

## MUHAMMAD ABDUH'S QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION OF JIHAD: IMPLEMENTATION AND CHALLENGES IN MODERN INDONESIAN SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

Muhammad Abduh is a modern mufassir whose thoughts are widely studied by scholars, one of which is about the verse of jihad. Abduh's ideas about the interpretation of the verse of jihad have inspired the birth of new thoughts that are more accommodating to the times. The purpose of this paper is to explore Abduh's thoughts on jihad in the Qur'an; implement and analyze the challenges of Abduh's jihad interpretation for modern Indonesian society; and analyze the positive and negative impacts of the implementation offer. The method used is library research with a content analysis approach. The results revealed that Abduh understood jihad was not limited to military and war aspects, spiritual, moral, social, and educational struggles also included the meaning of jihad. Jihad is also understood as a continuous effort to improve oneself and society, uphold justice, and advance science and social reform; the implementation of Abduh's meaning of Jihad is very relevant and in line with the needs of a plural and dynamic Indonesian society. By integrating education, dialog, and active involvement from all components of society, it can encourage the creation of a more just, peaceful, and advanced society. The challenge is that there is resistance and rejection from traditional circles that hold fast to old thinking; the positive impact of Abduh's thinking is to encourage the constructive contribution of Muslims in various aspects of life and inspire a peaceful and progressive renewal movement. Meanwhile, the negative impact is the potential for internal conflict, because his offer of thought will face the traditionalist thinking adopted by most Indonesians.

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## INTRODUCTION

The topic of jihad in the modern era is an issue worthy of study and also worthy of debate because it contains complex and multidimensional aspects. In the contemporary context, jihad is not only understood as a physical struggle, but also includes intellectual, social, and spiritual efforts to achieve higher goals. Debates on the interpretation of jihad often arise due to differences in theological, historical, and sociopolitical views. This issue becomes trending and viral on social media and mass media, especially when associated with acts of extremism and terrorism in the name of jihad. Controversy arises because some groups use narrow and literal interpretations, while others emphasize more inclusive and peaceful interpretations.<sup>1</sup> In Indonesia, this debate is all the more relevant given that the country has the largest Muslim population in the world and is facing the challenge of balancing between religious values and the principles of modernity. The emergence of this discussion is seen in the efforts of the government, academics, and community organizations to create a more comprehensive and peaceful understanding of jihad, in order to prevent radicalization and promote social harmony.

Recent data shows that the majority of Muslims in Indonesia, around 87%, support the interpretation of jihad as a peaceful endeavor to improve themselves and society, according to a report by UIN Jakarta's Center for the Study of Islam and Society (PPIM) in 2023.<sup>2</sup> However, around 10% still hold radical views, indicating significant challenges in education and proselytization. The Indonesian government through the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) has initiated various deradicalization programs and counter-narrative campaigns to counter extremism.<sup>3</sup> Academics are also active in conducting research and public discussions on inclusive interpretations of jihad, such as those conducted by the State Islamic University (UIN) and community organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah that continue to promote Islam that is *rahmatan lil alamin*. The involvement of social media as a tool for disseminating information is also utilized to spread positive narratives and strengthen community resilience against extremist ideologies.

Muhammad Abduh's interpretation of jihad provides a relevant example in this context. As one of the leading Islamic reformers, Muhammad Abduh emphasized the importance of understanding jihad as a broader endeavor than just physical warfare. According to Abduh, jihad includes intellectual, social and moral struggles to improve oneself and society. He taught that jihad should be directed towards the formation of good character, the improvement of knowledge, and the building of a just and prosperous civilization.<sup>4</sup> Abduh's views are very relevant to modern society which faces many challenges both social and religious. By adopting an inclusive and progressive interpretation as taught by Abduh, Muslims can contribute positively to a multicultural society and avoid extremism and intolerance. This interpretation is also in line with the efforts of various parties in Indonesia to promote a peaceful and *rahmatan lil alamin* Islam, through education, interfaith dialogue, and de-radicalization programs that utilize social media as the main tool.

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<sup>1</sup> Saifudin Asrori, "Mengikuti Panggilan Jihad; Argumen Radikalisme dan Ekstremisme di Indonesia," *Aqlam: Jurnal Islam dan Pluralitas* 4, no. 1 (2019).

<sup>2</sup> Dudung Abdul Rohman, *Moderasi Beragama dalam Bingkai Islam di Indonesia* (Lekkas, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> ALAMSYAH M DJA'FAR dan NURUN NISA, *Strategi Dari Dalam ke Luar: Wahid Foundation dan Advokasi Kebijakan untuk Mencegah Ekstremisme Kekerasan di Indonesia*, ed. Junaidi Simun (Jakarta: Wahid Foundation, 2021).

<sup>4</sup> Azrul Azlan Abdul Rahman, Noraini Zulkifli, dan Amer Fawwaz Mohd Yasid, "Jihad Militer: Perbandingan Teori Penafsiran Klasik dan Modern," *Zulfaqar Jurnal Manajemen Pertahanan, Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 2020.

