groups (Role of Social Services with Deviant Groups) ; [Neelam, et.al \(2018\)](#) stated that service ie service; Islamic conceptualisations of service, the notion of "khidmah", history and institutions of khidmah, the concept, role, and impact of slavery in Islamic marketing systems, and servitude in Islam ; [Edwina Pio, et.al \(2014\)](#) states that Khidmat is an Islamic concept which denotes service, assistance and kindness ; [Hasib \(2020\)](#) states that khidmah is a form of human servitude to Allah SWT who must be obliged to perform service (khidmah) to Allah SWT ; [Afandi \(2017\)](#) khidmah is defined as giving service, giving service to anything, in terms of pesantren, it means giving services to teacher or kyai, and pesantren ; [Rosadi \(2015\)](#) khidmah of faith and the Qur'an as a form of service for the community ; [Siti Yuwalliatin and Asyhari \(2021\)](#) stated that khidmah is the values of good and beneficial service ; [E Rahayu and AR Hidayat \(2015\)](#) that the concept of priority customer service is one of serving with humility (khidmah), and not forgetting the afterlife ; [Abd. Mujib, et.al \(2021\)](#) that khidmah means providing the best service to pesantren and teachers with maximum compliance without expecting a reward ; [Wuryanti Koentjoro \(2009\)](#) states that khidmah is a form of service quality ; [Uswatun Hasanah \(2013\)](#) states that khidmah is a form of service and one of the important parts of Islamic mu'āmalah ; [Ibnu Hajar, et.al \(2019\)](#) the meaning of khidmah is the activity of devotion, and service ; [Ahmad Khoirul, et.al \(2014\)](#) stated that husn al-khidmah (service) means entering the order means providing service to teachers and Muslims ; [A. Rizqon Khamami \(2012\)](#) by adopting Gulen's theory stated that khidmah which means "service". Gulen's thinking about hizmet is based on Islamic teachings ; and [Epi Tamala \(2018\)](#) states that service is part of siyasah syar'iyyah that politics not only performs the service function of "service" but also at the same time performs the function of directing "terms" .

Table 1. Previous Research

| No. | Name and year                       | Title   | Insight  | Perspective |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---|--|-------------|
| 1.  | Ateeq A. Rauf, Ajnesh Prasad (2020) | Temporal Spaces of Egalitarianism: The Ethical Negation of Economic Inequality in an Ephemeral Religious Organization | <i>khidmah</i> as a service of/to the congregation. Service is rotated among other brothers of the congregation after every 1 or 2 days until all the brothers | Economy     |

| No. | Name and year  | Title   | Insight  | Perspective |
|-----|--|---|--|-------------|
|     |  |   | have had the opportunity to serve. <i>khidmah</i> is a substantial responsibility in the congregation since the nourishment of all the members of the congregation depends on it. <i>khidmah</i> inculcates respect of others in participants by having them serve their brothers. |             |
| 2.  | Eva F. Amrullah (2011)   | Seeking sanctuary in 'the age of disorder': women in contemporary <i>Tablighi Jamā'at</i>                                 | <i>khidmah</i> as a service or providing service which involves physical labor   | Social      |
| 3.  | Farhan Hanif Siddiqi (2019)  | Political Parties as Transmitters of Political Culture: Competitive Party Dynamics and Political Sub-cultures in Pakistan | <i>khidmah</i> ko vote dou (respect the vote—vote for service provided)  | Politics    |
| 4.  | Fariza Md Sham, Azyyati Mohd Nazim, Khairul Anwar Mastor, Amirah Mad Radz (2018) | Religiosity as Mediator in Reducing Misconduct Of Adolescents-at-Risk   | Role of Social Services with Deviant Groups  | Social      |
| 5.  | Neelam Mukhtar and Mohammad Abid Khan (2019)                                     | Effective lexicon-based approach for Urdu sentiment analysis  | <i>Khidmat</i> is interpreted as service; Islamic conceptualisations of service, the notion of " <i>khidmah</i> ", history and institutions of <i>khidmah</i> , the concept, role, and impact of slavery in Islamic marketing systems, and servitude in Islam.                     | Management  |
| 6.  | Edwina Pio And   | Sacred activism   | <i>Khidmat</i> is  | Religious   |

