



Submitted	Revised	Published
21 August 2025	17 November 2025	18 November 2025
DOI : <a href="https://doi.org/10.58518/madinah.v12i2.4079">https://doi.org/10.58518/madinah.v12i2.4079</a>		

## RECONSTRUCTING THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD: EXPLORING THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF ZAINUDDIN AL-MALIBARI'S THOUGHT

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**Abstract:** Muslims today face quite serious internal problems, especially the emergence of exclusive religious movements that tend to construct fellow Muslims as "the other" simply because of differences in religious views. On the other hand, there are also groups that commit acts of violence in the name of God and religion, as if religion provides moral legitimacy for aggressive actions against other groups. In this situation, the theme of jihad becomes increasingly important to study, not only because it continues to be an academic debate, but also because the concept is often misunderstood and misused in the context of contemporary religious society. This study examines the concept of jihad in Zainuddin al-Malibari's *Fath al-Mu'in* by highlighting its four levels: (1) inviting people to believe in Allah rationally and argumentatively, (2) striving to fulfill sharia obligations, (3) waging defensive warfare when Muslims are disturbed, and (4) providing protection for all members of society, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The concept of jihad in this text is positioned as *fardhu kifayah*, which can change to *fardhu 'ain* according to the demands of the context. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to reconstruct al-Malibari's paradigm of jihad as a normative foundation for peace building in a pluralistic religious society. This research shows that jihad is not only related to



militancy or self-defense, but also encompasses ethical, social, and protective dimensions that are often overlooked in contemporary discourse. The findings of this study confirm that the framework of jihad in *Fatḥ al-Mu’īn* has strong relevance for strengthening interfaith harmony, overcoming tendencies toward exclusivism, and promoting peaceful coexistence in the context of today's diversity.

**Keywords:** Contemporary Discourse, *Fatḥ al-Mu’īn*, Jihad, Relevance, Zaunuddin al-Malibari.

**Abstrak:** Umat Islam saat ini menghadapi problem internal yang cukup serius, terutama munculnya gerakan-gerakan keagamaan ekslusif yang cenderung mengkonstruksi sesama Muslim sebagai “pihak lain” hanya karena perbedaan pandangan keagamaan. Di sisi lain, muncul pula kelompok-kelompok yang melakukan Tindakan kekerasan atas nama Tuhan dan agama, seolah-olah agama memberikan legitimasi moral bagi Tindakan agresif terhadap kelompok lain. Dalam situasi ini, tema jihad menjadi semakin penting untuk dikaji, bukan hanya karena terus-menerus menjadi perdebatan akademik, tetapi juga karena konsep tersebut kerap disalahpahami dan disalahgunakan dalam konteks sosial keagamaan kontemporer. Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep jihad dalam *Fatḥ al-Mu’īn* karya Zainuddin al-Malibari dengan menyoroti empat tingkatannya: (1) mengajak manusia beriman kepada Allah secara rasional dan argumentatif, (2) berjihad dalam menjalankan kewajiban syariat, (3) melakukan peperangan defensif apabila umat Islam mendapat gangguan, dan (4) memberikan perlindungan bagi seluruh warga masyarakat, baik Muslim maupun non-Muslim. Konsep jihad dalam teks ini diposisikan sebagai *fardhu kifayah* yang dapat berubah menjadi *fardhu ‘ain* sesuai tuntutan konteks. Kebaruan dalam penelitian ini yaitu upaya rekonstruksi paradigma jihad versi al-Malibari sebagai landasan normatif bagi pembangunan perdamaian (peace building) dalam masyarakat beragama yang plural. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa jihad tidak hanya berkaitan dengan aspek militansi atau pembelaan diri, tetapi juga mencakup dimensi etis, sosial, dan protektif yang sering terabaikan dalam wacana kontemporer. Temuan penelitian menegaskan bahwa kerangka jihad dalam *Fatḥ al-Mu’īn* memiliki relevansi yang kuat untuk memperkuat kerukunan antarumat beragama, mengatasi kecenderungan eksklusivisme, dan mendorong koeksistensi damai dalam konteks keberagaman masa kini.