Abduh's tafsir emphasizes the importance of a dynamic and contextual understanding of Islamic teachings, which allows for adaptation to changing times without compromising the core values of the religion. In the context of globalization, inclusive interpretations help Muslims to engage in intercultural and interfaith dialogue, strengthen international cooperation, and participate in various global initiatives aimed at promoting peace and social justice. Technology, especially social media, provides a powerful platform to spread messages of moderation and inclusiveness.<sup>5</sup> Muslims who adopt Abduh's interpretation can use technology to spread knowledge, build community and counter extremist narratives that often dominate the digital space. Pluralism, which characterizes modern society, demands an understanding and appreciation of diversity. Abduh's inclusive views encourage Muslims to coexist harmoniously with other communities, respect differences, and contribute to creating a just and equal society. This progressive tafsir also encourages active participation in political and social life, encouraging Muslims to engage in democratic processes, human rights advocacy and the building of inclusive societies.

Thus, Muhammad Abduh's tafsir is not only relevant but also essential to face modern challenges in Indonesia. Abduh's tafsir emphasizes the importance of understanding jihad as a broader endeavor than just physical warfare, encompassing intellectual, social, and moral struggles to improve oneself and society.<sup>6</sup> In the Indonesian context, this tafsir provides valuable guidance for building a harmonious, just and prosperous society amidst the challenges of globalization, technology and pluralism. Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in the world, faces various challenges in implementing an inclusive and progressive interpretation of jihad. One of the main challenges is radicalization triggered by narrow and extremist interpretations of the concept of jihad. Extremist groups often utilize jihad verses to justify violent acts, which is contrary to the peaceful and *rahmatan lil alamin* teachings of Islam.

In addition, another challenge is the lack of a deep understanding of the interpretation of jihad among the wider community. Many Muslims still have a limited view of jihad, which needs to be expanded through proper education and da'wah. Social media has also become a battleground between positive and extremist narratives, where radical content can spread quickly and influence people's minds, especially the younger generation. To face these challenges, various efforts have been made by the government, academics, and community organizations in Indonesia. The government through the National Counterterrorism Agency (BNPT) has initiated a deradicalization program that involves former extremists and religious figures to spread anti-radicalism messages. The program aims to return individuals affected by extremist ideologies to a moderate and peaceful understanding of Islam.

This paper aims to understand three things: First, to explore the thoughts of Muhammad Abduh as a representation of modern mufassir related to the verse of jihad. Second, the implementation and challenges of Muhammad Abduh's interpretation of the verse of jihad in the context of modern Indonesia, including the implications of this interpretation for social and religious dynamics in Indonesia. Third, the positive and negative impacts caused by Abduh's interpretation of the verse of jihad in Indonesia, exploring how this interpretation affects policies, social movements, and people's perceptions of the concept of jihad in everyday life.

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<sup>5</sup> Ahmad Zuhri, "Dinamika Penafsiran Al-Qur'an dalam Pemikiran Kontemporer (Studi Kasus Tafsir Al-Manar)," *Al-Ulum* 23, no. 2 (December 5, 2023): 391–405, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v23i2.4277>.

<sup>6</sup> Saepul Hidayat, "KONSEP JIHAD DALAM AL-QUR'AN: Studi Penafsiran Ayat-Ayat Jihad Dalam Tafsir Al-Munir," *TAFAKKUR: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 3, no. 2 (2023): 170-188.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In relation to the theme of this paper, existing research has three trends: *First*, the exploration of the meaning of jihad in the Qur'an, such as the writings of Lianti<sup>7</sup>, Mochamad Rizal<sup>8</sup> and Junaidi<sup>9</sup>, the three of them explore the meaning of jihad in the Qur'an by using thematic methods. *Second*, exploring the meaning of jihad from the perspective of the mufassirs, such as the writing of Huda<sup>10</sup> which explores the thoughts of Quraisy Shihab, Ulfiah<sup>11</sup> which explores the thoughts of Ibn Ajibah, Mauluddin<sup>12</sup> which explores the thoughts of Ibn 'Ashur and Risqo<sup>13</sup> which explores the thoughts of Al-Maraghi. *Third*, the contextualization of the meaning of jihad in the modern era, such as Farid's research<sup>14</sup> which contextualizes the meaning of jihad from the perspective of Abdullah Saeed, Shofwan<sup>15</sup> which contextualizes the meaning of jihad according to Mutawali As-Syarāwī, Suhartono<sup>16</sup> who contextualizes the meaning of jihad according to Al-Qaradhawi, Haikal Fadhil<sup>17</sup> who tries to contextualize the meaning of jihad and relate it to Covid-19 and Shobirin<sup>18</sup> who tries to contextualize the meaning of jihad and portray it in the Indonesian context. Meanwhile, this paper tends to discuss three things, namely the meaning of jihad according to Muhammad Abduh's thought; its implementation and challenges in Indonesia. These three things have not been done by previous researchers as mentioned earlier. So that this paper can contribute more to add information to existing research.

