

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR MUSLIM MINORITIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TAHA JABIR AL-ALWANI



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### Abstract

This study examines the challenges and strategic responses of Islamic religious education among Muslim minority communities in Western societies by focusing on the educational thought of Taha Jabir al-Alwani. Employing a qualitative library-based research approach, the study analyzes both primary and secondary sources related to al-Alwani's writings on Islamic education and fiqh al-aqalliyat. The findings reveal that al-Alwani advances a contextual, transformative, and integrative educational model grounded in five core principles: orientation toward maqşid al-sharīah, epistemological renewal (tajdid), the integration of religious and modern sciences, dialogical pedagogy, and a strong emphasis on ethical formation and social responsibility. Within this framework, Islamic education is conceived not merely as a mechanism for preserving religious identity, but as a means of enabling constructive engagement within pluralistic social settings. The novelty of this study lies in its articulation of the practical relevance of al-Alwani's educational framework for Muslim minorities in Western contexts, an area that has received limited and unsystematic attention in previous studies. Overall, al-Alwani's educational thought offers valuable insights for the development of adaptive and future-oriented Islamic education in responding to the challenges of modernity and diversity.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji tantangan dan strategi pendidikan agama Islam bagi komunitas muslim minoritas di negara-negara Barat dengan menitikberatkan pada pemikiran pendidikan Taha Jabir al-Alwani. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan, dengan menganalisis sumber primer dan sekunder yang berkaitan dengan karya-karya al-Alwani dalam bidang pendidikan Islam dan fiqh al-aqalliyat. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa al-Alwani menawarkan model pendidikan yang kontekstual, transformatif, dan integratif yang dibangun atas lima prinsip utama, yaitu orientasi pada maqşid al-sharīah, pembaruan epistemologis (tajdid), integrasi ilmu keislaman dan ilmu modern, pedagogi dialogis, serta penekanan pada pembentukan etika dan tanggung jawab sosial. Model ini memosisikan pendidikan Islam tidak hanya sebagai sarana pelestarian identitas keagamaan, tetapi juga sebagai kerangka untuk keterlibatan konstruktif dalam masyarakat yang plural. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada perumusan relevansi praktis kerangka pendidikan al-Alwani bagi Muslim minoritas di konteks Barat, yang selama ini belum banyak dikaji secara sistematis. Secara keseluruhan, pemikiran pendidikan al-Alwani memberikan kontribusi penting bagi pengembangan pendidikan Islam yang adaptif dan berorientasi masa depan dalam merespons tantangan modernitas dan keberagaman.

## Background

Muslim minority communities face various challenges in accessing Islamic education within Western societies. Social, cultural, and legal environments that differ markedly from those of Muslim-majority countries demand more adaptive and contextualized approaches to religious education. Empirically, the presence of Muslims in Western



countries has continued to grow over recent decades. According to the Pew Research Center, Europe's Muslim population reached approximately 46 million in 2025, accounting for about 6% of the continent's total population.<sup>1</sup> This figure represents a substantial increase from around 4 million in 2010, with projections suggesting that it could exceed 50 million by 2030. Such growth has been driven largely by migration from Muslim – majority countries (estimated at 50 – 60%) and higher fertility rates (around 40 – 50%), as Muslim populations in Europe tend to be demographically younger than other religious groups. Comparable demographic patterns are also observed in North America, where Muslim communities continue to expand and diversify.<sup>2</sup>

This rapid demographic development highlights the growing urgency of understanding how Muslim minority communities in Western societies maintain their religious identity and address their educational needs within secular and pluralistic environments. Despite their growing numbers, these communities frequently encounter limited access to established Islamic educational institutions, a shortage of qualified educators, and social pressures that challenge the internalization of Islamic values, especially among younger generations.

Taha Jabir al – Alwani is a contemporary scholar who has engaged intensely with the discourse on *fiqh al-aqalliyāt*. Born in Iraq in 1935, al – Alwani was trained primarily in *uṣūl al-fiqh* and obtained his doctoral degree in this field from al – Azhar University in Egypt.<sup>3</sup> According to al – Alwani, the term *aqalliyah* linguistically means minority groups, a term commonly used in political contexts to describe groups of people who differ from the majority in terms of ethnicity, language, race, or religion.<sup>4</sup> In terminological usage, *fiqh al-aqalliyāt* refers to a mode of jurisprudence that takes seriously the specific conditions of minority communities and their socio – legal environments, thus producing legal provisions that are responsive to their lived realities, even when such rulings may not be directly applicable to Muslim – majority contexts.<sup>5</sup>

*Fiqh al-aqalliyāt* emerged as a response to the concrete concerns of Muslim minority communities in Western societies as they sought to practice their religious teachings.<sup>6</sup> This concept offers a renewed perspective on how Islam may be learned by Muslims who live as minorities. Al – Alwani's thinking is directed toward maintaining Islamic identity while simultaneously engaging the social realities such communities encounter. Rather than relying on rigid normative teaching, his approach emphasizes the importance of flexible and contextual methods capable of fostering religious awareness within the dynamics of a pluralistic society.<sup>7</sup>

Previous studies on Taha Jabir al – Alwani have largely focused on his jurisprudential contributions within the field of *fiqh al-aqalliyāt*.<sup>8</sup> While several works acknowledge the

<sup>1</sup>Pew Research Center, "Europe's Growing Muslim Population: Trends and Projections."

<sup>2</sup>Jocelyne Cesari, *Why the West Fears Islam: An Exploration of Muslims in Liberal Democracies*, with Internet Archive (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), <http://archive.org/details/whywestfearsisla0000cesa>.