| No. | Name and year  | Title   | Insight  | Perspective |
|-----|----------------|---|--|-------------|
|     | Jawad (2014)   | Syed through seva and service: Contextualising management and organizations in South Asia | interpreted as an Islamic concept which denotes service, assistance and kindness. <i>The concept is enshrined in multiple verses in the Quran and also in the traditions (Hadith) of the Prophet Muhammad. According to the Quran (5:2): 'Help one another to virtue and God consciousness and do not help one another to sin and transgression'.</i>  |             |
| 7.  | Kholili (2020) | Hasib The concept of Insān Kulli follows Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas                    | <i>Khidmah</i> is interpreted as part of the obligation as a servant and as a servant it is obligatory to perform service ( <i>khidmah</i> ) to Allah SWT. With the practice of this service, people are called 'abd (servants). The practice of service is worship, that is, doing something that is commanded and living in accordance with His rules. So, the meaning of dīn has four dimensions, namely indebtedness, self-surrender, legal force, and natural inclination | Religious   |
| 8.  | Afandi, (2017) | Mahrus Sociological study on service at   | <i>Khidmah</i> is defined as giving service,   | Education   |

| No. | Name and year  | Title  | Insight  | Perspective          |
|-----|--|--|--|----------------------|
|     |  | Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Syafii'iyah Nurul Huda Mergosono Malang   | giving service to anything, in terms of pesantren, it means giving services to teacher or kyai, and pesantren.                   |                      |
| 9.  | Rosadi, Imron (2015)                                     | The Sufism influence of Risalah Nur on Gülen's thought about the Gülen movement: a literature study of Gülen's thought | The service of faith and the Qur'an as a form of service for the community.  | Religious            |
| 10. | Siti Yuwalliatin, Asyhari (2021)                         | Developing Services in Increasing the Satisfaction and Loyalty of Sharia Banking Customers                             | <i>khidmah</i> is values good and helpful service.   | Business Economics   |
| 11. | E Rahayu, and AR Hidayat (2015)                          | Islamic Survey About Priority Customer Service System At Mandiri Syariah Bank Ahmad Yani Bandung Branch                | The concept of priority customer service is one of serving with humility ( <i>khidmah</i> ), and not forgetting the afterlife.   | Business Economics   |
| 12. | Abd. Mujib, Siti Maria Wardayati, Muhammad Miqdad (2021) | Pesantren Internal Management Model  | Service means providing the best service to pesantren and teachers with maximum compliance without expecting anything in return. | Religious            |
| 13. | Wuryanti Koentjoro (2009)                                | Service quality and its influence For satisfaction and loyalty which syar'i insurance policy holders Sharia            | Quality of service   | Management Economics |
| 14. | Uswatun Hasanah (2013)                                   | Insurance in the perspective of Islamic law  | Service ( <i>khidmah</i> ) is one of the important parts of Islamic mu'āmalah.   | Law                  |
| 15. | Ibnu Hajar Ansori, Roudlatunnasikah                      | Santri's Democracy in Islamic View.  | <i>Khidmah</i> is defined as an activity of  | Religious            |

| No. | Name and year                                | Title  | Insight   | Perspective |
|-----|--|--|---|-------------|
|     | (2019)                                       | Situating the Concept of Democracy and Ittiba' Kiai  | devotion, and service.  |             |
| 16. | Ahmad Khoirul Fata and M. Ainun Najib (2014) | Contextualization of KH's thoughts. Hashim Ash'ari About the unity of Muslims                        | <i>Husn al-khidmah</i> (service) means entering the order means providing service to teachers and Muslims   | Religious   |
| 17. | A. Rizqon Khamami (2012)                     | Interim dialogue in Fethullah Gülen's Perspective  | <i>Khidmah</i> is defined as "service". Gulen's thinking about <i>hizmet</i> is based on Islamic teachings.   | Religious   |
| 18. | Epi Tamala (2018)                            | Ali Abdu Al-Raziq's thoughts on the concept of religion and country according to <i>fiqh siyasah</i> | <i>Khidmah</i> is interpreted as part of <i>siyasah syar'iyah</i> not only carrying out the service function of " <i>khidmah</i> " but also at the same time carrying out the function of directing "terms". On the other hand, politics ( <i>politique</i> ) in its purest sense only carries out the function of service ( <i>khidmah</i> ) not direction (term). | Politics    |