## METHODS

This research uses the Library Research method, which examines literature sources such as books, manuscripts, and documents related to the interpretation of jihad in the Qur'an by Muhammad Abduh. A content analysis approach based on the theory of tafsir science is used to deepen the understanding of text and context, as well as evaluate the implementation and challenges of tafsir of jihad verses in modern Indonesian society. The main data sources include Muhammad Abduh's "Tafsir al-Manar" and "Risalah al-Tauhid",

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<sup>7</sup> "Jihad dalam Tafsir: Sebuah Kajian terhadap QS. Al-Taubah [9]: 44-45," 2019.

<sup>8</sup> "Konsep Jihad dalam Al-Quran (Telaah atas Penafsiran Surat Al-Hajj Ayat 78 dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah)," *Al-Dhikra Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman dan Hadis* 3, no. 1 (2021): 71-84.

<sup>9</sup> "Interpreting Ulang Makna 'Jihad' dalam Konteks Kontemporer," *MAWA'IZH: JURNAL DAKWAH DAN PENGEMBANGAN SOSIAL KEMANUSIAAN* 11, no. 1 (June 4, 2020): 1-25, <https://doi.org/10.32923/maw.v11i1.1203>.

<sup>10</sup> "Ragam Makna Jihad dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah," *SUHUF* 32, no. 2 (2020): 172-83.

<sup>11</sup> "Konsep Jihad dalam Perspektif Imam Ibnu Ajibah dalam Tafsir Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-Majīd" (UIN Suska Riau, 2023).

<sup>12</sup> "Ayat-ayat Jihad dalam Perspektif Tafsir Maqasidiy Ibn Ashur," *Al Furqan: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 6, no. 1 (June 30, 2023): 1-19, <https://doi.org/10.58518/alfurqon.v6i1.1734>.

<sup>13</sup> "Konsep Jihad dalam Tafsir Al-Maraghi (Studi Tafsir Tematik tentang Jihad dalam QS. At-Taubah)," *Ishlah: Jurnal Ilmu Ushuluddin, Adab dan Dakwah* 2, no. 2 (November 18, 2020): 146-175, <https://doi.org/10.32939/ishlah.v2i2.34>.

<sup>14</sup> "Kontekstualisasi Ayat-ayat Jihad dalam Perspektif Abdullah Saeed," *El-Afkar: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam dan Tafsir Hadis* 12, no. 1 (2023): 170-185.

<sup>15</sup> "Kontekstualisasi Ayat-Ayat Jihad Terhadap Perempuan (Studi Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Syekh Mutawalli As-Syarāwī dalam Tafsir Al-Syarāwī)," 2022.

<sup>16</sup> "Kontekstualisasi Ayat-Ayat Jihad Menurut Yusuf Al-Qaradlawi" (PTIQ Institute Jakarta, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> "Kontekstualisasi Konsep Jihad dalam Al-Qur'an (Q.S Al-Nisa [4]: 95) sebagai Upaya Pencegahan Covid-19)," *Mashdar: Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 2, no. 2 (August 28, 2020): 107-124, <https://doi.org/10.15548/mashdar.v2i2.1355>.

<sup>18</sup> "Kontekstualisasi Makna Jihad dalam Potret Indonesia: Analisis Hermeneutika Hassan Hanafi terhadap Hadis Perang," *Cendekia: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 6, no. 2 (2020): 133-148.

as well as various secondary literature and journal articles that examine the relevance of his thoughts in Indonesia.

The research stages involved identifying, collecting, sorting and analyzing relevant literature to find key information and build a comprehensive theoretical framework. The data that has been collected is organized, critically evaluated, and synthesized to incorporate various perspectives and findings from different literatures. This process aims to generate in-depth understanding and answer the research questions by achieving the overall study objectives.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. *Cultural Backroand* Abduh and Tafsir Al-Manar

Abduh was a highly influential scholar in modern times, whose work is often referenced by contemporary Muslim scholars. Many of Abduh's ideas of modernity are set out in the tafsir al-Manar, where his thinking sought to bridge traditional understandings of Islam with the needs and challenges of modern times. Tafsir al-Manar not only focuses on explaining Qur'anic texts but also integrates the perspectives of rationality and social reform, reflecting Abduh's attempt to bring Muslims towards more progressive thinking.<sup>19</sup> Abduh often responded to the challenges of modern times with his brilliant ideas, such as the concept of jihad which he defined as a moral and spiritual struggle to achieve justice and goodness. Through this approach, Abduh made significant contributions to the formation of Islamic thought that was dynamic and relevant to the changing times, making him one of the most respected reformers in modern Islamic history.