<sup>3</sup>Ahmad Imam Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas; Fiqh al – Aqalliyat dan Evolusi maq ṣid al – Sharī'ah dari Konsep ke Pendekatan (LKIS Pelangi Aksara, 2010)*.

<sup>4</sup>Al – Alwani, "Towards a Fiqh for Minorities."

<sup>5</sup>Nurhayati Nurhayati, "Fikih Minoritas: Suatu Kajian Teoretis," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 13, no. 2 (2013).

<sup>6</sup>Al – Alwani, "Towards a Fiqh for Minorities."

<sup>7</sup>Zavitri Galuh Prameswari, "Perspektif Fiqh Minoritas Yūsuf al – Qarḍawī dalam Penentuan Awal Waktu Salat di Daerah Kutub," *El – Faqih: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Hukum Islam* 10, no. 2 (2024): 334 – 49.

<sup>8</sup>Al – Alwani, "Towards a Fiqh for Minorities."

broader educational implications of his thought, such discussions tend to be fragmented and predominantly normative, lacking systematic engagement with contemporary theories of Islamic education, such as integrative education, *maqāṣid*–based pedagogy, and dialogical–critical learning.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, recent studies have highlighted the urgency of reinterpreting Islamic education for Muslim minority contexts through critical pedagogy,<sup>10</sup> Islamic ethical education,<sup>11</sup> identity development among Muslim youth in Western societies,<sup>12</sup> and *maqāṣid*–based curriculum reform.<sup>13</sup> However, these emerging approaches have yet to be systematically connected to al–Alwani's educational framework.

Despite the considerable scholarly attention devoted to Taha Jabir al–Alwani's contributions to *fiqh al-aqalliyāt*, existing studies largely position his thought within a juridical framework and tend to overlook its broader educational implications. At the same time, discussions on Islamic education for Muslim minority communities have developed through various approaches, such as *maqāṣid*–based pedagogy, critical and dialogical learning models, and studies on identity formation in pluralistic societies. However, these strands of scholarships have not yet been systematically connected to al–Alwani's educational vision. As a result, a conceptual gap remains in explaining how his ideas can be mobilized to inform adaptive and contextual Islamic learning methods for Muslim minority communities in Western contexts.<sup>14</sup>

To respond to this gap, this study conceptualizes al–Alwani's thought as an integrated framework for addressing the educational challenges faced by Muslim minority communities. His emphasis on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, epistemological renewal (*tajdīd*), the integration of religious and contemporary sciences, dialogical pedagogy, and ethical formation is positioned as a coherent problem–solving approach to Islamic education within secular and pluralistic societies. Through this conceptual orientation, Islamic learning is directed not merely toward the preservation of religious identity, but also toward the cultivation of critical awareness, social responsibility, and constructive engagement within diverse social environments.

This study employs a qualitative library research approach focusing on the analysis of Taha Jabir al–Alwani's thought on Islamic learning methods within Muslim minority contexts. The data are derived from al–Alwani's major works, such as *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, and *Towards a Fiqh for Minorities*, as well as from relevant scholarly books and peer–reviewed journal articles addressing Islamic education and *fiqh al-aqalliyāt*.<sup>15</sup> The data are analyzed using a descriptive–analytical

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<sup>9</sup>Al–Alwani, Islamic thought.

<sup>10</sup>Sania and Sirozi, "Patterns of Relationships between Learners and Educators in the Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Philosophy."

<sup>11</sup>Ibrahim et al., "Addressing Contemporary Ethical and Moral Issues through Islamic Education," 2024.

<sup>12</sup>Simsek and Phalet, "Secular Socialization vs. Religious Reactivity."

<sup>13</sup>Muhaki and Aziz, "maqāṣid al–Sharī'ah Sebagai Instrumen Pembaruan Fiqh Sosial Kontemporer," 2024.

<sup>14</sup>Yvonna S. Lincoln dan Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, California, USA: SAGE Publications, 1985), Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3 ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, USA: SAGE Publications, 2002).

<sup>15</sup>Miles et al., *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*.

and thematic approach to formulate core educational principles and to interpret their relevance for the educational realities of Muslim minority communities.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the conceptual framework outlined above, this study addresses two main research questions: (1) What are the fundamental principles of Islamic learning methods according to Taha Jabir al-Alwani? and (2) How are these learning methods adapted within Muslim minority communities in Western countries? Accordingly, the study aims to conceptualize the core educational principles articulated by al-Alwani and to analyze their adaptation in fostering religious life among Muslims as minorities. By doing so, this research seeks to contribute to the development of contextualized Islamic education and to offer a conceptual reference for educators, policymakers, and Islamic institutions operating within pluralistic and secular environments.

In this study, primary sources consist of Taha Jabir al-Alwani's original works, including *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, and *Towards a Fiqh for Minorities*, which represent his authentic intellectual contributions. The secondary sources include scholarly books, journal articles, and conference papers that analyze, interpret, or critically discuss al-Alwani's thought and its relevance to Islamic education and the experiences of Muslim minority communities.

