

Article

KH. Maimun Zubair's Perspective on the *Ittibā' Al-Fuqahā'* and its Relevance to Indonesia's Socio-Religious Life

Zanuar Mubin 

Email: zanuarmubin.mat@gmail.com

Ma'had Aly Al-Tarmasi, Indonesia

Kukuh Alhadad

Email: kukuhalhadad@gmail.com

UIN Kiai Ageng Muhammad Besari Ponorogo, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This article examines KH. Maimun Zubair's thought on *ittibā'* toward jurists and its relevance to socio-religious life in Indonesia. Using a qualitative library research design and an intellectual biography approach, the study analyzes al-'Ulamā' al-Mujaddidūn Raḥimahum Allāh Ta'ālā wa Majāl Tajdīdihim wa Ijtihādhim, especially the chapter on following jurists in the textual formulations of school-based legal works without fanaticism toward a single school. The data are interpreted through descriptive-analytical reading and content analysis. The findings show that KH. Maimun conceptualizes *ittibā'* as an epistemological discipline that protects religious authority, maintains the continuity of legal schools, and prevents lay Muslims from unsupported claims of *ijtihad*. *Ittibā'* is not blind obedience; rather, it is a responsible adherence to scholars who possess sanad, competence, and the methodological instruments of legal reasoning. In contemporary Indonesia, this idea is relevant to strengthening religious literacy, moderation, pesantren authority, and social resilience amid fragmented digital religious authority.

Abstrak:

Artikel ini membahas KH. Maimun Zubair tentang *ittibā'* terhadap para ahli hukum dan relevansinya dengan kehidupan sosial-agama di Indonesia. Dengan menggunakan desain riset perpustakaan kualitatif dan pendekatan biografi intelektual, studi ini menganalisis al-'Ulamā' al-Mujaddidūn Raḥimahum Allāh Ta'ālā wa Majāl Tajdīdihim wa Ijtihādhim, khususnya bab tentang mengikuti ahli hukum dalam perumusan tekstual karya hukum berbasis sekolah tanpa fanatisme terhadap satu aliran tunggal. Data diinterpretasikan melalui pembacaan deskriptif-analitis dan analisis konten. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa KH. Maimun mengkonseptualisasikan *ittibā'* sebagai disiplin epistemologis yang melindungi otoritas agama, menjaga kesinambungan sekolah hukum, dan mencegah umat Muslim awam dari klaim *ijtihad* yang tidak berdasar. *Ittibā'* bukanlah ketaatan buta; melainkan, ini adalah kepatuhan yang bertanggung jawab kepada para sarjana yang memiliki sanad, kompetensi, dan instrumen metodologis penalaran hukum. Di Indonesia masa kini, gagasan ini relevan untuk memperkuat literasi agama, moderasi, otoritas pesantren, dan ketahanan sosial di tengah otoritas agama digital yang terfragmentasi.

Kata kunci: *ittibā'*, KH. Maimun Zubair, ahli hukum Islam, sosial-agama

Introduction

The development of contemporary Islamic religion no longer moves only through traditional authorities such as pesantren, taklim councils, bahtsul masail forums, halaqah kitab, and fatwa institutions, but also through a very fast, open, and competitive digital space. Globally, social media has become a space for the production of authority, the formation of identity, as well as an arena for religious interpretation. State-of-the-art digital data shows that the number of internet and social media users continues to increase significantly, making religious knowledge increasingly accessible to people across ages, social classes, and geographical regions.¹ In the Indonesian context, APJII noted that the number of internet users in 2024 will reach 221,563,479 people or 79.5 percent of the total population, with Gen Z and millennials as the dominant user group.² This condition shows the democratization of access to religious knowledge, but at the same time raises serious problems in the form of weak verification of authority, the cutting off of scientific sanad, and the instant consumption of Islamic law.

These changes are becoming increasingly important because religious authority in the digital age is not always built through book mastery, scientific sanad, or legal istinbat competence, but often through popularity, communicative rhetoric, algorithms, and content dissemination. Akmaliah points out that Nahdlatul Ulama faces serious challenges from new religious actors on digital platforms that gain influence through popular communication styles, not solely through the depth of scholarly³ traditions. Hannan and Mursyidi also emphasized that social media plays a role in the fragmentation of Indonesian Muslim religious authority because new figures can gain public legitimacy quickly through digital interaction.⁴ This phenomenon shows that the shift in religious authority is not just a matter of da'wah media, but touches on the epistemological structure of Islamic law: who is considered to have the right to explain religion, how the law is taken, and the extent to which the ummah is able to distinguish scientific authority from mere social influence.

In such a situation, the concept of *ittibā'* becomes relevant to be reviewed. In the tradition of *ushul fiqh*, *ittibā'* is not synonymous with blind obedience, but it is also not the same as individual *ijtihad* freedom. It can be understood as an attitude of following the opinions of scholars with an introduction to their evidence, methods, manhaj, and scientific authority. The studies of Ar-Rizq, Auliya', and Muttaqin confirm that *taqlid*, *ittibā'*, *talfiq*, and *ijtihad* are methodological categories that have different functions in Islamic⁵ law-making. Meanwhile, Ardyansyah, Al Fikri, Kaminah, and Muttaqin show that the distinction between *taqlid*, *ittibā'*, *talfiq*, and *ijtihad* remains actual in the religious practices of

¹ DataReportal, "Digital 2025: Indonesia," 2025, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-indonesia>; DataReportal, "Digital 2026: Indonesia," 2026, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2026-indonesia>.

² Apjii.or.id, "APJII Number of Indonesian Internet Users Reaches 221 Million People," *Apjii.or.Id*, 2024, <https://apjii.or.id/berita/d/apjii-jumlah-pengguna-internet-indonesia-tembus-221-juta-orang>.

³ wahyudi Akmaliah, "Reclaiming Moderate Islam In Nahdlatul Ulama Challenging the Dominant Religious Authority in Digital Platform," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 1 (2022): 223–48, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.1.223-248>.

⁴ Abd Hannan and Ach Fatayillah Mursyidi, "Social Media and the Fragmentation of Religious Authority among Muslims in Contemporary Indonesia," *Digital Muslim Review* 1, no. 2 (2023): 84–104, <https://doi.org/10.32678/dmr.v1i2.10>.

⁵ Alfani Ulya Ar-Rizq, Moh. Syafiq Qolbil Auliya', and M. Imamul Muttaqin, "Taqlid, Ittiba', Talfiq, and Ijtihad in Ushul Fiqh," *Ummul Qura Journal of the Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School (INSUD) Lamongan* 19, no. 2 (2024): 79–85, <https://doi.org/10.55352/uq.v19i2.904>.