His full name was Muhammad Abduh bin Hasan Khairullah. He came from a small village in Egypt called Mahallat Nasr, located in Gharbiyah Province. His parents were a simple farming family who paid great attention to religious education. His childhood was filled with learning the Qur'an and helping his parents in the fields. He began his formal education at a local religious school before continuing his studies at Al-Azhar University in Cairo, where he studied religious sciences, philosophy and Arabic language. His education at Al-Azhar was the starting point for Abduh to develop his progressive thinking that would later become a major influence in the Islamic world.<sup>20</sup>

During his time at Al-Azhar, Abduh was influenced by a wide range of traditional and contemporary knowledge and met many prominent intellectuals, such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who became his mentor. The influence of al-Afghani awakened Abduh's spirit to criticize stagnant religious practices and encourage reform in Islamic thought. In addition to formal education, the social and political environment of colonial Egypt also influenced Abduh's views on the need for reform in Muslims. His intellectual career flourished as he began writing and teaching, voicing his reform ideas through print media and educational institutions. Abduh later served as Mufti of Egypt, where he sought to implement reforms in the education system and Islamic law, promoting interpretations that were more rational and relevant to the times.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> ADIBAH YASMIN ALIAS, MOHD IRWAN SYAZLI SAIDIN, dan JAMAIE HAJI HAMIL, "Pengaruh Muhammad 'Abduh terhadap Kemunculan Kaum Muda Fundamental-Reformis di Tanah Melayu (1900-1930)," *KEMANUSIAAN: The Asian Journal of Humanities* 30, no. 2 (2023).

<sup>20</sup> Ahmad Nabil Amir, *Biografi Intelektual Muhammad Abduh* (GUEPEDIA, 2020).

<sup>21</sup> Israel Shrenzel, "Melawan Arus Utama: Pembacaan Muhammad Abduh atas Q.S. 1:7 dan Implikasinya terhadap Hubungan Muslim-Yahudi Saat Ini," dalam *Menghadapi Antisemitisme dari Perspektif Kekristenan, Islam, dan Yahudi* (De Gruyter, 2020), 209-222, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110671773-013>.

Many of his writings are derived from his own thoughts and have been published in various print and online media. All his works reflect his critical views and reformist vision of Islam. One of his monumental works is the tafsir al-Manar, which he wrote with his own student Rashid Ridha. It became one of the main references in modern tafsir studies. In addition, Abduh also wrote articles and books on various social, political and religious aspects, such as "Risalah at-Tauhid" which explained the concept of tawhid with a rational approach. He also actively contributed to scientific journals, such as al-Urwah al-Wuthqa, which he co-founded with al-Afghani, spreading his reform ideas throughout the Islamic world. Through his writings, Abduh invited Muslims to return to the essence of the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith with a contextual and relevant understanding, and emphasized the importance of education, rationality, and social progress in facing the challenges of the times.<sup>22</sup>

Tafsir Al-Manar is a commentary that he wrote with his student, Rashid Ridha. He started his tafsir from surah Al-Fatihah to surah An-Nisa, then continued by his student until surah Yusuf. This interpretation is not complete 30 juz, stopping at surah Yusuf because of various obstacles faced, including the death of Abduh. The background to the writing of tafsir al-Manar was Abduh's desire to present a Qur'anic interpretation that was relevant to the challenges of modern times and able to answer various social, political and religious issues faced by Muslims.<sup>23</sup> It emphasized the importance of rationality, social reform, and contextual understanding of the Qur'anic texts. Abduh and Ridha tried to criticize stagnant religious practices and encourage Muslims to return to the pure and dynamic teachings of Islam. Tafsir Al-Manar also served as a medium to spread the ideas of renewal and the formation of a more progressive and inclusive Islamic thought, in line with the spirit of renewal promoted by Abduh and his followers.<sup>24</sup>

Tafsir Al-Manar was very influential, especially for the development of tafsir that came after it. Its influence also reached Indonesia, both in the social and religious fields. Many Indonesians were influenced by Abduh's ideas, especially among intellectuals and scholars who were interested in reformist thought.<sup>25</sup> Tafsir Al-Manar encouraged the birth of Islamic reform movements in Indonesia, such as Muhammadiyah, which adopted a rational and contextual approach in understanding the Qur'an. Abduh's thought also influenced Islamic education policy in Indonesia, encouraging curriculum updates and more modern and inclusive teaching methods.<sup>26</sup> Socially, it helped strengthen efforts to empower Muslims, inviting them to actively participate in social and political development, and emphasizing the importance of unity. The influence of Tafsir Al-Manar in Indonesia demonstrates how Abduh's reform ideas crossed geographical and cultural boundaries, contributing significantly to the dynamics of Islamic thought in the modern world.

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<sup>22</sup> M Quraish Shihab, *Rasionalitas Al-Qur'an: Kajian Kritis atas Tafsir Al-Manar* (Lentera Hati, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Shihab, *Rasionalitas Al-Qur'an: Kajian Kritis atas Tafsir Al-Manar*.

<sup>24</sup> Sakirman Sakirman, "Konstruksi Metodologi Tafsir Modern: Telaah atas Tafsir Al-Manar, Al-Maraghi, dan Al-Misbah," *Hermeneutik: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 10, no. 2 (2019): 271-294; Mohammad Fattah dkk., "Corak Penafsiran Muhammad Abduh dan Muhammad Rasyid Ridha dalam Tafsir Al-Manar," *Reflektika* 18, no. 1 (2023): 25-48.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad Nabil Amir, "Pengaruh Muhammad Abduh di Nusantara: Dari Tafsir Al-Qur'an hingga Gerakan Reformasi Islam," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, 18, no. 2 (December 27, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v18i2.10282>.