In this study, the researcher served as the main instrument, actively involved in selecting relevant literature, interpreting the context of al-Alwani's thought, and maintaining objectivity and academic validity. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, verification of text authenticity (using original works or authoritative translations), and assessment of contextual relevance to contemporary issues in Islamic education. These steps adhered to the principles of credibility, transferability, and dependability.<sup>17</sup>

### **Principles of Islamic Learning Methods in Taha Jabir al-Alwani's Thought**

Based on a qualitative analysis of al-Alwani's major works and relevant secondary literature, this study identifies several interrelated principles that shape his approach to Islamic learning. The findings indicate that Taha Jabir al-Alwani's conception of Islamic learning methods offers a highly relevant educational model, particularly for Muslim minority communities in Western societies. As al-Alwani argues:

*"There can be no true knowledge unless revelation and reason are reunited in an Islamic worldview."*<sup>18</sup>

Education, in his view, is the process of forming a complete human being grounded in *tawhīd*. Its purpose is not merely the transmission of knowledge but the holistic development of personality including spiritual, intellectual, and physical, directed at achieving the values of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. He emphasizes the integration of revelation and reason, advocating for unification of religious knowledge with contemporary scientific understanding. Al-Alwani proposes the concept of the Islamization of knowledge as a form of harmonizing Islamic epistemology with contemporary disciplines, guided by divine values. Education is seen as a means of empowering Muslims, especially in Western

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<sup>16</sup>Yvonna S. Lincoln dan Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Beverly Hills, California, USA: SAGE Publications, 1985), Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3 ed. (Thousand Oaks, California, USA: SAGE Publications, 2002).

<sup>17</sup>Lincoln and Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry*.

<sup>18</sup>al-Alwani Taha Jabir al-Alwani, "Toward an Islamic alternative in thought and knowledge," *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 1989.

contexts, to maintain their Islamic identity while engaging constructively and responsibly within pluralistic societies.

In his educational thought, Taha Jabir al-Alwani formulates a set of interrelated principles that collectively form the foundational framework of an adaptive and transformative model of Islamic religious education. These principles were originally articulated as a conceptual framework rather than a rigid pedagogical system. Nevertheless, elements of this framework have been partially implemented in various Muslim minority educational initiatives, such as weekend Islamic schools in the United States, community-based study circles (*ḥalāqah*), and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*-oriented curriculum guidelines promoted by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT). While no single educational institution has fully institutionalized all of these principles, existing practices indicate that al-Alwani's ideas extend beyond theoretical discourse, exerting a tangible influence on pedagogical models within Muslim minority communities.

At the core of al-Alwani's approach is the orientation of religious education toward the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), including the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-aql*), religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*).<sup>19</sup> This orientation functions as a guiding framework for curriculum design and instructional strategies, ensuring that Islamic education is not confined to a narrow literalism of *fiqh*. Instead, it enables Islamic values to be articulated in a contextual, applicable, and socially meaningful manner, effectively addressing the real-life challenges faced by learners.<sup>20</sup>

Closely connected to this *maqāṣid*-oriented framework is al-Alwani's emphasis on *tajdīd*, or epistemological renewal. He strongly criticizes *taqlīd* as an approach that restrains intellectual freedom and weakens Muslims' capacity for reasoned judgement.<sup>21</sup> For al-Alwani, religious education must actively encourage learners' engagement in reflective thinking and *ijtihād*, allowing them to interpret religious teachings critically while remaining grounded in Islamic principles. Learners are thus positioned as active subjects who engage in dialogue with texts, contexts, and lived realities. This emphasis is particularly relevant for young Muslims in Western societies, who encounter secular pressures that may challenge religious commitment, while experiences of marginalization can simultaneously foster spiritual resilience.<sup>22</sup> Islamic education, therefore, must cultivate both intellectual independence and social responsibility, equipping learners to navigate modernity and secular environments effectively.<sup>23</sup>

Another central principle in al-Alwani's framework is the rejection of a strict dichotomy between religious and worldly sciences.<sup>24</sup> He advocates an integrative and interdisciplinary approach in which the study of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh* is enriched by insights from sociology, psychology, and other contemporary disciplines. This integration seeks to produce a holistic understanding of Islam, equipping learners to engage effectively with the complexities of modern life, particularly within pluralistic societies where Muslims must navigate diverse cultural and intellectual landscapes.

Al-Alwani further emphasizes dialogical and participatory learning as a central pedagogical approach.<sup>25</sup> In line with his extensive elaboration on *adāb al-ikhtilāf*, diversity

<sup>19</sup>al-Alwani Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam* (Herndon, Virginia, USA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 1995).

<sup>20</sup>Muhaki Muhaki dan Husein Aziz, "Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah Sebagai Instrumen Pembaruan Fiqh Sosial Kontemporer," *Al-Ibrah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keilmuan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2024): 125–52.

<sup>21</sup>Taha Jabir al-Alwani, *Islamic thought: An approach to reform* (International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2006).

<sup>22</sup>Muhaki Muhaki dan Husein Aziz, "Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah Sebagai Instrumen Pembaruan Fiqh Sosial Kontemporer," *Al-Ibrah: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keilmuan Islam* 9, no. 2 (2024): 125–52.

<sup>23</sup>Simsek and Phalet, "Secular Socialization vs. Religious Reactivity."

<sup>24</sup>Al-Alwani, *Islamic thought*.

<sup>25</sup>Al-Alwani, *Islamization of Knowledge*.

of opinion is regarded as a intrinsic and valuable aspect of the Islamic intellectual tradition.<sup>26</sup> He critiques authoritarian, one – way teaching methods that limit students' intellectual development and reduce learning to passive reception.<sup>27</sup> Instead, he proposes an interactive educational process in which teachers serve as facilitators of understanding rather than mere transmitters of information.<sup>28</sup> Through dialogue, discussion, and critical inquiry, learners are encouraged to articulate arguments, exchange perspectives, and internalize Islamic values through reflective engagement.<sup>29</sup> Educational evaluation, in this sense, extends beyond cognitive achievement to include character formation, social sensitivity, and critical reasoning.