Source: adapted from various sources (2023)

From table 1 above it appears that the concept service is so valuable that it should be studied philosophically, because according to the author's wisdom, he found that the concept of service is related to worldview, epistemology and education. Philosophically, service in the thinking of Prof. Al-Attas is a symbol of the Islamic university concept. An Islamic university should reflect people who are ready to serve in all areas of life as part of their duties as caliphs on earth. An Islamic higher education institution must be led by an academic leader who has the necessary knowledge for him and is also committed to religious-philosophical and social-cultural education, who is called a civilized person. In addition, the understanding of the human concept is studied from the aspect of Islamic metaphysics. The concept of human being is the basis of Islamic education. Because the purpose of Islamic education is to give birth to civilized people. Therefore, the basic metaphysics of Islam should be the foundation of Islamic education.

The concept of human being is an important element in the Islamic view of life (Islamic Worldview). One of the Islamic scientific traditions in the human concept that receives important attention is the study of the soul. Because the soul dimension in Islam is a metaphysical part that is higher than just the physical dimension. It is the driving force behind all human physical activity. The idea of human being is also the basis of the building of Islamic epistemology. Because, in epistemology there are three important things that become dimensions. That is; soul, meaning, and the properties and uses of knowledge. That is, the study of the human concept contributes to formulating the concept of epistemology in Islam. Especially the study of Prof. human concept. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas based on Islamic metaphysics.

In this context, Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas formulated the concept of ideal man by using some terminology; *insan kuli*, universal man (Universal Man) who is essentially a civilized human being (*Insan Adabi*) and this concept is embodied in the concept of service. The uniqueness of Al-Attas' study of this service is discussed as a study of human beings as servants (*Insan Kulli*), it is understood as a symbol of an Islamic university concept. According to him, the idea of an Islamic higher education institution (university) should reflect a well-rounded human being which means that the academic, social and if possible, physical structure of the institution itself should be different from what is generally known in today's practice. He also said that Islamic higher education institutions must be led by an academic leader who has knowledge that is mandatory for him and is also committed to religious-philosophical and social-cultural education. In short, the leader of the Islamic higher education institution must be a *kulli* person. Therefore, this dissertation research proposal analyzes the concept of *khidmah* and its contribution in *tasawuf* epistemology.

This is at once a novelty and will contribute to the study of thought, because this research will provide a novelty where the study of the concept of *khidmah* is comprehensive and philosophical. If seen from table 1, it can be seen that the study of *khidmah* is mostly only partial in one discipline, but this article will examine it philosophically (evidence gap and knowledge gap). This research is one of the few researches that conducts a philosophical study of the concept of service and its contribution in *tasawuf* epistemology.

Based on the background that has been displayed at length above, this research article will examine about:

- 1) How is the concept of *khidmah* according to Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas?
- 2) What is the contribution of the concept of service in the epistemology of *tasawwuf*?

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of the writing to be achieved is to describe and analyze:

- 1) The concept of *khidmah* according to Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas.
- 2) The contribution of the concept of *khidmah* in the epistemology of *tasawwuf*.

## Method

The approach used in this research is qualitative. Where [Strauss and Corbin \(1990\)](#), [Grinnell \(1993\)](#), and [Rubin and Babbie \(1989\)](#) state that:

*"...qualitative research is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Qualitative research focuses on the meaning and depth of the data collected, rather than on*

*the quantity and breadth. Larger samples that are broadly representative of the wider population are not studied, and the focus is on a smaller group of persons from whom meaningful and intimate information can be collected".*

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*"A qualitative methodology can be utilized to research people's lives, stories, behaviors and social interactional relationships. The researcher feels that because narrative therapy focuses on the stories that people tell about their lives and their reality, and because adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse all have unique experiences and perceptions of their worlds, a qualitative approach to research methodology is the best option. The sample used is small (2 respondents) and the information gleaned is plentiful and meaningful" .*

Qualitative methodology can be used to examine the lives, stories, behaviors, and interactional relationships of the community. The researcher feels that because the concept of service also focuses on the stories that people tell about the life and reality of the community, a qualitative approach to research methodology is the best choice. The sample used is small (2 respondents) and the information obtained is abundant and meaningful .