Indonesian people, for example in the determination of the beginning of Ramadan.⁶ Therefore, the mistake of understanding *ittibā'* can give birth to two extremes: blind fanaticism towards certain opinions or the courage to do *ijtihad* without adequate scientific tools.

At the socio-religious level in Indonesia, this problem cannot be separated from the dynamics of religious moderation, harmony, and the protection of the community from religious extremism. The Ministry of Religious Affairs noted that the Religious Harmony Index increased from 76.02 in 2023 to 76.47 in 2024, then reached 77.89 in 2025, the highest score in the last 11 years.⁷ However, the positive data does not negate the challenges in the field. The SETARA Institute noted that in 2024 there will be 260 incidents and 402 acts of violations of freedom of religion/belief, with non-state actors such as religious organizations and citizen groups as the dominant actors, as well as local governments and the police as the most recorded state⁸ actors. Thus, the increasing formal harmony is still confronted with the practice of intolerance, discrimination, and weak socio-religious literacy at the grassroots level.

These socio-religious issues are increasingly complex when religious knowledge is consumed through digital media. Research by PPIM UIN Jakarta in 2021 shows that social media has become one of the important sources of religious knowledge, especially for the younger generation. The survey found that social media is the main door for young people to encounter religious discourse.⁹ These findings are important because they show that religious authority is not only produced by traditional clerics and institutions, but is also shaped by digital interaction patterns, algorithmic tendencies, and users' emotional preferences. In this context, *ittibā'* needs to be read as an ethics of verification: it is not enough for the people to ask "what is their opinion", but also "who is conveying, from which scientific path, by what method, and for what social benefit".

Religiously, the need for *ittibā'* is also related to the position of the ulama as the guardian of the continuity of sharia understanding. Islamic boarding schools, yellow books, sanad, and madhhab are social-scientific devices that for centuries have kept religious understanding from being uprooted from scientific disciplines. Harnadi, Siahaan, and Hilmy point out that pesantren have an important role in maintaining traditional religious authority in the digital era.¹⁰ Hamidah and Chasannudin also found that elements of Islamic boarding schools such as kiai, santri, mosque, and yellow book can be a mechanism for shaping the character of Islamic moderation, which includes a commitment to

⁶ Muhammad Fayiz Ardyansyah et al., "Taqlid, Ittiba', Talfiq, And Ijtihad In The Taking Of Islamic Law: A Case Study Of The Early Determination Of Ramadan In Indonesia," *Muta'allim: Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 4, no. 1 (2025): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.18860/mjpai.v4i1.11204>.

⁷ Ministry of Religion, "Religious Harmony in Indonesia Increases, KUB Index 2024 Reaches 76.47, Very High Category" (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, May 23, 2024), <https://ntt.kemenag.go.id/berita/528289/kerukunan-beragama-menguat-menag-indeks-kub-capai-7647-di-2024>; Public Relations and Public Communication of the Ministry of Religion, "Religious Harmony Index Rises, Highest in 11 Years," *Directorate General of Christian Guidance of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia* (Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, May 23, 2025), <https://bimaskristen.kemenag.go.id/news-1711-indeks-kerukunan-umat-beragama-naik-tertinggi-dalam-11-tahun.html?utm>.

⁸ SETARA Institute: Institute of Democracy and Peace, "Conditions of Freedom of Religion and Belief (KBB) 2024," *Regression in the Middle of Transition*, 2025, <https://kbb.id/2025/05/23/indeks-kota-toleran-2024-setara-institute/>.

⁹ PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021 <https://www.uinjkt.ac.id/id/ppim-uin-jakarta-anak-muda-tidak-religius-tapi-konservatif/>

¹⁰ Dodik Harnadi, Hotman Siahaan, and Masdar Hilmy, "Pesantren and the Preservation of Traditional Religious Authority in the Digital Age," *Society, Culture and Politics* 34, no. 3 (2021): 272, <https://doi.org/10.20473/mkp.v34i32021.272-280>.

nationality, tolerance, anti-violent da'wah, and accommodation to local culture.¹¹ Thus, *ittibā'* is not only a legal concept, but also a social mechanism to maintain the continuity of knowledge, manners, authority, and harmony of society.

It is in this context that according to the researcher, the thinking of KH. Maimun Zubair gained academic significance. KH. Maimun Zubair is known as a kiai pesantren teacher, *faqih*, charismatic scholar, as well as a *mushannif* who connects the tradition of the yellow book with the problems of modern people. One of his important works, *al-'Ulamā' al-Mujaddidūn wa Majāl Tajdīdihim wa Ijtihādihim*, discusses the reformist scholars, the field of reform, and the limits of *ijtihad* in Islamic history. Dhani notes that the work not only presents the names of the mujaddids, but also shows the relationship between *tajdid*, *sanad*, the authority of the *ulama*, and the limits of Islamic law reform.¹² NU Online also noted that in the book, KH. Maimun emphasized the importance of the current generation basing their opinions and behaviors on the *ulama*, their books, and their *manhaj*, especially in the midst of the rapidly changing times.¹³

The peculiarities of KH Maimun Zubair's thought. Maimun lies in the way he places renewal not as a break from tradition, but as a methodological continuation with previous scholars. *Tajdid* in this perspective does not mean the freedom of everyone to explore the law independently without conditions, but renewal that remains bound by *sanad*, *madhhab*, competence, and benefits. This is in line with Mutawali's study which places *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as the foundation of Islamic moderation to deal with extreme ideologies, because Islamic law should not be separated from the goal of benefit, justice, and the protection of human life.¹⁴ Thus, KH. Maimun can be read as a model of Islamic law in the archipelago that maintains a balance between the heritage of scholars and contemporary social needs.

From the cultural side, KH. Maimun is also important because it was born from a pesantren environment that has a distinctive character: respecting the *madhhab*, prioritizing *sanad*, maintaining *adab*, and placing *ulama* as a link in religious understanding. Fuaddin and Qudsy's study of KH. Maemon Zubair on Tafsir al-Jalalain shows that the tradition of pesantren is not always repetitive, but can give birth to dominant reception, negotiation, and contextual reading of the text (Fuaddin and Qudsy 2024). Anam also points out that the interpretation of KH. Maimun Zubair is able to respond to modern issues such as technology, nature, and the needs of contemporary people, so that it can be understood as an interpretation that remains orthodox and adaptive.¹⁵ These findings reinforce the assumption that KH. Maimun on *ittibā'* should not be read as closed conservatism, but rather as a scientific discipline that allows renewal to continue within the corridors of tradition.