**Kata Kunci:** Diskursus Kontemporer, *Fatḥ al-Mu’īn*, Jihad, Relevansi, Zaunuddin al-Malabri.

## INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of religious exclusivism within the Muslim community has continued to intensify in recent years. Various reports on religious freedom indicate that certain Islamic groups readily label fellow Muslims with differing theological views as “deviant,” “*bid’ah* (heretical),” or even “*kafir* (infidel).”<sup>1</sup> This form of intolerance is not merely a theoretical discourse; it is reflected in numerous documented cases of religious freedom violations and discriminatory practices in

<sup>1</sup> Setara Institute, Laporan Kondisi Kebebasan Beragama/Berkeyakinan di Indonesia 2023 (Jakarta, 2023).



public spaces.<sup>2</sup> Such conditions indicate a deepening internal fragmentation that requires serious scholarly attention and a reconstruction of religious understanding.<sup>3</sup>

Another equally important problem is the rise of violent acts carried out in the name of religion.<sup>4</sup> The narrative of jihad is frequently taken out of its historical context and used as a justification for aggressive actions by certain groups. International reports indicate that after the decline of ISIS, various forms of religiously motivated extremism have diversified in both method and strategy, including in Indonesia as the world's largest Muslim-majority country.<sup>5</sup> This phenomenon highlights the urgency of re-examining the concept of jihad in a more comprehensive, contextual, and critical manner.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of jihad has indeed remained a highly contested theme, particularly within modern Islamic legal discourse. Many scholars emphasize that jihad in the Islamic tradition is multidimensional, encompassing spiritual, legal, social, and protective aspects, though these dimensions are often overshadowed in public narratives that prioritize militant interpretations.<sup>5</sup> Such academic debates underscore the need for new approaches capable of bridging classical conceptualizations of jihad with the pluralistic and complex realities of contemporary society.<sup>7</sup>

In Indonesia, the *Fath al-Mu'īn* by Zainuddin al-Malibari is one of the most influential Shafi'i legal texts within the pesantren tradition. The text is widely taught because it is considered concise, systematic, and relevant to the practical application of Islamic law in daily life. Its broad acceptance makes it an essential reference for exploring how classical scholars conceptualized jihad and how such understandings can be contextualized to respond to modern religious challenges.<sup>8</sup> This social relevance grounds the necessity of re-examining the work from a reconstructive perspective.

In *Fath al-Mu'īn*, jihad is understood as a layered and non-monolithic concept. Al-Malibari outlines four forms of jihad: (1) inviting people to believe in God through rational and argumentative persuasion, (2) striving to fulfill religious obligations, (3) engaging in defensive warfare when Muslims are attacked, and (4) providing protection to all members of society, including non-Muslims.<sup>7</sup> This

<sup>2</sup> International Crisis Group, *Indonesia: Jihadism After the Caliphate* (Brussels, 2024).

<sup>3</sup> Khairul Umam dan Masrul Anam, "Dari Toleransi ke Kewaspadaan: Deteksi Dini Konflik Keagamaan oleh Tokoh Agama di Kota Kediri". *Empirisma: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan Islam*, 2, no. 1 (2025), 357-359.

<sup>4</sup> Thiyas Tono Taufiq, "Kontribusi Filsafat Perdamaian Eric Weil Bagi Resolusi Konflik Masyarakat Majemuk", *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourse*, 4, no. 1 (2021), 77. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ljid.v4i1.2780>

<sup>5</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *The Parameters of Jihad in Islam* (Islamic Texts Society, 2019), 1-5.

<sup>6</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII-XVIII* (Kencana, 2013), 245-247.

<sup>7</sup> Nazlia Aziza, "Konsep Jihad Menurut Sayyid Quṭb dan Fazlur Rahman", 2, no. 1 (2025), hlm. 459-486.