<sup>26</sup> Asmaul Afifah Irfindari, Aulia Anis Al Jannah, dan Zulfa Ridhani Abwi, "Perspektif Muhammad 'Abduh tentang Reformasi Pendidikan Islam," *Indonesian Journal of Education* 2, no. 8 (August 25, 2021): 1306-1312, <https://doi.org/10.36418/japendi.v2i8.247>.

## 2. Tafsir Ayat Jihad Perspective Muhammad Abduh

The verses of jihad in the Qur'an are numerous and have different contexts, covering spiritual, moral, social and military aspects. Classical scholars interpreted jihad with a focus on physical or military struggle in defense of Islam. However, this is different from Abduh's interpretation of jihad. Abduh adopted many modern ideas in interpreting the verse of jihad, seeing jihad not only as physical warfare, but more as an internal struggle against lust and injustice. According to Abduh, jihad should be understood as a continuous effort to improve oneself and society, promoting the values of justice, morality and education.<sup>27</sup> This view reflects Abduh's attempt to respond to the challenges of modern times by emphasizing the importance of social and spiritual reform in Islam. His tafsir invites people to understand jihad in a broader and more relevant context, integrating Islamic principles with scientific advances and contemporary social dynamics. Abduh's thinking paved the way for a more inclusive and progressive understanding of the concept of jihad, inspiring renewal movements in the Islamic world, including in Indonesia.

Because Tafsir Al-Manar does not cover 30 juz, the interpretation of the verse of jihad is limited to only a few verses. However, Abduh's idea of jihad interpretation was not only contained in Tafsir Al-Manar. In his other works, such as "Risalah al-Tauhid" and various articles published in scientific journals, he also mentioned the concept of jihad. Abduh expanded the understanding of jihad by emphasizing the spiritual and social aspects, inviting Muslims to understand jihad as a collective effort to achieve progress and justice in society. In "Risalah al-Tauhid," for example, Abduh explained jihad as a struggle against injustice and ignorance, and an attempt to improve the condition of the ummah through education and social reform.<sup>28</sup> This view shows that Abduh saw jihad as an integral part of the Islamic renewal process aimed at creating a more just and civilized society. Through his works, Abduh succeeded in spreading a broader and deeper understanding of jihad, which inspired many intellectuals and activists in the Islamic world to adopt a similar approach in facing the challenges of modern times.

The verses of jihad in the Qur'an are found in surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 218; Āli 'Imrān [3]: 142; An-Nisā' [4]: 95; At-Taubah [9]: 20; Al-Ḥajj [22]: 78; Al-Furqān [25]: 52; Al-'Ankabūt [29]: 69; and Aṣ-Ṣaff [61]: 11. However, as it has been explained, that Al-Manar's interpretation only reaches Surah Yusuf, not all of these jihad verses are interpreted in Al-Manar's interpretation. When Abduh interpreted verse 218 of surah Al-Baqarah as follows:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ .

"Verily, those who believe and those who migrate and strive in the cause of Allah, they expect the mercy of Allah. Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:218).

Abduh stated that jihad is not specific to warfare alone. According to him, jihad has a broader meaning and includes all forms of efforts made to defend and fight for the values of truth and justice. Abduh emphasized that jihad includes all forms of effort aimed at improving oneself, society, and the environment. This includes the struggle against lust, efforts to uphold the truth, and efforts to improve social and economic welfare.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Riḍa, *Tafsīr Al-Manār* (Egypt: Al Haiah Al Mishriyyah, 1990), vol. 2: 225.

<sup>28</sup> Mia Apriana, "Naskah Risalah Tauhid: Suntingan Teks Disertai dengan Kajian Analisis Isi," *Universitas Diponegoro: Semarang*, 2019.

<sup>29</sup> Riḍa, *Tafsīr Al-Manār* vol. 2: 225.

For Abduh, jihad is a call to contribute in all aspects of life, whether in the form of education, da'wah, or positive social action, so as to bring benefits to individuals and society as a whole. He emphasized that jihad must be interpreted as a continuous struggle to improve oneself and others, and build a civilization based on universal Islamic values. Abduh saw jihad in the modern context as an effort to face the challenges of the times in a constructive and peaceful way. For example, jihad in education means striving to study, teach and spread useful knowledge. In da'wah, jihad means preaching with wisdom and good examples, and avoiding violence and coercion. Whereas in social action, jihad means working for social justice, helping the needy, and playing an active role in the development of society. Abduh believed that this comprehensive understanding of jihad would help Muslims become agents of positive change in an ever-evolving world.<sup>30</sup>

When interpreting verse 142 of surah Ali Imran which reads:

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ .

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise when it has not yet become evident to Allah those who strive<sup>121</sup>) among you, nor has it become evident those who are patient?" (QS. Āli 'Imrān [3]:142).