Finally, al – Alwani places ethics, moral formation, and social responsibility at the heart of the educational process.<sup>30</sup> He argues that an educational model focused solely on memorizing formal legal rulings, while neglecting moral development, fails to produce a complete Muslim personality. Core values such as honesty, justice, tolerance, and care for others must be internalized through education and reflected in learners' personal, social, and global interactions.<sup>31</sup> For al – Alwani, Islamic education is ultimately a transformative process, aimed at shaping individuals who are morally grounded, socially engaged, and capable of contributing positively to diverse and pluralistic societies.

Taha Jabir al – Alwani, as a contemporary Islamic thinker, pays close attention to the educational challenges faced by Muslim minority communities, especially in Western contexts.<sup>32</sup> He views education not merely as the transmission of religious knowledge, but as the holistic formation of a Muslim personality that is spiritually, intellectually, and socially intact, and capable of engaging thoughtfully with the realities of modern life.<sup>33</sup>

In terms of methodology, al – Alwani rejects monological and purely textual approaches that prioritize memorization. Instead, he emphasized the importance of dialogical, participatory, and inquiry – based learning, incorporating discussions, case studies, and question – and – answer formats tailored to the learners' social context. He also advocates for the use of local languages, such as English, and the integration of technology and digital media to enhance the effectiveness of religious learning. within this framework, al – Alwani offers an educational paradigm that integrates the principles of Islamic law with methodological approaches responsive to contemporary challenges.

Al – Alwani formulated a comprehensive methodology for *fiqh al-aqalliyāt* by examining human actions through the lens of Qur'anic values, reflecting the dynamic nature of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.<sup>34</sup> He emphasizes three main values: *tawhīd* (human relationship with God as *khalīfah*), *tazkiyah* (purification of self and society toward *taqwā*), and *'umrān* (value – based civilization building). These principles form the basis of a contextualized approach to Islamic law for minority Muslim communities. Following the intellectual legacy of al – Ṭūfī, al – Alwani seeks to balance Islamic principles, justice, legal

<sup>26</sup>Majid, "al – Alwani Taha Jabir al – Alwani: A Study of His Views on Ethics of Disagreement in Islam."

<sup>27</sup>Ubaidillah Marsan, "Respon intelektual muslim indonesia terhadap gagasan dan gerakan islamisasi ilmu pengetahuan" (Paradigma Institute, 2022).

<sup>28</sup>Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Continuum, 2000).

<sup>29</sup>Sania and Sirozi, "Patterns of Relationships between Learners and Educators in the Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Philosophy."

<sup>30</sup>Al – Alwani, *Islamic thought*.

<sup>31</sup>Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas; Fiqh Al-Aqalliyat dan Evolusi Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah dari Konsep Ke Pendekatan*.

<sup>32</sup>Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas; Fiqh Al-Aqalliyat dan Evolusi Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah dari Konsep Ke Pendekatan*.

<sup>33</sup>Fahmi Arif Ruchman Basori dan A. R. Muhtadin, Suryadharma Ali: gagasan, ucapan, dan tindakan dalam mencerahkan pendidikan Islam dan kerukunan umat (LKIS Pelangi Aksara, 2014).

<sup>34</sup>Al – Alwani, "Towards a Fiqh for Minorities"; M. Ag Busyro, *maqāṣid al – Syarī'ah* (BuatBuku. com, 2017).

objectives, and the lived realities of Muslim minorities, particularly in matters such as interfaith inheritance. He emphasizes that legal interpretations should be fair, inclusive, and relevant to contemporary social and ethical challenges.<sup>35</sup>

Al – Alwani emphasizes that the intellectual basis for the construction of civilization must possess three main characteristics.<sup>36</sup> First, it must be rooted in truth, free from error and deviation, ensuring that reasoning does not fall into distorted imagination or baseless contemplation. Second, it should be rationally and logically acceptable, so that when presented to the Muslim community, it is met with understanding rather than immediate rejection. Third, it must be realistic, capable of engaging with lived realities and affecting positive change. Thus, the robust civilizational foundation include the truth of revelation, the power of reason, and practical relevance to society.

In line with this vision, al – Alwani asserts that Islamic religious education should not remain confined within rigid textual formalism. Instead, it should focus on understanding the objectives of the *Sharī'ah* as the core of Islamic teachings.<sup>37</sup> For him, Islamic law is dynamic, oriented toward human benefit and ethical values. Therefore, al – Alwani encourages a paradigm shift from a strictly *fiqh* – centered approach to one grounded in *maqāṣid*, ensuring that students understood not only what actions to do, but also why these actions are important, promoting social welfare and communal harmony.<sup>38</sup>

The principle of *tajdīd* (renewal) is at the heart of al – Alwani's approach. In this context, *tajdīd* does not merely signify the modification of institutional forms or pedagogical systems, but rather the revitalization of the meaning, spirit, and intellectual vitality of Islamic teachings so that they remain relevant across time and space.<sup>39</sup> He sees the stagnation of thought in the Islamic world as a result of the dominance of the *taqlīd* within religious education, an approach that tends to produce learners who are mechanically obedient yet limited in analytical capacity and spiritual acumen. Accordingly, the renewal he intended is fundamentally epistemological in nature. It entails reopening the door for *ijtihād*, building critical reasoning skills, and inviting students to engage in reflective rereadings of religious texts in lights of contemporary realities.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, al – Alwani proposes an interdisciplinary approach as an integral strategy in Islamic learning.<sup>41</sup> He firmly rejects the dichotomy between religious sciences and worldly sciences, arguing that both ultimately derive from the same foundational sources: revelation and human reason.<sup>42</sup> For al – Alwani, religious sciences should not be exclusive or insulated from historical developments; rather, it must remain open to the

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<sup>35</sup>E. E. Yakar dan S. Yakar, "The Critical Analysis of ṬhJbir al – 'Alwanī's Concept of Fiqh al – Aqalliyat," *Hitit İlahiyat Dergisi*, 2021.