<sup>8</sup> Zainuddin al-Malibari, *Fath Al-Mu'īn*, ed. Ahmad al-Fathani (Dar al-Fikr, n.d.).



explanation demonstrates that al-Malibari presents a broad interpretation of jihad, encompassing ethical and social dimensions that extend far beyond the realm of physical combat.<sup>9</sup>

This conceptual framework aligns closely with contemporary ideas of inclusive Islam and religious moderation. Literature on religious moderation consistently emphasizes the importance of protection, social welfare, and the creation of dialogical spaces across groups.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, linking the concept of jihad in *Fath al-Mu'in* with discourses on pluralism and interreligious harmony is not only relevant but also methodologically significant in constructing a more constructive religious ethic.

Nevertheless, there exists a notable research gap. Studies on jihad are largely theoretical or focus on major classical figures such as al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah, or on modern thinkers such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, academic works that specifically reconstruct the concept of jihad in *Fath al-Mu'in* – particularly in relation to peace-building – remain exceedingly limited. Considering that this text is one of the primary references for many Indonesian Muslims, its contextual reinterpretation becomes an urgent scholarly task.

This study seeks to fill this gap by reconstructing Zainuddin al-Malibari's conceptualization of jihad and examining its relevance to the pluralistic and conflict-prone contemporary religious landscape.<sup>11</sup> Such an approach not only contributes to the study of classical Islamic jurisprudence but also offers a normative foundation for strengthening religious moderation, interreligious harmony, and peace-building models rooted in the intellectual heritage of Indonesian Islam.

## METHOD

This study employs qualitative library research to reconstruct Zainuddin al-Malibari's concept of jihad in *Fath al-Mu'in* and assess its relevance to contemporary socio-religious issues. Three methodological approaches are used. First, a textual-normative approach provides a close reading of *Fath al-Mu'in* to identify its structure, terminology, and legal reasoning. Second, a historical-contextual approach situates al-Malibari within the Shāfi'i tradition and the socio-intellectual environment that shaped his ethical and protective formulation of jihad. Third, a contemporary socio-religious approach links classical doctrines with modern challenges such as exclusivism, extremism, and peace-building in plural societies.

Data are drawn from primary sources – including *Fath al-Mu'in* and major Shāfi'i commentaries – and secondary materials such as scholarly books, peer-reviewed articles, and contemporary reports. Document analysis is carried out through content analysis, conceptual reconstruction, and comparative-contextual interpretation. Methodological rigor is maintained through triangulation of sources, theories, and cross-verification with current scholarship.

<sup>9</sup> Zainuddin al-Malibari, *Fath Al-Mu'in*.

<sup>10</sup> Abdul Jamil Wahab et al., "Theological Discourse of Jihad Operations of Terrorism Actions in Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2538719>.

<sup>11</sup> Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif: Menuju Sikap Terbuka Dalam Beragama* (Mizan, 2017), 56-60.



## RESULTS

### A Brief Overview of *Fathul Mu'in* by Shaykh Imam Zainuddin bin Aziz al-Malibari

*Fathul Mu'in* is a foundational fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) text widely regarded as a standard reference for Muslims. It is commonly studied in traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) due to its comprehensive coverage of legal concepts.<sup>12</sup> The book offers a thorough exposition from beginning to end. However, many perceive this work by Shaykh Imam Zainuddin bin Aziz al-Malibari as difficult to understand, particularly for those with limited proficiency in Arabic or experience reading classical Islamic texts (*kitab kuning*).<sup>13</sup> Some even consider *Fathul Mu'in* a benchmark for assessing a student's mastery of Arabic texts. Despite its complexity, the book remains essential for Muslims in determining the legal status of various aspects of daily life.