From a social perspective, *ittibā'* has the function of maintaining the cohesion of the *ummah*. When society faces differences of legal opinion, the existence of *ulama*, *madhhab*, and *manhaj* functions as a tool for social stabilization. Without these tools, legal differences can easily turn into identity conflicts, mutual misleading, and even social polarization. Junaidi's study of religious moderation research 2016-2025 shows that religious moderation studies are

¹¹ Kamilia Hamidah and Arif Chasannudin, "Mechanization of Islamic Moderation Da'wah in the Nahdlatul Ulama Pesantren Tradition," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 41, no. 1 (2021): 15–29, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v41.1.7134>.

¹² Ahmad Dhani, "Criteria for Islamic Reformer Scholars," *Tarikhuna* 4, no. 1 (2024), <https://garuda.kemdiktisaintek.go.id/documents/detail/4579609>.

¹³ NU Online, 2019 <https://www.nu.or.id/pustaka/mbah-moen-mutiara-ilmu-dan-kebangsaan-dari-sarang-rembang-sFEcE> diakses pada 23 Mei 2026.

¹⁴ Mutawali, "As The Foundation Of Islamic Moderation: Theo-Philosophical Insight against Extreme Religious Ideology," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 1 (2023): 341–366, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v27i1.560>.

¹⁵ Saichul Anam, "Exposition of Tafsir KH. Maimoen Zubair," *Al Itqan: Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 10, no. 1 (2024): 116–55, <https://ejournal.staialanwar.ac.id/index.php/itqon/article/view/1076>.

growing after 2020, with Indonesia as the dominant contributor, as well as the emergence of three main clusters: education and citizenship, local wisdom and cultural practices, and digital age challenges related to radicalism and polarization.¹⁶ These findings show that the study of *ittibā'* can make a new contribution to the study of religious moderation, as it offers a scientific framework from the tradition of *ushul fiqh* and pesantren to answer the problem of digital polarization.

From an economic-cultural point of view, the relevance of *ittibā'* can also be seen in the way Muslim societies deal with changes in muamalah, zakat, modern transactions, and local socio-religious practices. The reform of Islamic law cannot be carried out haphazardly because it concerns legal certainty, social order, and the economic benefits of the people. Athoillah, Rahman, Firdaus, and Septiadi show that religious moderation policies and practices in Islamic boarding schools are related to the management of education that fosters tolerance, balance, and an effective management system.¹⁷ Amri, Febriandi, and Da-Oh also emphasize the importance of textual and contextual approaches in understanding Indonesian Muslims, so that religion is not only read as a normative text, but also as a social practice that lives in culture.¹⁸ Thus, *ittibā'* to the scholars is not an obstacle to change, but a way to ensure that legal changes can still be accounted for in terms of evidence, manhaj, and benefit.

Although studies on religious moderation, digital authority, Islamic boarding schools, and *ushul fiqh* have grown rapidly, there are academic vacancies that still need to be filled. First, the study of *taqlid*, *ittibā'*, *talfiq*, and *ijtihad* is generally still conceptual-normative and has not been widely associated with the thinking of certain Islamic boarding school figures. Second, the study of digital authority explains more about the fragmentation of authority, but has not offered much of the concept of Islamic law verification from within the pesantren tradition. Third, the study of KH. Maimun Zubair focuses more on the interpretation, nationality, or criteria of mujaddid, while the concept of *ittibā'* as an epistemological framework of contemporary Islamic law has not been elaborated much. This is the academic space that this research wants to fill, namely reading KH Maimun Zubair's thought. Maimun Zubair is not only a legacy of Islamic boarding schools, but also a theoretical offer for the study of Islamic law and socio-religious Indonesia.

Based on this background, this research focuses on KH Maimun Zubair's thought on *ittibā'* and its relevance to socio-religious life in Indonesia. The focus of the study is directed at three aspects: first, how *ittibā'* is understood in the relationship between scholars, madhhabs, sanad, and tajdid; second, how the concept distinguishes scientific authority from religious popularity in the digital age; third, how *ittibā'* can be a socio-religious framework to maintain moderation, harmony, and Islamic legal literacy in the Indonesian people. Using a qualitative approach based on literature studies, this study places the book al-'Ulamā' al-Mujaddidūn as the primary source, while *ushul fiqh* literature, pesantren studies, religious moderation, and digital authority are used as secondary sources.

The purpose of this research is to explain the construction of KH. Maimun Zubair's thought on *ittibā'* and analyzes its relevance to socio-religious in Indonesia. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of contemporary *ushul fiqh* studies, theories of religious authority, and the study of Islamic law in the archipelago. Practically, this research is expected to help the community, students, academics, religious institutions, and policy

¹⁶ Junaidi Junaidi and Sri Wahyuni Tanshzil, "Religious Moderation Research (2016–2025): Systematic Review and Bibliometric Mapping," *Harmoni* 24, no. 2 (2025): 185–214, <https://doi.org/10.32488/harmoni.v24i2.888>.

¹⁷ Mohamad Athoillah et al., "Policies and Practices Religious Moderation in Pesantren," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2024): 387–96, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i2.27543>.

¹⁸ Yaser Amri, Yogi Febriandi, and Phaison Da-Oh, "Religious Moderation Unveiled: The Intersection of Textual and Contextual Approaches to Understanding Indonesian Muslims," *Miqot: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 48, no. 1 (2024): 105–125, <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v48i1.1207>.

makers understand that following ulama is not a form of anti-rationality, but a scientific attitude that requires an introduction to postulate, sanad, manhaj, and benefits. Thus, *ittibā'* in the thought of KH Zubair can be positioned as a middle ground between sectarian fanaticism and the liberalization of *ijtihad* without competence, as well as a model of socio-religious literacy to deal with the fragmentation of authority in contemporary Indonesia.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method with the type of library research and a character thought study approach. This method was chosen because the main object of the research is not in the form of direct field social behavior, but the ideas, concepts, and construction of KH Maimun Zubair's thought about *ittibā'* as reflected in the writings, scientific traditions of Islamic boarding schools, and relevant supporting literature. Literature research is understood as a research activity that makes written materials the main source of data, both in the form of books, books, journal articles, official documents, or other scientific works related to the research¹⁹ theme. The primary source of this research is the book *al-'Ulamā' al-Mujaddidūn Raḥimahum Allāh Ta'ālā wa Majāl Tajdīdihim wa Ijtihādihim* by KH Zubair, especially the part that contains the idea of ulama, *tajdid*, *ijtihad*, and the necessity of following the *manhaj* of the ulama. The secondary sources include the book of *ushul fiqh*, Islamic legal methodology books, studies on Islamic boarding schools, religious authorities, religious moderation, and cutting-edge academic articles that discuss *taqlid*, *ittibā'*, *ijtihad*, and Indonesia's socio-religious dynamics. The approach of the study of character thought is used to place the idea of KH Zubair in the relationship between texts, social contexts, pesantren tradition backgrounds, and contemporary religious problems. In qualitative research, meaning is not only found from the text literally, but also through the interpretation of the context, structure of ideas, and the relationships between concepts that shape the thinking of the characters.²⁰

Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation, namely searching, reading, recording, classifying, and interpreting written sources that are relevant to the focus of the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive-analytical techniques and content analysis. Descriptive-analytical is used to systematically describe KH. Maimun Zubair's thought about *ittibā'*, while content analysis is used to find the main themes, categories of ideas, and argumentation patterns that appear in the text. Content analysis is relevant because it allows researchers to read the text not just as a collection of statements, but as data that contains a particular meaning, structure, and message in a particular socio-scientific context.²¹ The analysis stage is carried out through several steps: first, inventory of primary and secondary texts; second, identification of key concepts such as ulama, *tajdid*, *ijtihad*, *madhhab*, *sanad*, and *ittibā'*; third, categorization of ideas based on epistemological, normative, and socio-religious themes; fourth, the interpretation of ideas with the approach of *ushul fiqh* and the theory of religious authority; fifth, drawing conclusions about the relevance of KH Maimun Zubair's thought for socio-religious life in Indonesia. To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation of sources by comparing primary texts, *ushul fiqh* literature, pesantren studies, and contemporary research on religious moderation. In this way, this research not only explains the thinking of figures normatively, but also places them as a conceptual offer that is relevant to the problems of religious authority, Islamic legal literacy, and social cohesion of the Indonesian Muslim community.

¹⁹ Mestika Zed, *Literature Research Methods* (Indonesian Torch Library Foundation, 2022).

²⁰ John W Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2014); Kaelan, *Interdisciplinary Qualitative Research Methods; Interdisciplinary Interconnective Religious Research Methods with Other Sciences* (Yogyakarta: Paradigma, 2010), <https://www.istanaagency.com/metode-penelitian-kualitatif-interdisipliner-bidang-sosial-budaya-filsafat-seni-agama-dan-humaniora/>.

²¹ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Theory and Methodology* (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 1980).

KH. Maimun Zubair's Thought on *Ittibā'* of Fāqih

A study of the *وحد في مذهب واحد* in the book *al-'Ulamā' al-Mujaddidūn* Raḥimahum Allāh Ta'ālā wa Majāl Tajdīdihim wa Ijtihādihim shows that KH. Maimun Zubair is not building a defense against sectarian fanaticism in a narrow way, but is formulating an epistemological framework for how Muslims maintain the continuity of Islamic jurisprudence. The term *ittibā'* in this context cannot be simply equated with passive obedience without methodological awareness. It is more appropriately understood as an act of following the authority of *fiqh* scholars because there is recognition of expertise, sanad, *istinbat* tools, and scientific disciplines that are not possessed by everyone. Thus, *ittibā'* in the thought of KH. Maimun is a middle ground between two extreme poles: first, sectarian fanaticism that closes the possibility of the breadth of the law; Second, the claim of free *ijtihād* that gives space to anyone to speak the law without competence.

The first finding of this manuscript is that KH. Maimun places the ulama as the guardian of the authenticity of the sharia. On page 33, he opens the discussion by quoting the text:

"إكمال هذا العلم من كل خلف عدوله ينفون عنه تحريف الغالين وانتحال المبطلين وتأويل الجاهلين"

This text affirms that religious science is not allowed to run unguarded. Each generation has a just scholar who rejects three forms of deviation: the distortion of extreme groups, the false claims of the false, and the manipulation of the ignorant. Within this framework, *fiqh* scholars do not only play the role of the law-teller, but also as the guardian of the epistemological boundary between legitimate knowledge and distorted religious claims. Therefore, the obligation to follow *fiqh* scholars is not just an attitude of respect for figures, but a mechanism of protection for religion so that it remains within the path of sanad, madhhab, and scientific discipline.²²

On page 34, KH. Maimun strengthens the authority of the scholars by linking them to the concept of *ulī al-amr*. He wrote:

"وأولو الأمر هم العلماء والفقهاء"

This statement shows the expansion of the meaning of obedience from a political structure to a religious epistemic structure. In socio-legal interpretation, *ulī al-amr* is not only interpreted as the ruler of the government, but also as a scholar and scholar who has the capacity to understand the law of Allah. Thus, obedience to the *fiqh* scholars is not feudal obedience, but epistemic obedience to the person who has the apparatus of knowledge. On the same page, KH. Maimun quotes:

"وإذا وقع الاختلاف فعليك بالسواد الأعظم مع الحق وأهله"

This quote confirms that when differences occur, the ummah is directed to follow the majority group that is with the truth and its experts. That is, the measure of truth is not just the number, but the attachment to *al-ḥ aqq* and *ahl al-ḥ aqq*. This is where it can be seen that the concept of pilgrims in the thought of KH. Maimun is not populist, but epistemological: the majority that follows is the majority that is connected to truth, scholars, and scientific traditions.²³

The second finding is that KH. Maimun positions madhhab as a form of continuity of knowledge, not just a group identity. On page 35, he mentions high priests and scholars such as al-Bukhari as representations of the continuity of *ahl al-sunnah wa al-jamā'ah*. Quoting the meaning of the commemoration "من شذ إلى النار", KH. Maimun directs readers to understand the dangers of separating oneself from the congregation of knowledge. This expression should not be read simplistic as a rejection of differences of opinion, because in the *fiqh* tradition difference is inevitable. What is criticized is the act of smuggling out the building of knowledge without adequate scientific tools. Thus, "congregation"

²² Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 33.

²³ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 34.

in the thought of KH. Maimun is not a social crowd, but an epistemic community formed through sanad, madhhab, transmission of books, and the confession of scholars ²⁴.