<sup>36</sup> Al – Alwani, *Islamization of knowledge*.

<sup>37</sup>TJ Al 'Alwanī, "Uṣūl Al Fiqh Al Islam, Source Methodology in Islamic Jurisprudence," Virginia USA: The International Institute of Islamic (academia.edu, 1990).

<sup>38</sup>Ahmad Qiram As – Suvi and Erfaniah Zuhriah, "Ratio Legis of Interfaith Inheritance Reformulation from The Perspective of Fiqh Minority: A Study of The Thoughts of Yūsuf al – Qarḍawī and al – Alwani Taha Jabir al – Alwani," *JPH: Jurnal Pembaharuan Hukum* 10, no. 3 (2023): 361 – 86.

<sup>39</sup>Al – Alwani, *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam*.

<sup>40</sup>Muhaki dan Aziz, "Maq ṣid al – Sharī'ah Sebagai Instrumen Pembaruan Fiqh Sosial Kontemporer," 2024.

<sup>41</sup>al – Alwani Taha Jabir al – Alwani dan Imad al – Din Khalil, *The Quran and the Sunnah: The Time – Space Factor* (Herndon, Virginia, USA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2004).

<sup>42</sup>Inayah, "Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan."

findings of modern sciences that can enrich religious understanding.<sup>43</sup> In practical terms, this interdisciplinary orientation encourages the integration of studies such as of *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh* with fields including sociology, anthropology, educational psychology, and even ecology. Such integration enables the formation of a comprehensive Islamic worldview. In this way, learners are guided not only to understand "what religion says", but also to grasp "how religion engages with and responds to the real – world context".

In terms of teaching methods, al – Alwani emphasizes the importance of dialogical and participatory approaches.<sup>44</sup> His elaboration of *adāb al-ikhtilāf* reflect a clear rejection of authoritative, monological approaches in Islamic education. He emphasizes the importance of learning spaces that are open to dialogue, critical questioning, and active learner participation. For al – Alwani, diversity of opinion is an integral part of the intellectual process and should be managed through ethical conduct and mutual respect rather than the imposition of a single dominant authority.<sup>45</sup> The educational process, therefore, must create a two – way dynamic of understanding, in which teachers function as facilitators of values rather than transmitters or memorizers of texts. Through this approach, students are recognized as active subjects endowed with reason and lived experience, enabling them to internalize Islamic values through reflective engagement rather than passive absorption.

The ethical and moral dimension of education constitute a major concern in al – Alwani's educational thought. He regrets trends in Islamic education that place disproportionate emphasis on the memorization of legal rulings while neglecting character building.<sup>46</sup> For al – Alwani, morals are not a supplementary complement of religious learning but its very core. He emphasizes the importance of preparing a new generation of Muslims guided by scholars who combine sound knowledge, leadership, and piety, so that learners are able to understand the true purposes of Islam through a *nabawiyyah* educational approach (inspired by the model of the Prophet Muhammad). Religious education, in this sense, must focus on shaping morals through exemplary conduct and habituation within real social contexts. By doing so, education becomes a transformative process capable of producing individuals who embody honesty, tolerance, justice, and social concern in both personal and communal life.<sup>47</sup>

Equally important in al – Alwani's idea is the view that religious education must have social awareness and serve a strategic function in the construction of civilization. He emphasizes that Muslims, especially those living in Western societies, must be equipped with a clear sense of responsibility as members of plural and diverse communities.<sup>48</sup> Religious education, therefore, should not merely produce individuals who are personally pious, but also socially engaged and committed to constructive change. Therefore, contemporary issues such as social justice, human rights, minority protection,

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<sup>43</sup>Mizaj Iskandar Usman, "Usul Fikih: Teologis dalam Paradigma Ontologis" (Lembaga Naskah Aceh, 2018).

<sup>44</sup>al – Alwani Taha Jabir al – Alwani, *Uṣūl Al – Fiqh al – Islāmī: Source Methodology in Islamic Jurisprudence* (Herndon, Virginia, USA: The International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), 2005).

<sup>45</sup>M. Ulil Abshor dan Husnul Khotimah, "Etika Ilmiah Islam Sebagai Wujud Toleransi (Analisis Pemikiran Ṭahabir al – ‘Alwanī dalam Kitab Adab al – ikhtilafi fi al Islami)," *Al – Banjari: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu – Ilmu Keislaman* 19, no. 1 (2020): 55 – 83.

<sup>46</sup>Mahmud Arif, "Moderasi Islam dan Kebebasan Beragama Perspektif Mohamed Yatim & ṬahaJbir al – ‘Alwanī" (Deepublish, 2020).

<sup>47</sup>Mohd Rumaizuddin Ghazali, "Adab Perbezaan Pendapat dalam Islam Menurut ṬahaJbir al – ‘Alwanī (1935 – 2016)," *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* 9, no. 1 (2017): 39 – 59.

<sup>48</sup>Al – Alwani, "Towards a Fiqh for Minorities."

environmental sustainability, and global ethics need to be meaningfully integrated into the Islamic curriculum.<sup>49</sup> This integration ensures that Islam is not reduced to a narrowly ritualistic framework, but is understood as a value system that brings mercy and practical solutions for all humanity.