Like other classical fiqh works, *Fathul Mu'in*<sup>14</sup> is organized systematically into the following major sections:

- a *Khutbah al-Kitab* (Introduction): In this section, Zainuddin ibn Abdul Aziz al-Malibari outlines the position of the book (as a commentary), its contents, objectives, and sources of legal derivation.
- b *Chapter on Prayer* (*Bab al-Shalat*):\*\* This chapter discusses the legal status of neglecting prayer, conditions for valid prayer, and purification (*al-Thaharah*), including ablution (*wudhu*), dry ablution (*tayammum*), ritual bathing (*ghusl*), menstruation and postnatal bleeding, impurities, and etiquettes of relieving oneself. It further elaborates on the pillars and recommended acts of prayer, prostration of forgetfulness (*sujud sahw*) and recitation (*tilawah*), nullifiers of prayer, the call to prayer (*adhan*) and its commencement (*iqamah*), voluntary prayers (such as Eid, eclipse, and rain prayers), congregational prayer, Friday prayer, travel prayer, and concludes with funeral prayer.
- c *Chapter on Almsgiving* (*Bab al-Zakat*):\*\* This section covers the types of wealth subject to zakat, zakat al-fitr, eligible recipients (*mustahiq al-zakat*), and various forms of charity (*shadaqah*).
- d *Chapter on Fasting* (*Bab al-Sawm*):\*\* It discusses the conditions of fasting, spiritual retreat (*i'tikaf*), and voluntary fasts.
- e *Chapter on Pilgrimage* (*Bab al-Hajj wa al-'Umrah*):\*\* This chapter examines the pillars and obligations of Hajj, prohibitions during the state of consecration (*ihram*), sacrificial offerings (*udhiyah*), *aqiqah*, and vows (*nadzar*).
- f *Chapter on Transactions* (*Bab al-Bay'*):\*\* Topics include usury (*riba*), investment partnerships (*qirad*), collateral (*rahn*), bankruptcy (*muflis*), debt transfer (*hawalah*), reconciliation (*sulh*), agency (*wakalah*), partnership (*shirkah*), preemption rights (*shuf'ah*), leasing (*ijarah*), lending ('*ariyah*), usurpation (*ghasab*), gifts (*hibah*),

<sup>12</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Tempe: Arizona State University Press, 1999), 45–48.

<sup>13</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning, Pesantren, dan Tarekat: Tradisi-tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1995), 37–40.

<sup>14</sup> Kitab *Fathul Mui.in*



endowments (*waqf*), acknowledgment (*iqrar*), and wills (*wasiyyah*).

- g *Chapter on Inheritance* (Bab al-Fara'id):\*\* This section discusses inheritance distribution, exclusion (*hijab*), agnate heirs ('asabah), entrusted items (*wadi'ah*), and found property (*luqathah*).
- h *Chapter on Marriage* (Bab al-Nikah):\*\* It covers the conditions and pillars of marriage, compatibility (*kafa'ah*), dowry (*mahar*), wedding feast (*walimah*), oaths (*ila*), comparison (*dhihar*), divorce (*thalak*), reconciliation (*ruju'*), financial support (*nafaqah*), and child custody (*hadhanah*).
- i *Chapter on Criminal Law* (Bab al-Jinayat):\*\* This chapter includes apostasy (*riddah*), prescribed punishments (*hudud*), discretionary punishments (*ta'zir*), retaliation (*qisas*), jihad, judiciary (*qadha*), legal claims (*al-da'wa*), evidence (*al-bayyinat*), testimony, and oaths.
- j Chapter on Emancipation of Slaves: The final chapter discusses manumission (*al-khitabah*), conditional emancipation (*al-tadbir*), and the status of a slave mother (*umm al-walad*).
- k Conclusion: The book closes with expressions of praise and blessings upon the completion of the work by Zainuddin ibn Abdul Aziz al-Malibari, along with his hopes for the benefit and impact of *Fathul Mu'in*.