More than that, the researcher will conduct a critical study and analysis of various literature and documents related to the thoughts of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas about the concept of service and its application in various scientific disciplines and philosophical studies.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Concept of Service According to Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas**

The concept of human being is an important element in the Islamic worldview. One of the Islamic scientific traditions in the human concept that receives important attention is the study of the soul. Because the soul dimension in Islam is a metaphysical part that is higher than just the physical dimension. It is the driving force behind all human physical activity. The idea of human being is also the basis of the building of Islamic epistemology. Because, in epistemology there are three important things that become dimensions. That is; soul, meaning, and the properties and uses of knowledge. That is, the study of the human concept contributes to formulating the concept of epistemology in Islam. Especially the study of Prof. human concept. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas based on Islamic metaphysics.

In this context, Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas formulated the concept of ideal man by using some terminology; insan kuli, universal man (Universal Man) who is essentially a civilized human being (Insan Adabi) and this concept is embodied in the concept of khidmah.

The uniqueness of Al-Attas' study of this khidmah is discussed as a study of human beings as servants (Insan Kulli), it is understood as a symbol of an Islamic university concept. According to him, the idea of an Islamic higher education



institution (university) should reflect a well-rounded human being which means that the academic, social and if possible, physical structure of the institution itself should be different from what is generally known in today's practice. He also said that Islamic higher education institutions must be led by an academic leader who has knowledge that is mandatory for him and is also committed to religious-philosophical and social-cultural education. In short, the leader of the Islamic higher education institution must be a *kulli* person .

Discussion of the human concept in the thoughts of Prof. Al-Attas is discussed up to the context of basic Islamic metaphysics. Such discussion is connected with the concept of *mītsāq* (original agreement), the human level at the spiritual level and continued with the concept of manners and justice. These three discussions will also be related to epistemology at once. So, the description of all that is in the 'circle' of the worldview of Islam along with its basic elements. So, the discussion of one concept will automatically discuss other concepts. However, this research is focused on aspects that are directly related to the concept of *insan kulli*, namely higher education and the model of Islamic psychological philosophy.

First of all, the researcher will start with a discussion of the concept of *mītsāq*. The concept that is the basis of the discussion of human nature. Because of the human understanding of *mītsāq* in Prof.'s discussion. Al-Attas is a solid foundation for religious people . In short, *mītsāq* is a discussion about human testimony about God's divinity in the spirit realm before humans were created in the world. In this spirit realm, all humans are bound by Allah SWT with a covenant (*mītsāq*) to worship Him and submit themselves to Allah SWT when they have been created in the world.

In this realm of *mītsāq*, humans according to Prof. Al-Attas is in the best spiritual condition. The agreement is explained in al-Qur'an surah al-A'raf verse 172 which means: "And (remember), when your Lord brought out the descendants of the children of Adam from their sulbi and Allah took testimony against their souls (saying): "Am I not your Lord?" They answered: "True (You are our Lord), we are witnesses". (We did that) so that on the Day of Judgment you would not say: "Surely we (sons of Adam) are the ones who are careless about this (the oneness of God)". Quoting Sheikh Junaid al-Baghdadi, Prof. Al-Attas explained the meaning of the verse. In the conditions in the world called the *alastu* world, thus connected with the concept of *mītsāq* (original agreement), human level at the spiritual level and continued with the concept of manners and justice. These three discussions will also be related to epistemology at once. So, the description of all that is in the 'circle' of the worldview of Islam along with its basic elements. So, the discussion of one concept will automatically discuss other concepts. However, this research is focused on aspects that are directly related to the concept of *insan kulli*, namely higher education and the model of Islamic psychological philosophy.