On page 36, KH. Maimun clarifies the boundary between mujtahid and layman. He wrote:

"تقليد قول المجتهدين، والأخذ بفتواهم ليخرج عن عهدة التكليف"

This sentence is very important because it shows that following the opinion of the mujtahid is a way for people who have not reached the degree of *ijtihād* to get out of the dependency of *taklif*. In other words, religious obligations must still be carried out, but not everyone has the ability to deduce laws directly from the Qur'an and hadith. Ordinary people are still responsible for carrying out the law, but the form of responsibility is to ask questions and follow experts. Therefore, *ittibā'* is not a sign of intellectual weakness, but rather a form of methodological responsibility for legal subjects who are aware of the limits of their competence. ²⁵

However, KH. Maimun did not fall into the rigid defense of the madhhab. On page 37, he wrote: "ولا يجب على العامي" and "بل يجوز له الانتقال إلى مذهب غيره", then continued: "والتقليد بعد العمل جائز". This statement shows a very important methodological flexibility. The public is not obliged to be bound to one sect in every event absolutely. Under certain conditions, he can move to another sect. In fact, KH. Maimun mentioned the possibility of *taklid* after committing an act. From this it can be seen that his defense of the ulama and madhhab is not synonymous with fanaticism. Madhhab is maintained as a discipline, but not as a social prison that closes the breadth of *fiqh*. Thus, *ittibā'* in the thought of KH. Maimun is the attitude of following knowledge, not freezing religion. ²⁶

This point is an important contribution to the study of contemporary Islamic law. Criticism of madhhab often departs from the assumption that madhhab means rejecting renewal. On the other hand, the defense of the madhhab is sometimes trapped in freezing opinions so that it loses responsiveness to social change. KH. Maimun takes a more balanced position. He defends madhhab as an epistemic institution, but still acknowledges the breadth of *fiqh* and the possibility of dissent. This position is close to the spirit of Islamic legal moderation, which is to maintain a balance between text and context, tradition and renewal, and authority and benefit. With this perspective, KH. Maimun can be read as a form of *fiqh* moderation based on pesantren traditions.

The third finding is the criticism of KH. Maimun against the claim of free *ijtihād*. On page 38, he criticizes those who sue the authority of the sect with the phrase that they are "يعمدون إلى زعزعة الثقة بها". This criticism is not directed at legitimate *ijtihād*, but at appeals that shake the faith of the ummah in the scholars and madhhabs without offering a solid methodological tool. Here it appears that KH's social sensitivity. Maimun: ordinary people can lose their grip when everyone feels entitled to set the law directly. If the authority of the ulama is overthrown without a legitimate methodological substitute, then what emerges is not scientific freedom, but the chaos of fatwas. Therefore, the defense of *ittibā'* is a defense of the regularity of Islamic legal knowledge. ²⁷

On page 39, KH. Maimun emphasized that the religion that the ummah must know and practice is what the fuqaha have formulated:

"والدين علينا علمه والعمل به هو ما قرره فقهاؤنا رحمهم الله تعالى"

However, he did not rule out the possibility of the virtues of the latter. What he rejects is the *ijtihād* claim of an unqualified person:

"ولكن فلا يدعي الاجتهاد من ليس من أهله"

²⁴ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 35.

²⁵ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 36.

²⁶ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 37.

²⁷ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 38.

This statement shows that KH. Maimun is not anti-ijtihād, but anti-false claims of ijtihād. He distinguishes between the opening of the ijtihād space and the eligibility of a person to enter it. Thus, the core of the question is not whether ijtihād can be done, but who is worthy to perform ijtihād and with what device he does it ²⁸.

On pages 39-40, KH. Maimun detailed the requirements of ijtihād by emphasizing mastery of Arabic, nash, general and special pronunciations, absolute and muqayyad, essence and majaz, mujmal and musytarak, as well as the *ushul fiqh* apparatus. He wrote:

ومن شرطه أيضا معرفة القواعد الأصولية للكتاب الكريم والسنة" and "ومن شرطه معرفة مواقع الإجماع لكيلا يخرج عنه فيكون متبعا غير سبيل المؤمن نين" الشريعة

This formulation shows that ijtihād is a very complex scientific work. It is not enough for mujtahid to have the moral courage or enthusiasm to return to the Qur'an and hadith. He must master the language apparatus, hadith, tafsir, ijma', *ushul fiqh*, istinbat rules, and maps of scholars' differences of opinion. By affirming this condition, KH. Maimun is building an epistemological fence so that Islamic law is not produced by untrained subjectivity.²⁹

The fourth finding is that KH. Maimun does not understand the sharia as a rigid system. On page 41, he shows that the Shari'ah of Allah can still answer new events, but the way to answer them is not the claim of free ijtihād. New questions must be returned to the experts of knowledge and the rules of the madhhab that have matured. Thus, *ittibā'* serves as a bridge between the text of revelation and social reality. It does not kill legal creativity, but ensures that creativity runs through legitimate devices. This is what distinguishes *fiqh* reform from undisciplined legal liberalization. KH. Maimun accepts the reality of change, but rejects the changes uprooted from sanad and methodology.³⁰

On page 42, KH. Maimun shows intellectual humility through the sentence: "فما علينا أن نتبع إلا ما أثره". This sentence can be interpreted conceptually as an acknowledgment that later generations did not start science from scratch. They received the methodological heritage of the previous imams and fuqahas. This attitude is not anti-criticism, but a historical awareness that Islamic jurisprudence develops through a long process, dialogue between scholars, the formation of sects, the testing of opinions, and socio-religious selection. After that, KH. Maimun warned of the danger of opening the door of ijtihād freely in this day and age because it can give birth to many false "mujtahids". Thus, *ittibā'* functions preventively: to protect society from fatwa chaos, divisions, and misuse of evidence.³¹

On page 43, KH. Maimun calls the path of following the scholars and the fuqaha as the path of sincere people: "هذه سنة المخلصين من العلماء والفقهاء". He then wrote: "أن يلزموا الحق باتباع المذاهب الفقهية التي كتب الله لها البقاء". This sentence is the normative core of the discussion. The school of *fiqh* survives not only because it is inherited, but because it has been tested in history, practiced by the ummah, studied by scholars, and filtered through scientific tradition. By following the recognized school of *fiqh*, the ummah is not worshipping the past, but following a scientific system that has durability. Here, *ittibā'* has three functions at once: to maintain the truth, to maintain the continuity of knowledge, and to maintain the social stability of the ³²ummah.

On page 44, KH. Maimun formulated the ruling of following certain mujtahid for people who have not reached the degree of ijtihād:

"تقليد مجتهد بخصوصه في الأعمال الفرعية واجب على القاصر عن مرتبة الاجتهاد المطلق"

²⁸ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 39.

²⁹ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 39-40.

³⁰ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 41.

³¹ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 40.

³² Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 43.

He places this obligation in the realm of *a'māl far'iyyah*, which are practical laws that require *fiqh* reasoning. The basis is the verse "فاسألوا أهل الذكر إن كنتم لا تعلمون". By quoting this verse, KH. Maimun emphasized that asking experts is not a sign of inferiority, but a sharia command for those who do not know. This shows that the epistemology of Islamic law is proportional: those who know are obliged to explain, those who do not know are obliged to ask questions and follow expert³³ explanations.