### Historical Overview of Shaykh Imam Zainuddin al-Malibari

There is limited biographical information available regarding the life and scholarly stature of Shaykh Zainuddin bin Abdul Aziz bin Zainuddin al-Malibari, a prominent scholar from Malabar in southern India. Most references to him are found within the texts he authored, and precise details about his birth remain unknown. Even the date of his death is subject to differing opinions, though it is generally estimated that he passed away between 970-990 AH and was buried on the outskirts of Koro Ponani, India.

He was the grandson of Shaykh Zainuddin bin Ali, the author of *Irshād al-Qāṣidīn*, a summary of *Minhāj al-Ābidīn*. From a young age, Shaykh Zainuddin al-Malibari was raised in a devout religious family.<sup>15</sup> He studied at *al-Madrasy*, an institution founded by his grandfather, and furthered his education under several Arab scholars, including Ibn Hajar al-Haytami and Ibn Ziyad.<sup>16</sup> Shaykh Zainuddin al-Malibari was of Arab descent and was widely known by the honorific title *Makhdum Thangal*, a designation linked to the region where he resided.<sup>17</sup> He is also referred to as Zainuddin Makhdum, Zainuddin Thangal, or simply Makhdum Thangal—titles that reflect the high regard and reverence held for him by the local community.<sup>18</sup>

The Grand Mosque of Ponani (also known as Funani) was the first mosque established by Makhdum Thangal. He adhered to the Shafi'i school of

<sup>15</sup> A. Shoukath Ali, *Zainuddin Makhdoom II: His Life and Works* (Calicut: Islamic Publishing House, 2008), 22-24.

<sup>16</sup> M. M. Ali, *Ulama of Malabar: Biographical Studies* (Kozhikode: Cultural Publications, 1996), 41-45.

<sup>17</sup> K. M. Mathew, *Muslim Intellectual Tradition of Malabar* (New Delhi: Crescent Books, 2011), 67-70.

<sup>18</sup> Roland E. Miller, *Mappila Muslims of Kerala: A Study in Islamic Trends* (Madras: Orient Longman, 1976), 112-115.



jurisprudence. Unlike modern mosques, the Ponani Grand Mosque integrates local architectural styles with Hindu design elements. This fusion reflects the historical context in which Islam was introduced to India—brought by Arab traders via maritime routes and welcomed by local Hindu rulers. The tomb of Shaykh Zainuddin al-Malibari<sup>19</sup> is located adjacent to the mosque. Beyond architecture, the Muslim community in India also adapted their clothing, culinary practices, and building styles to suit local conditions. Like many other scholars of his time, Shaykh Zainuddin al-Malibari was known for his firmness, critical thinking, consistency, and resolute character. He served as a judge, royal advisor, and diplomat during his lifetime.

### Works of Shaykh Zainuddin al-Malibari

In addition to being renowned as a scholar of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Shaykh Zainuddin al-Malibari was also recognized for his expertise in tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism), history, and literature. His notable works include:

- a. *Fathul Mu'in* (The Gateway to Divine Assistance): A commentary (sharh) on the book *Qurrat al-Ayan Hidayat al-Azkiya ila al-Thariq*.
- b. *Irsyad al-'Ibad ila Sabil al-Rashad* (Guidance for the Servants Toward the Path of Righteousness): A didactic work aimed at moral and spiritual instruction.
- c. *Tuhfat al-Mujahidin* (The Gift to the Warriors): A historical and motivational treatise addressing the struggle against colonial forces, particularly the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean region.