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Based on that, there is a different type of existence from the existence that we understand in general. Existence in this world is the best human existence. Prof. Al-Attas stated that the best existence here is because humans were created by Allah SWT to bear witness (*ashyada*) with full awareness of themselves. In this condition, humans know Allah SWT well, witness directly (*syuhūd*) the highest reality and the truth (the Reality and Truth) . This introduction (*ma'rifah*) and recognition of human existence is the basis of Islam.

So, religion is actually in the framework of guiding people to become and return to their best existence. When humans are born in a natural state. The Prophet SAW said: "Every child that is born is born according to nature, so it is the two parents who make him a Jew, a Magian, or a Christian." (HR. Tabrani). This hadith shows that humans are originally pure, because they once existed in a high spiritual condition in the *alastu* realm. When its existence is not in physical form. At birth, humans are still pure in spirit. Changes occur when humans become adults with all their surroundings. Here it is also very important to educate parents to maintain the purity or human nature. Because it is contaminated by the environment,

However, it should be noted that humans in nature are in various different conditions. Among the human souls there are those who shine brightly, namely the Prophets. There are also weak, strong and others. Mohd Farid Mohd Shahrani in "Adab and Civilization" quotes Ibnu Katsir that in the agreement Allah SWT has determined the practices of people and their fate.

In addition, it was quoted from Imam al-Qurtubi who explained a hadith that when witnessing, people are in different states. Despite that, all human souls are united in accepting the divinity of Allah SWT. Since the beginning, humans have accepted Allah SWT as their Lord. This testimony also shows that humans have accepted the responsibility of worshiping Allah SWT. Based on this, when people grow up but then oppose Allah SWT, it is called *ghāfil* (forgetfulness). The meaning is that people really know deep down their nature to worship Allah SWT, just because they follow their lust, people forget their promise to Allah SWT.

*Fitrah* is the spiritual nature of humans that is the origin of humans coming to the world and is the place of their return. Human testimony in the *alastu* realm is actually the true pledge of humans that is the reference for all other forms of testimony (*shahādah*) in the world. The whole religious life of man in the world should be aimed at the return of man's spirit to his natural state. So, human nature is to submit and obey Allah SWT, surrender to accept the divinity of Allah SWT.

This thought was then linked by Prof. Al-Attas with a religious concept called *al-dīn*, as written above that this concept of *mītsāq* becomes the basis of religion. Prof. al-Attas analyzes that the correct understanding of Islam is the concept of *al-*

Dīn. It connects dīn with the word *dayn* (debt). Two words (dīn and *dayn*) come from the same root *dayana*. What is the relationship between religion and debt?

The main meanings in the word *din* can be summarized into four: state of debt, surrender, judicial power, and natural inclination. Prof. al-Attas explained that man actually owes God, who created and who gave him sustenance, as well as who created him and maintained his existence. Even human debt to God is total and comprehensive. Because the debt is in the form of an existence debt, a debt from nothing to exist, and also a debt to maintain its existence so that it can continue to exist in this world. So, this debt repayment process was later linked by al-Attas to the concept of dīn (commonly translated as religion). Ontologically, when man owes God, then man's position is the loser. So,

Prof. al-Attas said that by returning to God, that is by obeying His commandments and avoiding His prohibitions, humans who were originally at a loss will receive a multiple reward, which will not only cover their losses but will also gain great profits from its existence. According to the explanation of Prof. Al-Attas, the purpose of religion is to return humans to their original state. In this condition, humans realize their identity and spirituality through true human knowledge. The purpose of life in the world is actually the process of returning to God. This practice is mentioned by Prof. al-Attas as al-dīn, which essentially pays the debt. The nature of debt is binding and makes the debtor low and contemptible on the side of the lender. The whole of human life should ultimately be based on the effort of self-surrender as mentioned in QS al-Dhariyyat [51]:56 which means: "And I did not create jinn and humans except to worship me".