On pages 45-46, KH. Maimun shows the peak of the flexibility of *fiqh*. He wrote:

"فالشرعية الإسلامية تسع لكل ما يجد للناس من أفضية"

This statement confirms that Islamic sharia has the breadth to answer new cases. He then distinguishes between the postulates of *qat'i* and *zanni*. In the postulates of *qat'i*, the debate space is closed because the meaning is certain. However, in the *zanni* postulate, the area of *ijtihad*, research, and *tarjih* is open. This formulation is condensed in the sentence:

"والطريق الذي يترجح به هذا المعنى المستفاد على المعنى الآخر المستفاد من نص واحد، هو: الاجتهاد والنظر والبحث".

Thus, KH. Maimun did not close the door of *ijtihad*. Instead, he explains the place of *ijtihad* precisely: *ijtihad* takes place in an area that does open up the possibility of reasoning, and is carried out by people who have a set of knowledge.³⁴

From this it can be concluded that KH. Maimun about *ittibā'* has a complete structure. First, the authority of the *ulama* must be followed because they keep religion from distortion. Second, the school must be respected because it is a system of transmission and testing of knowledge. Third, ordinary people are obliged to follow experts because not everyone reaches the degree of *ijtihad*. Fourth, narrow fanaticism is rejected because *fiqh* has a breadth and possibility of changing opinions. Fifth, false *ijtihad* claims are criticized for endangering society. Sixth, renewal is still possible as long as it runs through the legitimate *ijtihad*, vows, and *bahth* devices. This structure shows that KH. Maimun does not place tradition and renewal as two poles that negate each other. Tradition is precisely a condition so that renewal does not lose its legitimacy.

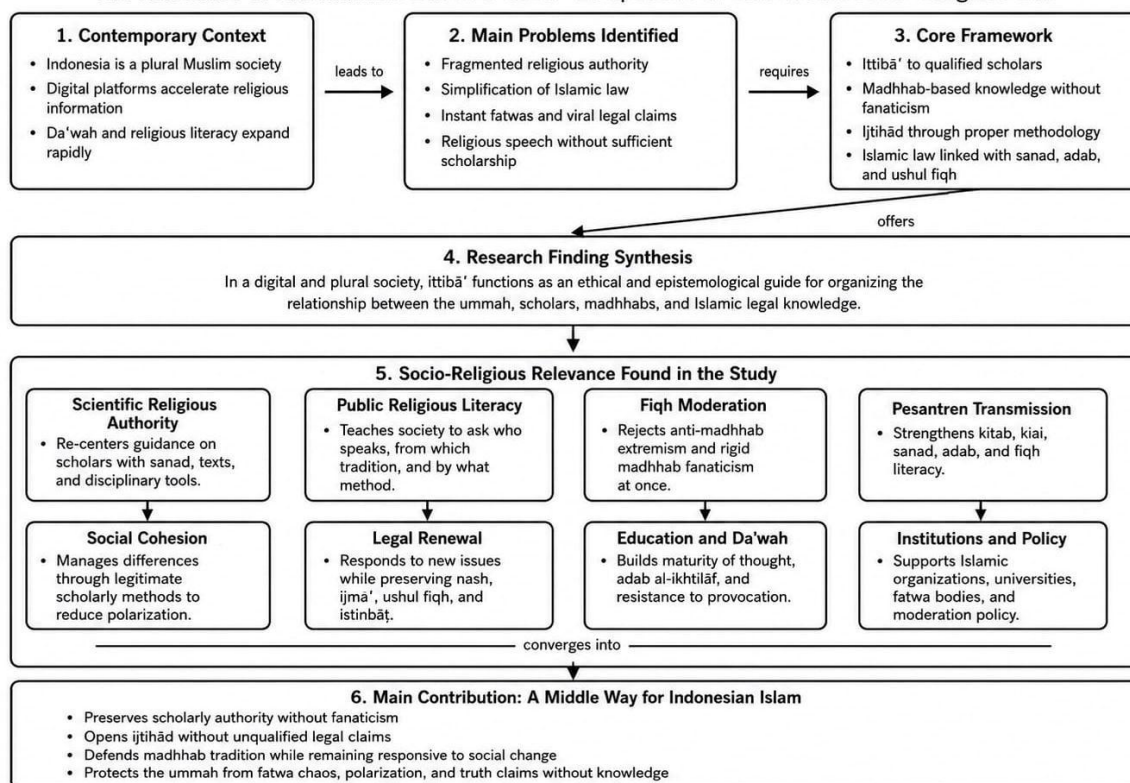
The theoretical contribution of these findings is the strengthening of the concept of *ittibā'* as an epistemological category in Islamic law. So far, the term *taqlid* has often been positioned negatively as a symbol of stagnation, while *ijtihad* has been positively positioned as a symbol of progress. The reading of KH. Maimun points out that the dichotomy is too simple. In the reality of Islamic law, *taqlid* and *ittibā'* have a social and epistemic function for people who do not meet the requirements of *ijtihad*, while *ijtihad* has a renewal function for experts who have competence. Thus, the problem is not to choose between *taqlid* or *ijtihad* in black and white, but to place each on the right subject, context, and capacity.

The Relevance of KH. Maimun Zubair's Perspective on Socio-Religious in Indonesia

The Perspective of KH. Maimun Zubair of *ittibā'* has a strong relevance to contemporary Indonesian socio-religious conditions. Indonesia is a pluralistic Muslim society, living in diverse religious traditions, and being in a digital space that accelerates the circulation of religious information. On the one hand, the development of technology provides great opportunities for *da'wah* and the expansion of religious literacy. However, on the other hand, the digital space also gives birth to new problems in the form of fragmentation of authority, simplification of Islamic law, the spread of instant fatwas, and the increasing courage of some people to speak religion without an adequate scientific background. In such a situation, the idea of KH. Maimun on *ittibā'* can be read as an ethical and epistemological framework for reorganizing the relationship between the *ummah*, scholars, sects, and Islamic legal knowledge.

³³ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 44.

³⁴ Maimun Zubair, *Al-'Ulama' Al-Mujaddidun*, 2007, 45-46.

Image 1. Relevance of the ConceptThe Relevance of KH. Maimun Zubair's *Ittibā'* Perspective in Indonesian Socio-Religious LifeSource synthesis: Research text on KH. Maimun Zubair's concept of *ittibā'* and its relevance to Indonesian socio-religious life.

The first relevance lies in strengthening scientific religious authority. In the digital age, religious authority is not always born from mastery of books, sanad, and disciplines, but is often shaped by popularity, rhetoric, number of followers, and the ability to produce content. Akmaliah points out that moderate religious authorities such as Nahdlatul Ulama face serious challenges from new actors on digital platforms that gain influence through popular communication patterns. Hannan and Mursyidi also explained that social media causes the fragmentation of religious authority because new religious figures can gain public legitimacy without always going through traditional scientific paths. In this context, KH. Maimun is important because he emphasized that religious authority must be returned to scholars and scholars who have the tools of knowledge.