### Shaykh Zainuddin al-Malibari's Thought on Jihad in *Fathul Mu'in*

Every religion contains two seemingly contradictory tendencies in its teachings. The first promotes the belief that one's own religion is the absolute truth—superior, salvific, and exclusive, while followers of other faiths are viewed as misguided, disbelievers, or even doomed; thus, they should either be avoided or persuaded to convert.<sup>20</sup> The second tendency emphasizes that every individual deserves respect and love, that there should be no compulsion in religion, and that kindness toward others is encouraged—indeed, such benevolence is often regarded as the core of religious teaching.<sup>21</sup> Religion also appears to serve as the final refuge for society in its attempt to escape the shackles of worldly life and its complexities, offering a sacred canopy under which meaning is constructed.<sup>22</sup> It is likewise a belief system deeply embedded in the consciousness of communities, shaping worldviews, practices, and moral commitments.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, there are various ways to acquire religious knowledge and to embody it in daily life, reflecting the

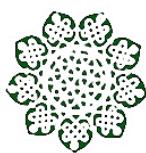
<sup>19</sup> <https://pecihitam.org/biografi-syekh-zainuddin-al-malibari-pengarang-fathul-muin/>, diakses tanggal 31 Juli 2025

<sup>20</sup> Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 15–18.

<sup>21</sup> John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 235–240.

<sup>22</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 51–55.

<sup>23</sup> Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 87–93.



diversity of religious expressions across cultures and traditions.<sup>24</sup>

Generally, religious understanding is acquired through two main avenues: formal and informal education. Formal education is represented by religious institutions such as Islamic schools and *pondok pesantren* (boarding schools), while informal education is disseminated by preachers (*da'i*), religious teachers (*ustaz*), and scholars (*kyai*) in mosques or within families.<sup>25</sup> However, with the advent of mass media—especially television—there has been a significant shift in how people access religious knowledge, as mediated religious messages increasingly shape public religious consciousness.<sup>26</sup> Religion not only addresses the relationship between humans and God (*hablun min Allāh*), but also extensively discusses human relations with others (*hablun min al-nās*) and with the natural environment (*hablun min al-‘ālam*).<sup>27</sup> This affirms that religion functions not merely as a personal spiritual path to God, but also as a social institution that governs ethical conduct, social interaction, and communal life. Unfortunately, this social dimension of religion is often overlooked, especially when religious practice becomes narrowly ritualistic or exclusive in scope.<sup>28</sup>

However, to this day, religious communities continue to be confronted with news of violent acts committed in the name of religion by certain groups. These incidents have contributed to a negative narrative that associates terrorism with Islam.<sup>29</sup> Several acts of terror<sup>30</sup>, particularly bombings, have claimed numerous lives and caused widespread disruption to the social fabric of society, especially in Indonesia. Since the year 2000, there have been at least 20 bombing incidents recorded to date.

Jihad is one of the fundamental obligations in Islam, yet it continues to be systematically suppressed by disbelievers (*kāfirīn*) and hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*). Numerous arguments have been deliberately propagated to distort and neutralize the spirit of jihad, diverting it from its authentic Islamic values.<sup>31</sup> Various Islamic studies, including directives and fatwas, have been presented in ways that diminish the status of jihad as one of the highest forms of worship in Islam. These efforts are nothing but the result of the ideological virus of *shubuhāt* (doubtful ambiguities)

<sup>24</sup> Ninian Smart, *The World's Religions: Old Traditions and Modern Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10–14.

<sup>25</sup> Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: A Study of the Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Tempe: Arizona State University Press, 1999), 18–25.

<sup>26</sup> Stewart M. Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age* (London: Routledge, 2006), 43–48.

<sup>27</sup> Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1989), 32–39.

<sup>28</sup> Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 95–101.

<sup>29</sup> Caroline Mala Corbin, *Terrorists Are Always Muslim but Not Always Muslim but Never White: A Note on White at the Intersection of Critical Race Theory and Propaganda*, *Fordham L. Rev.* 86, No. 1, 2017), 455–456.

<sup>30</sup> Pusat Bahasa Depdiknas RI, *Kamus Bahasa Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa Depdiknas, 2008), 1511.

<sup>31</sup> Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islam, Piety, Politics, And Post-Islamism: Dhikr Akbar in Indonesia", *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 50, no. 1 (20120), 370–371.



injected by those seeking to weaken the condition of the Muslim ummah.