This sense of indebtedness (*dayn*) is the reason for human servitude to Allah SWT. So it can be described that religion is the practice of paying the debt of human servants to Allah SWT. As in the case of people who owe money or property, a servant who feels indebted is submissive and obedient to the person who gives the debt. Thus, a servant surrenders to Allah SWT (*aslama*). So, the servant must do service (*khidmah*) to Allah SWT. With the practice of this service, people are called 'abd (servants).

The practice of *khidmah* is worship, that is, doing something that is commanded and living in accordance with His rules. So, the meaning of dīn has four dimensions, namely indebtedness, self-surrender, legal force, and natural inclination

Interpreting the religion of Islam with this dīn perspective is clearly the practice of religion up to the spiritual level with the "debt" approach. Prof. Al-Attas explained, with man returning himself to Allah SWT as the ruler and the One who gives the debt, then man faithfully and fully consciously follows His commands and stays away from His prohibitions. So that this human action will be "counted" and he will receive a good reward as explained by Allah SWT in QS al-Baqarah [1]:245 which means: "Who wants to give a loan to Allah SWT, a good loan, then Allah SWT will multiplying the payment to him many times over". In this case Prof. Al-Attas explained:

It should be noted here that the word used to express 'loan' (*yuqridu*) comes from *qarada*, *qard* has a different meaning to the word debt (*dayn*), where the latter can only be directed at humans. 'Loan' here is 'the return of something that originally belonged to the Owner who now asks for it back, and must be returned to him'. Man belongs to his God and his existence is only a 'loan' for him for a while. On the other hand, the words 'good loan' (*qard'an hasanan*) addressed to humans have a metaphorical meaning, meaning 'devotion to Allah SWT', 'good work' which

is meant, because all these can be said to belong to him and for doing so he will be richly rewarded .

In this regard, Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi explained, the human tendency to serve Allah SWT is called fitrah. Everyone who behaves in accordance with this pattern of nature means following his own instincts or following his true demands. Hamid said: "The real instinct is to surrender to God or practice religion. Because religion is a tendency or instinct, religion is not compulsion and cannot be forced. Likewise, obeying and surrendering to God is called *aslama*, an attitude that is best in embracing religion . Human servitude to Allah SWT is one of the religious meanings associated with the concept of *mītsāq*. A human agreement to return to its original state. So, the stronger he holds the promise, the closer he gets spiritually to Allah SWT. This closeness to Allah SWT is in order to return to the best human condition. That is, the condition of humans in the age of *Alastu* became a reference for humans in real religion .

In the view of Prof. Al-Attas, religious people who are good and right, can return to that spiritual condition (pre-existence before the human soul became a physical being). Humans who are able to return to the spiritual realm of pre-existence are humans who have reached a high position in their spirituality, after passing through various obstacles, *riyadah* (training the soul) and *mujāhadah* (fighting lust). The success of reaching that great position depends on his intellectual development, his religious condition, and the generosity of Allah SWT (His grace).

When he has risen to his spiritual level, man sees that this religious world is no longer the same as he knew before (when he had not yet risen spiritually). It experiences what is called "separation" (*farq*). The term *farq* shows that humans see the physical world differently. So, what is separated is the spiritual condition with the physical world. Rationally still aware that the physical world exists. But from a metaphysical point of view, it does not exist. So, in this condition, humans witness (*musyāhadah*), experience and experience the Real Truth, which is Allah SWT. Therefore, people like this are people who only remember Allah SWT (*dhikrullah*). The absence of the physical world (*fanā'*) actually means not seeing value from the world. The value he feels is the highest value, which is God Almighty.

Reality and whatever humans see, in this condition, is not the only reality. There is another reality that is higher and more right. That is God. These people are called the chosen group of people (*khawās al-Khawās*). His spirituality is mature and perfect, he is under the guidance and direction of Allah SWT and always seeks help (*taufiq*). The beliefs and practices of religion and sharia that they have consistently done all this time are based on true knowledge, sincere intentions and noble morals. They can still see physical reality, but their view of physical reality is different from ordinary people. Because of that, the way to assess physical reality is also different. In this condition, humans are really like in the old days. People remember the original bond of promise (*mītsāq*). This kind of recognition and acknowledgment is the basis of Islam, including the awareness of the difference between God and himself. The awareness of the difference between God and servant appears in the spiritual context.