The principles outlined above show that Taha Jabir al – Alwani's method of religious learning is inseparable from the great vision of *islāh* (repair) to the *ummah* and the restoration of Islam's role within global civilization. He seeks to shift Islamic educational from a defensive and apologetic approach into one that is more creative, open and solution – oriented. Within this framework, education is positioned as a bridge between tradition and modernity, revelation and lived reality, as well as religious identity and openness to diversity.<sup>50</sup> Through such an approach, Islamic education is expected to produce a generation of Muslims who do not merely survive as minorities, but who are capable of acting as agents of change, carriers of ethical values, and constructive contributors to a more just and humane world.

### **Adaptation of al-Alwani's Islamic Learning Methods in Muslim Minority Contexts**

Building upon the principles discussed above, al – Alwani's approach can be adapted into an educational model that is responsive to the specific realities faced by Muslim minority communities. This model moves beyond a narrow emphasis on the transmission of religious knowledge and instead aims to form Muslim individuals who possess a strong sense of religious identity, an openness to diversity, and a conscious responsibility for fostering social harmony within multicultural societies. Thus, al – Alwani's approach offers an alternative model of Islamic education model that is solutive, contextual, and relevant in responding to the complex dynamics of Muslim life in the era of globalization.

In the context of the curriculum, al – Alwani offers an integrative and context – responsive design that reflects the complexities of contemporary life. Rather than limiting Islamic sciences to classical religious disciplines such as *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *fiqh*, the curriculum is enriched with the incorporation of the social sciences and humanities, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, and even environmental ethics. Practical attempts to operationalize this integrative curriculum can be observed in several reading materials developed by the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), such as *Teaching Islam in the West*, the *Islamization of Knowledge Series*, and *Foundations of Islamic Education*.

In practice, many weekend Islamic schools and community – based learning centers across North America and Europe have adopted these publications as supplementary materials, particularly to integrate the Islamic sciences with contemporary social knowledge. Beyond classical subjects, the curriculum is encouraged to cover pressing contemporary issues such as human rights, cultural pluralism, social justice, and interfaith relations. Through this approach, Islam is positioned not merely as a normative system of rules, but as a value – based framework that is contextual and capable of responding meaningfully to the challenges of modern life, especially within multicultural societies.

Al – Alwani is acutely understands that Muslims living as minorities in Western countries face circumstances fundamentally different from those of Muslim – majority communities.<sup>51</sup> They often live in secular and plural environments that may, at times, be

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49 Ibrahim et al., "Addressing Contemporary Ethical and Moral Issues through Islamic Education," 2024.

50 Zulaikhah, "Fiqh al – Aqalliyat: Ikhtiar Kemaslahatan Muslim sebagai Minoritas," Alif.ID (blog), 14 Januari 2020.

51 Al – Alwani, "Towards a Fiqh for Minorities."

unfriendly toward public expressions of Islamic identity.<sup>52</sup> In response to this reality, al – Alwani emphasizes the importance of Islamic learning methods that are adaptive, realistic, and context – sensitive, while remaining firmly grounded in the foundational principles of Islam. For him, religious education functions not only as a means of transmitting doctrinal knowledge, but also as a process of cultivating a Muslim identity that is solid, open, and oriented toward constructive social integration.

One form of adaptation offered by al – Alwani is the implementation of Islamic teaching based on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.<sup>53</sup> Through this approach, teaching materials move beyond an exclusive focus on formal legal aspects and instead emphasize the universal ethical values of Islam, such as justice, freedom, protection of life, mind, offspring, and property.<sup>54</sup> This approach is particularly important in Western contexts, where public discourse strongly emphasizes human rights and rationality.<sup>55</sup> Al – Alwani also emphasizes the strategic importance of using local languages, such as English, in teaching religion, given that many young Muslims in the West no longer have sufficient command of Arabic or their parents' native languages.<sup>56</sup> In addition, the use of modern and attractive learning media, such as videos, digital software, and interactive content, is seen as important part for enhancing learners' interest in Islamic material.<sup>57</sup>

Muslims, in Al – Alwani's view, are in dire need of engagement with the humanities, social sciences, and the arts that are based on Islamic beliefs and informed by scientific theories derived from those beliefs.<sup>58</sup> In line with that, the curriculum of religious education must be arranged in close relation to the lived reality of students. The material is not only limited to the *fiqh* of ritual worship alone, but expanded to address contemporary issues such as interfaith relations, professional ethics, social interaction, as well as the ongoing challenges of identity formation and multiculturalism.<sup>59</sup> In this framework, Islamic education plays a role in instilling Islamic values while equipping students to live harmoniously within pluralistic societies.

Al – Alwani encourages the formation of a Muslim identity that is both firmly rooted and open to engagement with the surrounding society. He explicitly rejects two opposing extremes: total assimilation that eliminates Islamic identity, and rigid social isolation that creates alienation from the broader society.<sup>60</sup> For him, Islamic education must cultivate a balanced posture that preserves the integrity of religious identity while simultaneously encouraging social openness, in line with his broader commitment to epistemological renewal and the integration of religious and contemporary sciences.

In a similar vein, Sania and Sirozi argue that religious education must form a deep and dynamic understanding of Islamic teachings, one that goes beyond the memorization

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52 Faiz and Afrita, "Kajian Literatur Terhadap Tantangan dan Prospek Fiqh Minoritas di Kalangan Muslim Barat."