The second relevance is related to the religious literacy of the community. APJII noted that the number of Indonesian internet users in 2024 will reach 221,563,479 people or 79.5 percent of the total population.³⁷ Meanwhile, research by PPIM UIN Jakarta shows that social media is one of the important sources of religious knowledge for the younger generation.³⁸ This data shows that many people learn religion through a very open digital space. The problem is that not all people have the ability to distinguish between authoritative scholars' opinions, snippets of popular discourses, and unfounded legal claims. In this context, *ittibā'* to the scholars of jurisprudence becomes the principle of

³⁵ Akmaliah, "Reclaiming Moderate Islam In Nahdlatul Ulama Challenging the Dominant Religious Authority in Digital Platform."

³⁶ Abd Hannan and Ach Fatayillah Mursyidi, "Social Media and the Fragmentation of Religious Authority among Muslims in Contemporary Indonesia."

³⁷ Apjii.or.id, "APJII Number of Indonesian Internet Users Reaches 221 Million People."

³⁸ PPIM UIN Jakarta, 2021 <https://www.uinjkt.ac.id/id/ppim-uin-jakarta-anak-muda-tidak-religius-tapi-konservatif/>

literacy: society needs to be taught not only "what the law is", but also "who conveys it", "from what tradition of science he speaks", and "how the law is formulated".

The third relevance appears in efforts to maintain religious moderation. KH Maimun Zubair's thought. Maimun rejected two extreme forms at once. First, anti-madhab extremism that assumes that everyone can directly take the law from the Qur'an and hadith without the *ushul fiqh* device. Second, madhab fanaticism that closes the possibility of the breadth of the law and differences of opinion. This position is very much in line with the needs of religious moderation in Indonesia. Mutawali explained that *maqāsid al-sharī'ah* can be the foundation of Islamic moderation because Islamic law is directed to safeguard the interests and avoid extremism.³⁹ Thus, *ittibā'* in the thought of KH. Maimun can be placed as a form of *fiqh* moderation: maintaining the authority of the ulama, but still recognizing the breadth of Islamic law.

The fourth relevance is related to the strengthening of Islamic boarding schools as a center for the transmission of Islamic knowledge. KH Maimun Zubair's thought was born from the tradition of pesantren that places the book, sanad, kiai, and adab as a unit. In this tradition, knowledge is not only understood as information, but also as a legacy transmitted through teachers and the scientific community. Harnadi, Siahaan, and Hilmy point out that pesantren have an important role in maintaining traditional religious authority in the digital era.⁴⁰ This shows that pesantren are not institutions that are left behind, but institutions that can maintain the stability of religious authorities in the midst of the rush of digital information. KH Maimun Zubair's thought about *ittibā'* can be the basis for strengthening pesantren as a fortress of *fiqh* literacy and scientific manners.

The fifth point of relevance lies in KH Maimun Zubair's intellectual approach to maintaining social cohesion. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, differences of opinion are inevitable. Without proper scholarly ethics, such differences can easily lead to mutual blame, polarization, and even social conflict. KH Maimun emphasizes that disagreements should be referred back to qualified scholars, established madhabs, and legitimate methodological frameworks. In this way, differences are not eliminated but managed in a manner that preserves communal unity. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs indicates that Indonesia's Religious Harmony Index reached 76.47 in 2024 and increased to 77.89 in 2025.

Would ⁴¹. However, the SETARA Institute still recorded 260 incidents and 402 acts of violations of freedom of religion/belief in 2024 ⁴². The data shows that harmony still requires strengthening socio-religious ethics. In this context, *ittibā'* to moderate scholars rooted in tradition can be a social mechanism to prevent extremism and conflicts based on religious interpretation.

The sixth relevance has to do with the need for reform of Islamic law that remains rooted in methodology. Indonesian society faces many new problems, ranging from the digital economy, modern transactions, family, popular culture, technology, to interreligious relations. All of these problems require responsive *fiqh* answers. However, the answer cannot be given haphazardly. KH Maimun Zubair's thought provides a framework that Islamic sharia is broad and able to answer new problems, but the update must be carried out by experts who understand *nash*, *ijma'*, *ushul fiqh*,

³⁹ Mutawali, "As The Foundation Of Islamic Moderation: Theo-Philosophical Insight against Extreme Religious Ideology."

⁴⁰ Harnadi, Siahaan, and Hilmy, "Pesantren and the Preservation of Traditional Religious Authority in the Digital Age."

⁴¹ Ministry of Religion, "Religious Harmony in Indonesia Increases, KUB Index 2024 Reaches 76.47, Very High Category"; Public Relations and Public Communication of the Ministry of Religion, "Religious Harmony Index Rises, Highest in 11 Years."

⁴² SETARA Institute: Institute of Democracy and Peace, "Conditions of Freedom of Religion and Belief (KBB) 2024."

and the rules of *istinbat*. Thus, his ideas were able to bridge the need for Islamic law reform and protection of methodological authority. This is what distinguishes *fiqh* reform from freedom of opinion without discipline.

The seventh relevance is seen in the religious education of the community. Islamic education in Indonesia needs to instill an understanding that religion is not only about knowing the evidence, but also understanding how the evidence works in the scientific system. In this case, KH. Maimun can be used as a basis for strengthening the *fiqh* curriculum, *ushul fiqh*, and *adab al-ikhtilaf*. Students need to be introduced that Islamic law has a level of evidence, different *madhhab*, *ijtihad* requirements, and the mechanism of *tarjih*. That way, they do not easily feel the most correct when they find one postulate or one opinion. Athoillah, Rahman, Firdaus, and Septiadi emphasized that *pesantren* have an important role in strengthening religious moderation through educational practices that foster tolerance, balance, and respect for ⁴³ differences. KH Maimun Zubair's thought can strengthen the direction of education through the basis of *fiqh* and *ushul fiqh*.

The eighth relevance is related to public *da'wah*. Many *da'wah* in the public space today are presented briefly, emotionally, and easily viral. This format is indeed effective in attracting attention, but it risks simplifying complex legal issues. KH Maimun Zubair's thought reminded that Islamic law should not be reduced to quotations of postulates without methods. *Da'wah* needs to educate the public about the importance of *ulama*, *madhhab*, *sanad*, and the requirements of *ijtihad*. Thus, *da'wah* not only forms religious spirit, but also forms maturity of thought. In this context, *ittibā'* is not just an invitation to follow the *ulama*, but public education so that the *ummah* is not easily swayed by instant fatwas and provocative religious narratives.