Thus it can be concluded that the concept of *khidmah* in the view of Prof. Al-Attas here is as a servant's obligation to perform service (*khidmah*) to Allah SWT. With the practice of this service, people are called 'abd (servants). And this practice of *khidmah* is done with worship, that is, doing something that is commanded and living in accordance with His rules. So, the meaning of *dīn* has four dimensions,

namely indebtedness, self-surrender, legal force, and natural inclination . By interpreting *Khidmah* as worship then all things done by humans are a manifestation of servitude to Allah and everything is intended as worship.

### **The Contribution of Prof. Al-Attas' Concept of Service in Sufism Epistemology**

Based on the explanation of the nature of *khidmah* in the perspective of Prof. Al-Attas in the previous section, it can be known that the concept of *khidmah* is the obligation of a servant to perform service (*khidmah*) to Allah SWT. With the practice of this service, people are called 'abd (servants). And this practice of *khidmah* is done with worship, that is, doing something that is commanded and living in accordance with His rules. So, the meaning of *dīn* has four dimensions, namely indebtedness, self-surrender, legal force, and natural inclination. By interpreting *khidmah* as worship then all things done by humans are a manifestation of servitude to Allah and everything is intended as worship.

Epistemologically this is part of the study of Sufism and as Muslims need to understand their religion in the perspective of the concept of *dīn*. The perspective explained by Prof. Al-Attas is essential for a correct understanding of Sufism. From the explanation of human origins, human nature and the meaning of religion, it can be concluded that the explanation of Prof. Al-Attas uses a Sufism approach which means the practice of Sharia at the level of *ihsān*. This approach to understanding religion with the concept of *dīn* turns out to give birth to a view that religion is not just a mere ritualistic practice. Precisely rituality that is empty of true knowledge, will not bring people to a high level. Being religious in this view means including ritual, rational and spiritual. These three elements are interrelated. Definition of Prof. Al-Attas about Sufism, which is sharia experience at the level of *ihsān*, gives the impression that to achieve high spirituality at the level of *ihsān*, one must practice sharia (one of which is ritual). The correct practice of sharia must be based on correct knowledge. The truth of a knowledge is obtained through rational activity. The highest regard for human beings in religion is in their spiritual condition.

Unity in religion is a way of producing good human beings (*adabi*). In accordance with the mission of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, that he was sent to educate people to become moral people. This perspective is interesting when practiced and applied in various fields of science or other matters. Science needs to be united with spiritual things. The rituality of knowledge by memorizing alone does not give birth to human beings. Therefore, knowledge with spiritual wrapping will give birth to people who have high spirituality in every practice, whatever and wherever.

Therefore, the study of this *khidmah* involves the study of Sufism. The reason must involve spiritual aspects. So that the concept of *insan* being as the basis of *khidmah* becomes the basis in the framework of the study of philosophy of education and psychology in Islam which is closely related to epistemology. A person's level of knowledge is influenced by his level of spirituality. The higher the spiritual level, the higher the level of a person's knowledge. Because at the transcendental human level, there is unity and harmony between the rational aspect and the intellectual aspect, between the empirical aspect and the spiritual experience aspect (*syuhūd*). So, the integral integration that is meant in this study is the unity between the aspects mentioned above.

The insan concept as the foundation of the service concept Prof. Al-Attas brings back the human concept which is one of the basic elements in the Islamic worldview. Because, the human concept that is presented becomes the shaper of Islamic thought. Because the Islamic worldview is fixed and constant, the concept of human beings does not change. The understanding of the human concept becomes a fixed concept (tsabāt) that does not change. Thoughts of Prof. Al-Attas about human being is the foundation of Islamic educational philosophy. So, in the philosophy of Islamic education, the first thing that should be discussed is the concept of man. In short, the study of the philosophy of Islamic education started from the study of human psychology. Because the objects and actors of education are human beings.