This ideological virus has successfully infiltrated the Muslim community not only among the general public but also among its intellectual and religious leaders. As a result, it is not uncommon to find some Muslim scholars producing new *ijtihād* (legal reasoning) on jihad that contradicts the consensus of earlier scholars who remained committed to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

According to Shaykh Imam Zainuddin bin Aziz al-Malibari in his work *Fathul Mu'in*, jihad consists of four distinct levels:

- a. Calling people to faith in Allah through rational and evidence-based conviction, thereby cultivating a quality of belief that is grounded in understanding not merely inherited by lineage.
- b. Striving to fulfill religious obligations such as performing the five daily prayers, fasting, paying zakat, and other duties prescribed by Islamic law.
- c. Engaging in armed defense when the Muslim community is attacked. This is exemplified by KH Hasyim Asy'ari's issuance of the Resolusi Jihad, which galvanized the spirit of the santri (Islamic students) to resist colonial forces in Surabaya.
- d. Providing protection and welfare to all members of society, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, who demonstrate good character. This includes ensuring access to food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare.

In *Fathul Mu'in*, under the chapter on Jihad, it is stated:

باب الجهاد : (هو فرض كفاية كل عام) ولو مرة إذا كان الكفار ببلادهم، ويتعين إذا دخلوا بلادنا كما يأتي: وحكم فرض الكفاية أنه إذا فعله من فيهم كفاية سقط الحرج عنه وعن الباقيين. ويأثم كل من لا عذر له من المسلمين إن تركوه وإن جهلوه

Chapter On Jihad: Jihad is a communal obligation (*fard kifayah*) every year – even if only once annually when disbelievers remain within their own territories. However, it becomes an individual obligation (*fard 'ayn*) if they invade or attack our land, as will be explained further. The meaning of *fard kifayah* is that if a portion of the Muslim community fulfills this duty to the extent of sufficiency, the obligation is lifted from the rest. Nevertheless, for those who are capable and have no valid excuse, it is sinful to neglect this obligation even if they are ignorant of its ruling.

This foundational text is further elaborated in *I'anat al-Talibin* (Vol. IV, p. 205), which serves as a commentary (*sharh*) on *Fathul Mu'in*, providing deeper explanation and jurisprudential context.

باب الجهاد أي باب في بيان أحكام الجهاد : أي القتال في سبيل الله  
قوله: إذا كان الكفار ببلاده - قيد لكونه فرض كفاية : أي أنه فرض كفاية في كل عام إذا كان الكفار  
حالين في بلادهم لم ينتقلوا عنها  
قوله: ويتعين - أي الجهاد، أي يكون فرض عين، والملازم أن يقول وفرض عين الخ



وقوله: إذا دخلوا بلادنا - أي بلدة من بلاد المسلمين ومثل البلدة القرية وغيرها

The “Chapter on Jihad” refers to the section that discusses the legal rulings concerning jihad, specifically *qitāl fī sabīlillāh* – armed struggle in the path of Allah.

- a. “If the disbelievers remain in their own lands”: This serves as a condition, indicating that jihad is classified as *fard kifāyah* (a communal obligation). That is, jihad becomes a communal duty each year as long as the disbelievers remain in their territories and do not relocate.
- b. “And it becomes *fard ‘ayn*”: This means that jihad transitions into an individual obligation (*fard ‘ayn*). The term *wayata’ayyan* is synonymous with *fard ‘ayn*.
- c. “If they (the disbelievers) enter (invade) our land”: This refers to any territory among the lands of the Muslim community. Even if they enter a village or a similar locality, it is considered sufficient to classify the situation as an invasion of Muslim land.

Abdul Qadir Abdul Aziz, in his book *Kedudukan Tauhid dan Jihad* (*The Status of Tawhid and Jihad*), argues: “Tawhid is the ultimate goal, while jihad is one of the means to realize it. In certain circumstances, jihad becomes *fard ‘ayn*, and those who abandon it under such conditions commit a major sin and are considered *fāsiq* (morally corrupt).”