The ninth point of relevance lies in the contribution of KH Maimun Zubair's thought to the concept of Islam Nusantara and Indonesian Islamic law. Islam in Indonesia has developed through an ongoing dialogue between scriptural texts, scholarly traditions, local culture, and social realities. KH Maimun Zubair's thought demonstrates that the *pesantren* tradition is not opposed to renewal; rather, it requires that renewal be pursued through a disciplined scholarly framework. Fuaddin and Qudsy further show that KH Maimun Zubair's reception of Tafsir al-Jalalain in the Ahadan study tradition reflects a mode of *pesantren* interpretation that is not merely repetitive, but also contextual and responsive to contemporary issues.⁴⁴ This strengthens the understanding that *pesantren* are able to maintain tradition while responding to change. Therefore, *ittibā'* in the thought of KH. Maimun can be a model of Indonesian religion rooted in *madhhab*, but remain open to social realities.

The tenth relevance is related to strengthening religious institutions in the face of public discourse contestation. Islamic organizations, Islamic boarding schools, religious universities, and fatwa institutions are not enough to produce legal decisions, but also need to build a public communication mechanism that is able to explain why an opinion is chosen, how the evidence is used, and what is the limit of the authority of the layman in following the opinion of the *ulama*. Salendra points out that digital media such as portals *nu.or.id* can play a moderation function by filtering conservative-radical religious narratives through more rational and communicative argumentation.⁴⁵ By using the perspective of KH. However, the task of religious institutions is not only to maintain authority, but to translate that authority into public literacy that is easy to understand without simplifying the discipline of jurisprudence.

⁴³ Athoillah et al., "Policies and Practices Religious Moderation in Pesantren."

⁴⁴ Achmad Fuaddin and Saifuddin Zuhri Qudsy, "The reception of KH. Maemon Zubair on Tafsir al-Jalalain in Ngaji Ahadan at Al-Anwar Islamic Boarding School, Sarang," *Suhuf* 17, no. 2 (2024): 193–213, <https://doi.org/10.22548/shf.v17i2.1107>.

⁴⁵ I Wayan Salendra, "Religious Moderation in Digital Media Discourse: A Study of the Nu.or.Id Portal from the Perspective of Communicative Rationality," *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya* 9, no. 2 (2024): 200–220, <https://doi.org/10.25217/jf.v9i2.4954>.

The relevance of the eleventh can be seen from the aspect of socio-religious policy. The state often uses the term religious moderation to maintain harmony, but its implementation requires conceptual support from the Islamic scientific tradition itself so that it is not understood as a mere administrative agenda. Nasir and Rijal show that Islamic religious universities can be a strategic space to mainstream religious moderation through education, institutions, and the formation of academic character.⁴⁶ The idea of KH. Maimun on *ittibā'* can strengthen this agenda because it provides a normative basis that moderation is not a compromise without principles, but a scientific attitude that places authority on its experts, maintains the breadth of *fiqh*, and prevents extreme attitudes in understanding the evidence.

The twelfth point of relevance concerns the formation of an ethics of difference within Muslim society. KH Maimun does not erase the plurality of legal schools, but rather acknowledges the possibility of changing opinions in certain contexts. This attitude is important because Indonesians are accustomed to living with the diversity of *fiqh* traditions, ranging from the practice of daily worship, the determination of lunar months, the procedures of mu'āmalah, to the expression of religious culture. If these differences are not managed within a scholarly framework, they can easily become material for mutual blame.

Ittibā' teaches that one may follow a recognized authority, but one must not treat one's chosen school as the exclusive expression of truth. This is where KH Maimun's thinking carries strong social value: it preserves the discipline of the madhhab while simultaneously creating space for tolerance within *fiqh*. Thus, the central relevance of KH Maimun Zubair's thought for Indonesia's socio-religious life lies in its ability to offer a middle way. He maintains the authority of the ulama without fostering fanaticism; he opens space for *ijtihad* without allowing everyone to claim to be a mujtahid; he defends the madhhab without obscuring the breadth of *fiqh*; and he values tradition without rejecting change. In an Indonesian society that is pluralistic, digital, and marked by contestations of religious authority, this idea is crucial for building a scientific, moderate, and responsible religious culture. In KH Maimun's thought, *ittibā'* is not merely a legal concept, but also a socio-religious ethics aimed at protecting the ummah from the chaos of divergent fatwas, polarization, and unsubstantiated claims to truth.

Finally, the results of this study show that KH Maimun Zubair's approach to *ittibā'* is not merely an internal theme of the pesantren but also an important contribution to the study of contemporary Islamic law. He addresses the fundamental questions confronting modern Muslim societies: how to maintain the authority of the ulama without becoming fanatical; how to allow renewal without undermining methodology; how to appreciate the madhhab without closing off the breadth of *fiqh*; and how to guide ordinary believers to remain religiously responsible amid the rapid flow of information. By reading *ittibā'* as both an epistemological and social discipline, this study positions KH Maimun Zubair as a scholar who not only inherited the classical books, but also offered a model of Islamic legal thinking that is highly relevant to contemporary Indonesia.

Conclusion

KH Maimun Zubair's thoughts on *ittibā'* of *fiqh* scholars demonstrate that following the ulama is not a form of blind fanaticism or a rejection of reason, but rather an epistemological stance grounded in an awareness of the limits of one's scholarly competence. In his work *al-'Ulamā' al-Mujaddidūn*, KH Maimun emphasizes that scholars and fuqahā' play a crucial role as custodians of the authority of the Sharī'ah, the continuity of legal schools (madhāhib), and the protection of the public from unqualified claims to *ijtihad*. Accordingly, *ittibā'* is understood as an informed and disciplined practice of adhering to scholars who possess reliable chains of transmission (sanad), mastery of evidences,

⁴⁶ Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Khairul Rijal, "Keeping the Middle Path: Mainstreaming Religious Moderation through Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 213–41, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.213-241>.

competence in *uṣūl al-fiqh*, and the ability to perform legal reasoning (*istinbāt*). At the same time, his defense of the *madhhab* is not rigid; he allows for flexibility through the recognition of juristic diversity, the possibility of transferring between *madhāhib* under certain conditions, and the legitimacy of *ijtihād* for those who are properly qualified.

The relevance of this perspective to Indonesia's socio-religious context lies in its capacity to offer a balanced approach amid the fragmentation of religious authority, the rapid flow of digital information, and the growing tendency toward instant access to religious knowledge. The concept of *ittibā'* can strengthen religious literacy by encouraging the public to critically assess the authority behind religious opinions, while also sustaining a moderate religious outlook that avoids both anti-*madhhab* extremism and rigid sectarianism. In a plural and digitally connected society like Indonesia, with its strong *pesantren* tradition, KH Maimun Zubair's thought represents a significant contribution to the development of Islamic law that remains rooted in tradition, open to renewal, and oriented toward the public good.

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