53 Al – Alwani, "Towards a Fiqh for Minorities."

54 Tri Wahyudi Ramdhan, "Teknologi Pendidikan Islam," Press STAI Darul Hikmah Bangkalan 1, no. 1 (2025): 1 – 179.

55 Melani Apri Yunita dkk., "Maqāṣid al – Sharī'ah dan Hak Asasi Manusia (Implementasi Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Pemikiran Islam)," AL – BAHTS: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, dan Hukum 2, no. 2 (2024): 49 – 64.

56 Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas; Fiqh Al-Aqalliyat Dan Evolusi Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah dari Konsep Ke Pendekatan*.

57 Ramdhan, "Teknologi Pendidikan Islam."

58 Al – Alwani, "Toward an Islamic alternative in thought and knowledge."

59 Achmad Anwar Abidin, *Pendidikan Islam Multikultural pada Masyarakat Plural*, vol. 3 (Academia Publication, 2023).

60 al – Alwani/Taha Jabir al – Alwani dan Nancy Roberts, *Apostasy in Islam: A Historical and Scriptural Analysis* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2011).

of classical laws to include the ability to interpret and apply them contextually.<sup>61</sup> In al-Alwani's view, religious education is also a means of social integration and cultural *da'wah*.<sup>62</sup> Through educational processes, Muslims are directed to contribute to society as productive citizens, conveying Islamic values through ethical conduct and exemplary behavior rather than through the mere display of religious symbols.

The role of family and community in religious education also receives particular attention in al-Alwani's thought. Recognizing the limitations of formal educational institutions in many Western countries, he emphasized that learning Islam within the family and community environment is essential.<sup>63</sup> Parents are expected to be actively involved in their children's Islamic development, while Muslim communities need to provide informal educational spaces that support continuous religious learning. Through this approach, al-Alwani's method of Islamic learning not only addresses the practical needs of Muslims living in the West, but also contributes to the formation of a generation with strong faith, social skills, and a clear awareness of their responsibilities as parts of a global society.

His ideas represent a substantive alternative to traditional models of Islamic education model that tend to be authoritative. The comparison here refers to the classical mainstream paradigm of Islamic education in general, rather than specifically to minority education model, which is often characterized by monological instruction, an emphasis on rote memorization, and a strong teacher-centered authority. As criticized by Marsan, such one-way pedagogical approaches in religious education tend to inhibit learners' critical thinking and creativity.<sup>64</sup> In contrast, al-Alwani offers a dialogical, participatory, and context-sensitive educational model that repositions teachers as facilitators of learning and learners as active, critical, and reflective subjects.<sup>65</sup> Within Muslim minority contexts, this pedagogical approach is particularly relevant for addressing the complex challenges of living in secular and plural social environments. Furthermore, by rejecting the rigid dichotomy between religious and worldly sciences, al-Alwani opens the way for an interdisciplinary model of Islamic education.<sup>66</sup> This orientation aligns with Usman's emphasis on integrating Islamic education with the social sciences, humanities, and even ecological perspectives, as a necessary response to the realities of globalization and cultural pluralism.<sup>67</sup>

In the context of minority Muslim communities, al-Alwani shows a high degree of sensitivity to the dual challenges of social integration and the preservation of Islamic identity within secular environments. Therefore, he proposes a model of religious education that is adaptive, contextual, and applicable to the dynamics of Western societies. The findings of this study indicate that the *maqāṣid*-based approach constitutes a particularly relevant solution, as it is able to bridge Islamic values with universal

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<sup>61</sup>Sania and Sirozi, "Patterns of Relationships between Learners and Educators in the Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Philosophy."

<sup>62</sup>Nur Fazwanis Othman dan Syed Najihuddin Syed Hassan, "Integration of Knowledge from The Perspective," *Journal of Islamic, Social, Economics and Development* 3, no. 4 (2020): 31 – 37.

<sup>63</sup>Al-Alwani, *Uṣūl Al-Fiqh al-Islamī*.

<sup>64</sup>Marsan, "Respon Intelektual Muslim Indonesia Terhadap Gagasan Dan Gerakan Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan."

<sup>65</sup>Sania and Sirozi, "Patterns of Relationships between Learners and Educators in the Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Philosophy."

<sup>66</sup>Al-Alwani, *Islamic thought*.

<sup>67</sup>Usman, "Usul Fikih."

principles such as justice, freedom, and rationality.<sup>68</sup> This conclusion is in line with Ramadhan's findings, which states that the *maqāṣid*-oriented approach supports meaningful integration between Islamic ethical values and the human rights principles widely upheld in Western countries.<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, the use of local languages and digital media reflects al – Alwani's acute methodological awareness of sociolinguistic realities faced by second – and third – generation Muslim learners in Western contexts.<sup>70</sup> This strategy directly provides a solution to the language and communication gap that often emerges between teachers and learners. In this regard, Abidin adds that learning materials which engage contemporary issues in an inclusive manner play a crucial role in shaping a Muslim identity that is both confident and open.<sup>71</sup>

Interestingly, al – Alwani's educational approach also succeeds in avoiding the pitfalls of identity extremism, either in the form of total assimilation that erases Islamic distinctiveness or social isolation that distances Muslims from the surrounding communities. Instead, he encourages a path of moderation that maintains core Islamic principles while remaining open to meaningful interaction within pluralistic societies.<sup>72</sup>

Based on the discussion above, this study contributes theoretically to contemporary Islamic education discourse by systematizing and reconstructing Taha Jabir al – Alwani's epistemological and legal thought into a coherent educational framework tailored to Muslim minority contexts. Whereas previous studies have largely examined al – Alwani's ideas within the domains of *fiqh al-aqalliyāt* and the Islamization of knowledge, this research extends that literature by articulating five interrelated principles of Islamic learning: orientation toward *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, epistemological renewal (*tajdīd*), integration of religious and modern sciences, dialogical participatory pedagogy, and the cultivation of moral and social responsibility. Rather than advancing an entirely new educational theory, this study refines and contextualizes existing Islamic education paradigms by positioning al – Alwani's thought as a normative strategic model capable of responding to the challenges of pluralism, secularism, and identity negotiation faced by Muslim minority communities.

