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**SESI III**

**AN OVERVIEW OF SYEIKH TAHIR JALALUDDIN'S  
MAJOR WRITINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS**

**Oleh**

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# An Overview of Syeikh Tahir Jalaluddin's Major Writings and Contributions

Hafiz bin Zakariya\*

Rectification of religion does not entail changing the very teaching of Islam, neither does it involve the introduction of foreign un-Islamic elements into Islam. Rather rectification and reformation of religion is a return to the original sources of Islam as practiced in the period of the prophet and early generation of Islam, unadulterated by the customs, practices, and beliefs that contravened Islam.

Tahir Jalaluddin  
*Reforming the Way Religion is Practiced*

## Syeikh Tahir: A Brief Biography <sup>1</sup>

Muhammad Tahir bin Syeikh Muhammad or Syeikh Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin (1869-1956) as he was popularly known, was born on Tuesday, November 7, 1869, in Kota Tua Empat Angkat, a district in Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra.<sup>2</sup> He was born into an established Minangkabau family with a strong tradition of Islamic learning and leadership. His great grandfather was Tuanku nan Tua, the most prominent 'alim of Minangkabau who was also the revered master teacher to the Padri warriors. Orphaned as a child, he was brought up by a maternal aunt until he was sent to study in Makkah in 1881.

In Makkah Tahir stayed for twelve years with his older cousin, Syeikh Ahmad al-Khatib, a prominent teacher among the Malay community. In 1894, he pursued Islamic learning at al-Azhar University in Cairo. After graduating from al-Azhar in 1897, he returned to Makkah to help Syeikh Ahmad teach Malay-Indonesian students. After spending long years in the heartland of Islam, Tahir returned to the Malay world in 1899. In 1901, he married Aishah Mustafa in Perak and five years later opted to reside in Malaya permanently.

Tahir lived during a time when Malayan Muslims were facing the challenges of colonialism as well as the internal problems of Malay backwardness. Moreover, the survival of un-Islamic and animistic beliefs and practices continued to influence Malay-Muslim society in Malaya. As a scholar who emphasized the significance of following the precedent and examples of the first generation of Muslims, Tahir was particularly concerned with and anguished about the religious conditions in Malaya. Indeed, his long experiences in the prominent centers of Islamic learning in the Middle East and first hand exposure to Abduh's ideas prepared Tahir

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