Abduh provides an in-depth analysis of the meaning of jihad and patience. According to Abduh, this verse reminds Muslims that entering heaven is not as easy as they imagine, but requires real struggle and sacrifice. Jihad here, according to Abduh, is not limited to physical warfare, but includes all forms of struggle carried out in obedience to Allah and in upholding the values of truth. Jihad can be the pursuit of knowledge, working hard for the benefit of the people, or fighting lust and worldly temptations. Abduh also emphasized the importance of patience in jihad, because every struggle must face obstacles and trials. Patience is the key to facing and overcoming all challenges that come, both in the form of difficulties and temptations. Thus, Abduh's interpretation of this verse emphasizes that paradise is a reward for those who strive and are patient in living life according to Allah's guidance, showing that true faith is reflected in daily actions and patience.<sup>31</sup>

Likewise, when interpreting verse 95 of surah An-Nisā' [4] which reads:

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرُ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ...

"Those believers who sit down (and do not fight) without an excuse are not equal to those who strive in the cause of Allah with their wealth and souls...". (QS. An-Nisā' [4]:95).

Abduh stated that this verse emphasizes the superiority of jihad with wealth and soul compared to those who sit idly by without participating in the war, except those who have an excuse. Abduh emphasized that jihad in the context of this verse is not limited to physical warfare, but also includes all forms of effort and struggle carried out for the sake of establishing truth and justice. According to him, this verse provides encouragement for Muslims to contribute actively in all forms of struggle that benefit the people, be it through science, da'wah, or other social contributions. Abduh also highlights that Allah gives greater rewards to those who strive earnestly because the sacrifices and efforts they make show a high level of faith and commitment. In Abduh's view, this verse invites Muslims not to be passive, but to actively contribute in all forms of goodness that can bring progress to society and religion.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Apriana, "Naskah Risalah Tauhid: Suntingan Teks Disertai Kajian Analisis Isi."

<sup>31</sup> Riḍa, *Tafsīr Al-Manār* vol. 4: 127.

<sup>32</sup> Riḍa, *Tafsīr Al-Manār*, vol. 5: 258.

The interpretation of the verse of jihad as explained earlier seems to be consistent with the verses that discuss jihad in other places. Such as the verse of jihad in the 20th verse of surah Al-Taubah:

أَذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ ۖ أَعْظَمَ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ.

"Those who believe and emigrate and strive in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their souls are greater in rank before Allah. They are the fortunate ones." (QS. At-Taubah [9]:20).

Abduh explains that the meaning of jihad in the verse is a total struggle in fighting for the religion of Allah, which involves physical aspects, property, and soul. According to Abduh, this verse emphasizes that those who believe and migrate and strive in the way of Allah with their property and souls, are at a higher degree in the sight of Allah. Abduh emphasized that jihad does not only mean warfare, but also includes all forms of sacrifice and efforts made to uphold justice, truth, and the spread of Islamic values. He underlined that jihad is a call to actively contribute to various aspects of life, be it through education, da'wah, or positive social action. In his interpretation, Abduh highlighted the importance of sincerity and commitment in jihad, because it is only with this totality that one can achieve a high degree in the sight of Allah. Thus, Abduh's interpretation of this verse invites Muslims to not only focus on the physical aspects of jihad, but also on real contributions in various forms of struggle that bring benefits to religion and society.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, the interpretation of jihad verses according to Muhammad Abduh shows a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the concept of jihad in Islam. Unlike the classical scholars who emphasized the physical or military aspects, Abduh expanded the meaning of jihad to include spiritual, moral, social, and educational struggles. He saw jihad as an ongoing effort to improve oneself and society, uphold justice, and advance science and social reform. In his various works, including "Tafsir Al-Manar" and "Risalah al-Tauhid," Abduh urged Muslims to understand jihad as a call for active and constructive contributions in various aspects of life. This view was not only relevant in the traditional context but also provided a response to the challenges of modern times, inspiring renewal and reform movements in the Islamic world. By emphasizing the values of earnestness, commitment, and patience, Abduh offered an inclusive and progressive perspective on jihad, aiming to create a more just, civilized, and advanced society.

### 3. Perceptions of the Meaning of Jihad in Modern Indonesian Society

Jihad, which etymologically means "to struggle" or "to strive hard," has undergone a transformation of meaning in various contexts of modern Indonesian society. In the contemporary era, jihad is often associated with physical or military struggle, although in the broader context of Islam, the term encompasses various forms of striving for good, including spiritual, educational and social endeavors. These perceptions are influenced by factors such as media, education, and historical experiences, which contribute to a diverse understanding of the concept of jihad among Indonesians. In a pluralistic society such as Indonesia, it is important to explore how jihad is interpreted and applied, and how these different perceptions can affect the social and religious dynamics in the country.

Indonesian society has a diverse understanding of the meaning of jihad in the Qur'an, this fact reflects the complexity of interpretation and application of Islamic teachings in the local context. The different interpretations of jihad are influenced by many factors, including religious education background, religious traditions, the influence of local scholars, as well as political and social dynamics. For example, some

<sup>33</sup> Riḍa, *Tafsīr Al-Manār*, vol. 10: 198.