His outlines nine conditions that render jihad a *fard kifāyah*: Being Muslim, Reaching the age of maturity (*baligh*), Possessing sound intellect, Being male, Free from physical disabilities, Not enslaved (i.e., free), Having sufficient financial means, Parental permission, and Permission from creditors (if indebted)

However, when jihad becomes *fard ‘ayn*, only the first five conditions apply. There is no obligation of jihad upon women. During the Prophet Muhammad’s Saw time, jihad was often classified as *fard ‘ayn*, yet the Prophet did not command women to participate in combat. Furthermore, there is no requirement for a person to be knowledgeable or just in order to perform jihad. Both the righteous and the sinful share the same obligation to engage in jihad.<sup>32</sup>

Meanwhile, Abu Qatadah al-Filastini, in his book *Thoifah Manshurah*, asserts:

“Allah commands the believers to invite the disbelievers to guidance and truth. Whoever refuses and turns away, Allah instructs that they be fought, so that the word of Allah may be exalted and religion belongs entirely to Allah. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: ‘I have been commanded to fight the people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.’” (Agreed upon by Bukhari and Muslim)

Thus, jihad is an *amrun shar’iyyun rabbaniyyun* a divine legal command to establish the religion of Allah on earth and eliminate *fitnah* (polytheism), so that no authority remains in the world except that of Allah. As stated in Surah Al-Anfal

<sup>32</sup> Abd Al-Qodir Abd Al-Aziz, *Kedudukan Tauhid Dan Jihad*, trans. Muhammad Rohil AsSofoli (Al-Qoidun Group, n.d.), 10-21.



(8:39): "And fight them until there is no more fitnah and the religion is entirely for Allah." Even the battle of a single Muslim is considered jihad, even in the absence of an appointed leader (imam).

From the views of both authors mentioned above, it is evident that they regard jihad as an individual religious obligation (*fard 'ayn*).<sup>33</sup> Moreover, those who abstain from jihad under such conditions are deemed *fāsiq*—major sinners. They further argue that a person who undertakes jihad alone has fulfilled the obligation, even without the presence of a leader. The legal assertiveness and minimal prerequisites for jihad promoted by such ideologues have, in turn, inspired individuals to carry out attacks against perceived enemies even single-handedly. Suicide bombings in various locations across the country may well have been influenced by such teachings.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Zainuddin al-Malibari's conception of jihad in *Fath al-Mu'īn* represents a comprehensive and multidimensional framework that challenges contemporary reductionist interpretations. Jihad is neither singular nor inherently violent; rather, it consists of four complementary layers: (1) rational persuasion, (2) adherence to religious obligations, (3) armed resistance permitted only in defensive circumstances under strict conditions, and (4) the protection of all members of society, including non-Muslims. The first two layers emphasize that jihad is rooted in moral discipline, spiritual development, and intellectual engagement, offering an important corrective to extremist narratives that prioritize violence. The third layer shows that warfare is only a last resort, in line with shari'a principles of proportionality and the preservation of life. The fourth layer is the most relevant in contemporary contexts, portraying jihad as an ethical mechanism for safeguarding pluralism, minority rights, and peaceful coexistence.

Taken together, these four levels demonstrate that al-Malibari's concept of jihad is dynamic and socially ethical. Its legal flexibility allows the classical tradition to be reconciled with modern realities, including the needs of plural societies such as Indonesia. Consequently, this concept of jihad provides a theological foundation for countering extremism, a jurisprudential model for an inclusive social order, and a normative paradigm for peacebuilding. The study shows that classical Islamic texts, when read comprehensively, contain internal resources for nurturing harmony, protecting diversity, and strengthening social cohesion.

<sup>33</sup> Umar Sheikh Tahir, "The Concept of Jihad in Islamic Texts: An Analytical Study of Violence Between Mainstream Scholars and Extremists", 4 No. 1 (2017): 27-30. Doi:10.15364/ris17-0401-03



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