Mistakes in understanding the human concept will result in confusion in the philosophy of Islamic education. Related to that, the concept of *insān kullī* becomes a basic framework in studying two sciences. That is the science of philosophy of education and the science of Islamic psychology. The study framework or framework is very decisive in the direction and purpose of a scientific study. Therefore, the study of philosophy of education and psychology in Islam, involves the study of Sufism. Where both should involve spiritual aspects. So that the concept of human becomes the basis in the framework of the study of philosophy of education and psychology in Islam which is closely related to epistemology. A person's level of knowledge is influenced by his level of spirituality. The higher the spiritual level, the higher the level of a person's knowledge. Because at the transcendental level of man, there is unity and harmony between the rational aspect and the intellectual aspect, between the empirical aspect and the spiritual experience aspect (*syuhūd*). So, the integral integration that is meant in this study is the unity between the aspects mentioned above.

## **Conclusion**

Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' concept of *khidmah* in higher education in Indonesia is defined as the obligation of a servant to perform service (*khidmah*) to Allah SWT. With the practice of this service, people are called '*abd* (servants). And this practice of service is done with worship, that is, doing something that is commanded and living in accordance with His rules. So, the meaning of *dīn* has four dimensions, namely indebtedness, self-surrender, legal force, and natural inclination. By interpreting *khidmah* as worship then all things done by humans are a manifestation of servitude to Allah and everything is intended as worship.

The essence of *khidmah* in the perspective of Prof. Al-Attas in the previous section can be known that the concept of *khidmah* is the obligation of a servant to perform service (*khidmah*) to Allah SWT. With the practice of this service, people are called '*abd* (servants). And this practice of service is done with worship, that is, doing something that is commanded and living in accordance with His rules. Therefore, the study of this *khidmah* involves the study of Sufism. The reason must involve spiritual aspects. Until the concept of human being as the foundation of *khidmah*.

The human concept as the foundation of the *khidmah* concept Prof. Al-Attas brings back the human concept which is one of the basic elements in the Islamic worldview. Because, the human concept that is presented becomes the shaper of Islamic thought. Thoughts of Prof. Al-Attas about *insān kullī* is the basic foundation in the philosophy of Islamic education. So, in the philosophy of Islamic education, the first thing that should be discussed is the concept of man. In short, the study of the philosophy of Islamic education started from the study of human

psychology. Because the objects and actors of education are human beings. Mistakes in understanding the human concept will result in confusion in the philosophy of Islamic education. Related to that, the concept of *insān kullī* becomes a basic framework in studying two sciences. That is the science of philosophy of education and the science of Islamic psychology.

## Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that in the context of inclusive education, multidisciplinary analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of zakat, encompassing economic, social, and religious aspects. This approach lays a strong foundation for designing sustainable strategies for zakat utilization. The effective utilization of zakat can create a significant positive impact in supporting inclusive education, ranging from infrastructure development to improved accessibility. Zakat proves itself as an instrument capable of bringing about tangible changes in the inclusive education environment.

The utilization of zakat requires active community involvement and an enhancement of financial literacy. Public awareness of the role of zakat in supporting inclusive education is crucial to ensure sustained and effective participation. This analysis also holds relevance on an international scale, enabling countries to learn from each other and adapt best practices in utilizing zakat for inclusive education according to their local contexts. In optimizing zakat, ethical considerations become crucial. The sustainability of zakat programs supporting inclusive education needs to be maintained by ensuring that values of justice, sustainability, and human rights continue to be upheld.

The analysis results imply that the utilization of zakat can become a sustainable inclusive model. Taking note of the positive impact and developing best practices from zakat utilization can lay the foundation for other educational institutions to adopt successful inclusive models. The involvement of Islamic financial institutions in zakat management can enhance efficiency and compliance with Sharia principles. This opens opportunities to improve transparency and trust in zakat fund management.

The conclusion of this article underscores the challenges and opportunities in the future optimization of zakat for inclusive education. Challenges such as risk management and sustainability need to be addressed, while opportunities to create a more equitable and widespread inclusive education system remain open. Taking these aspects into consideration, this article contributes to a practical and theoretical

understanding of how zakat optimization can be a crucial pillar in enhancing global inclusive education.

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