Muslims interpret jihad as a spiritual and moral effort to improve themselves and society, in accordance with the teachings of Sufism which emphasizes *jihad an-nafs* (the struggle against lust). On the other hand, there are also those who view jihad in the context of physical or military struggle, this is often triggered by situations of conflict or injustice that they feel.<sup>34</sup>

Some Indonesians who still cling to the interpretation of jihad as an act of war and military often carry out radical and violent actions.<sup>35</sup> This not only gives Islam a bad name but, moreover, makes it seem as if Islam cannot answer modern problems. These actions, which often include terrorist attacks, sectarian violence and insurgencies, create a negative image of Islam as an intolerant and violent religion. This contradicts the essence of Islamic teachings that promote peace, tolerance and justice. Furthermore, this narrow view ignores the great potential of Islam in providing solutions to modern challenges such as poverty, social injustice and environmental crisis. As a result, Islam's positive contributions to education, health and social development are often overlooked.<sup>36</sup>

However, most modern Indonesians understand that the meaning of jihad is not limited to war and military actions. According to expert research, modern Indonesians understand jihad more holistically, covering various aspects of life such as education, economic development, and social advocacy. Jihad is defined as an earnest effort to improve oneself, family and society in order to achieve prosperity and justice. They see jihad as a struggle to eradicate poverty, improve the quality of education, and promote human values and interfaith tolerance. Thus, if there are tensions between religions, the solution is not war but dialogue and cooperation between communities. This approach prioritizes peace over violence, emphasizing the importance of finding common ground and understanding differences as cultural and spiritual riches that must be respected and preserved.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the meaning of jihad in the modern context becomes a means to promote social harmony and build a more just and peaceful society.

#### **4. Implementation and Challenges of the Meaning of Jihad in the Context of Modern Indonesia**

Abduh's interpretation of the jihad verse is very relevant to be implemented in Indonesia, this is because Abduh's approach which emphasizes the spiritual, moral, social and educational aspects of jihad is in line with the needs of a plural and dynamic Indonesian society. Abduh taught that jihad is not only a physical struggle, but also a continuous effort to improve oneself, uphold justice, and improve social welfare. The implementation of this interpretation can encourage Indonesian people to focus more on education, social reform, and economic development as a form of productive and constructive jihad. In addition, the tafsir will be able to create a peaceful atmosphere in Indonesia by encouraging interfaith dialog, promoting tolerance, and avoiding violence. By instilling the values of patience, commitment, and hard work in everyday life, people can become agents of positive change, promote social harmony, and build a just and civilized society. Abduh's interpretation also paves the way for a more inclusive understanding of jihad, so that it can inspire renewal and reform movements that are

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<sup>34</sup> Esti Zaduqisti, "Memahami Konsep Jihad Ditinjau dari Identifikasi Kelompok, Persepsi Ancaman Antarkelompok, dan Kepribadian," *Penelitian Psikologi Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2019): 47-66.

<sup>35</sup> Ananda Emiel Kamala, "Merekonstruksi Makna Jihad: Studi Kasus Terorisme di Indonesia," *SINDA: Jurnal Komprehensif Studi Sosial Islam* 2, no. 1 (2022): 74-87.

<sup>36</sup> Asrori, "Mengikuti Panggilan Jihad; Argumen Radikalisme dan Ekstremisme di Indonesia."

<sup>37</sup> Dwi Hartini, "Kontekstualisasi Makna Jihad di Era Milenial," *Dialogia*, 17, no. 1 (2019): 81-100.

relevant to the challenges of modern times, leading Indonesia towards a more harmonious and prosperous future.

In the face of religious conflict, Abduh's interpretation of jihad is very relevant because it emphasizes the values of justice, peace, and constructive efforts that can overcome the sources of tension and conflict. Abduh taught that jihad is not just physical warfare, but rather a struggle against lust and injustice, as well as an effort to improve oneself and society as a whole. This approach emphasizes dialogue, tolerance and cooperation between religious communities, so as to minimize acts of violence between religions. Even this dialog in Arafat Noor's view is part of the call of faith for peace.<sup>38</sup> Tafsir Abduh encourages Muslims to contribute to social and economic development, promote education, and uphold justice without violence. Even on a smaller scale, this interpretation of jihad can reconcile between existing Islamic organizations in Indonesia by encouraging them to focus on positive and productive common goals, rather than engaging in harmful feuds. By emphasizing the importance of cooperation and mutual respect, this tafsir can help create a more harmonious and peaceful environment, where differences are seen as a wealth that enriches the common life, rather than a source of conflict.

Similarly, in the field of Islamic thought, Abduh with his interpretation of jihad can generate the intellectual spirit and innovation that is needed to overcome contemporary challenges. Abduh's broad and inclusive view of jihad as a struggle in all aspects of life, including education and social affairs, can inspire thinkers and scholars in Indonesia to develop new ideas that are relevant to the conditions of modern society. This interpretation of jihad encourages Muslims to not only focus on formal religious rites, but also to adopt scientific and rational approaches in interpreting Islamic teachings. Thus, it can create renewals of Islamic thought in Indonesia that are more adaptive and responsive to changing times. Abduh's approach also invites Muslims to continue learning, researching and developing science as part of intellectual jihad. By integrating Islamic principles with advances in science and technology, Islamic thought in Indonesia can continue to develop and make a positive contribution to global civilization. This will open space for interdisciplinary dialog and collaboration between various stakeholders, which will ultimately enrich and strengthen the foundation of Islamic thought in Indonesia.

However, offering ideas like this was also a challenge. Many Indonesians still have a traditional understanding<sup>39</sup>, so they are not ready to fully accept Abduh's ideas of modernization. Deeply rooted traditional thinking often leads to resistance to change, especially when such change is perceived to contradict long-held religious values and practices. This challenge is further compounded by the lack of access to quality education and a deep understanding of the broader and more dynamic teachings of Islam. The implementation of Abduh's ideas therefore requires a thoughtful and gradual approach, prioritizing constructive and inclusive dialogue. Continuous education, both through formal educational institutions and through da'wah and counseling, is very important to open up insights and introduce more comprehensive concepts of jihad. In addition, the role of ulama and respected community leaders is crucial in bridging the understanding between tradition and modernity, so that people can see that the modernization of Islamic thought does not mean abandoning basic religious values, but rather enriching and

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<sup>38</sup> Arafat Noer, "Pluralisme Agama dalam Konteks Islam di Indonesia," *Religi: Jurnal Studi Agama* 15, no. 1 (2019): 51-75.

<sup>39</sup> Muhammad Taufan Djafri dkk., "Pemikiran Keagamaan di Indonesia (Analisis Pemikiran Tradisionalisme dan Modernisme Islam)," *AL-QIBLAH: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Arab* 2, no. 2 (2023): 144-156.

strengthening them. Thus, this challenge can be overcome with a holistic approach, combining education, dialogue and active involvement from all components of society.

The positive impact of Abduh's thinking on jihad can create a broader and more inclusive understanding of jihad, which is not only limited to physical warfare, but includes struggles in education, social and economic fields. This encourages Muslims to contribute constructively in various aspects of life, thus improving welfare and social justice. Abduh's thinking also inspired a renewal movement that aimed to address the challenges of modern times in a peaceful and progressive manner. However, there was also a negative impact, namely the potential for internal conflict among Muslims themselves. Some people who still hold to traditional understandings may feel threatened by Abduh's modernizing ideas, leading to resistance and tension. Moreover, different interpretations of jihad can be exploited by extremist groups to propagate distorted views, which can lead to polarization and fragmentation within the Muslim community. Therefore, it is important to promote a dialogical and educative approach in implementing Abduh's thought, so that the negative impacts can be minimized and the positive benefits can be widely felt.

## CONCLUSIONS

Abduh's thought in the context of this modern era has undeniably influenced the dynamics of Islamic thought both globally and in Indonesia in particular. Based on the previous description, three points of conclusion can be drawn, namely:

*First, the* meaning of jihad in Abduh's view is not limited to military action or war. Abduh expanded the meaning of jihad to include spiritual, moral, social and educational struggles. He saw jihad as an ongoing effort to improve oneself and society, uphold justice, and advance science and social reform. Abduh also invited Muslims to understand jihad as a call to contribute actively and constructively in various aspects of life.

*Second, the* interpretation of jihad according to Muhammad Abduh is very relevant to be implemented in Indonesia, because it prioritizes spiritual, moral, social, and educational aspects that are in line with the needs of a plural and dynamic society. Despite facing challenges from a strong traditional understanding, Abduh's ideas can pave the way for a more inclusive and progressive renewal of Islamic thought, as long as it is done with a wise and gradual approach. By integrating education, dialogue and the active involvement of all components of society, Abduh's thoughts on jihad can encourage the creation of a more just, peaceful and advanced society.

*Third, Abduh's* thoughts on jihad had a positive impact by expanding the understanding of jihad to include education, social, and economic, thus encouraging the constructive contribution of Muslims in various aspects of life and inspiring a peaceful and progressive renewal movement. However, challenges from traditional understandings and the potential for internal conflict demand a dialogical and educative approach to minimize negative impacts and ensure positive benefits are widely felt.

## LIMITATIONS

This paper only discusses three things, namely: First, exploring the thoughts of Muhammad Abduh as a representation of modern mufassirs related to the verse of jihad. Second, the implementation and challenges of Muhammad Abduh's interpretation of the verse of jihad in the context of modern Indonesia, including the implications of this interpretation for social and political dynamics in Indonesia. Third, the positive and negative impacts caused by Abduh's interpretation of the verse of jihad in Indonesia, exploring how this interpretation affects policies, social movements, and people's

perceptions of the concept of jihad in everyday life. While these three things certainly have limitations in the context of the theme of study and methodology and the findings produced so that further in-depth and detailed research is needed.

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