Overall, al – Alwani's approach can be understood as a synthesis between classical Islamic intellectual traditions and contemporary educational needs, achieved by shifting attention from rigid legal formalism toward a *maqāṣid* – oriented and value – based educational paradigm. In practical terms, this approach contributes to the development of an Islamic education model that is both adaptable and implementable within educational institutions, especially in contexts shaped by Western cultural dominance. Moreover, the linkage between the results of this study and previous studies, such as that of Majid<sup>73</sup>, Abidin<sup>74</sup>, and Muhaki & Aziz<sup>75</sup>, strengthens the argument that al – Alwani's

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<sup>68</sup>Yunita Dkk., "Maqāṣid al – Sharī'ah dan Hak Asasi Manusia (Implementasi Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Pemikiran Islam)."

<sup>69</sup>Ramadhan, "Teknologi Pendidikan Islam."

<sup>70</sup>Mawardi, *Fiqh Minoritas; Fiqh Al-Aqalliyāt dan Evolusi Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah dari Konsep ke Pendekatan*.

<sup>71</sup>Abidin, *Pendidikan Islam Multikultural Pada Masyarakat Plural*, vol. 3.

<sup>72</sup>Al – Alwani dan Roberts, *Apostasy in Islam*.

<sup>73</sup>Majid, "al – Alwani/Taha Jabir al – Alwani: A Study of His Views on Ethics of Disagreement in Islam."

<sup>74</sup>Abidin, *Pendidikan Islam Multikultural pada Masyarakat Plural*, vol. 3.

<sup>75</sup>Muhaki dan Aziz, "Maqāṣid al – Sharī'ah Sebagai Instrumen Pembaruan Fiqh Sosial Kontemporer," 2024.

approach is not merely normatively compelling, but also operationally relevant for contemporary global Islamic education.

Despite its conceptual strengths, al–Alwani's educational framework is not free from challenges and potential criticisms. One major concern lies in the practical feasibility of implementing an integrative and *maqāṣid*–oriented curriculum within Muslim minority institutions that often function amid financial constraints, inadequate teacher preparation, and fragmented institutional infrastructures. The interdisciplinary educational ideal proposed by al–Alwani presupposes the availability of educators who are simultaneously well–versed in the Islamic sciences and conversant with modern social sciences, an expectation that remains structurally difficult to fulfill in many minority educational settings.<sup>76</sup>

Moreover, al–Alwani's strong emphasis on epistemological renewal (*tajdīd*) and critical engagement with religious texts may encounter resistance from traditionalist educational cultures that prioritize textual literalism, hierarchical authority, and classical modes of transmission. In such environments, dialogical and participatory learning models risk being perceived as challenges to established religious authority or as disruptions to long–standing pedagogical norms.<sup>77</sup>

Finally, although al–Alwani's framework is especially responsive to the lived realities of Muslim minorities in Western secular societies, its broader application requires careful contextualization to avoid conceptual overgeneralization. The social, legal, and cultural realities of Muslim minorities differ significantly across regions, and the uncritical application of a uniform pedagogical framework may limit its practical effectiveness. These challenges suggest that al–Alwani's ideas should not be understood as a fixed or ready–made educational system, but rather as a normative–strategic framework that invites contextual interpretation, gradual and adaptive implementation, and sustained institutional innovation.<sup>78</sup>

## Conclusion

This study shows that Taha Jabir al–Alwani's conception of Islamic learning is based on five main principles: orientation toward *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, epistemological renewal (*tajdīd*), integration of religious and modern sciences, participatory and dialogical pedagogy, and the cultivation of moral and social responsibility. Taken together, these principles form a coherent and transformative educational paradigm that departs from traditional authoritative and text–centered models by repositioning learners as active moral agents capable of critical reasoning and meaningful social engagement. Education is thus understood as a holistic process of forming the whole person in order to participate constructively within plural societies.

In the context of Muslim minorities in Western countries, al–Alwani emphasizes contextualized learning through the use of local languages, educational technology, and curricula grounded in universal Islamic values, with *fiqh al-aqalliyāt* serving as an adaptive legal–ethical foundation. Although this study primarily focuses on Western contexts, these principles are equally relevant to Muslim minority contexts in non–Western settings such as India, Thailand, and the Philippines, where similar challenges of identity negotiation, pluralism, and social integration are present.

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<sup>76</sup>Taha Jabir Al 'Alwanī Issues In Contemporary Islamic Thought, IIIT, 2005.

<sup>77</sup>Taha Jabir Al 'Alwanī Issues In Contemporary Islamic Thought, IIIT, 2005.

<sup>78</sup>Ramadan, Western Muslims and the Future of Islam.

Practically, these findings can be applied through the development of teaching materials that align with learners' social realities, the professional training of teachers in participatory and dialogical approaches, and the design of curricula that reflect *maqāṣid* into everyday ethical practice. For policymakers and institutional leaders, al–Alwani's framework offers strategic guidance for building Islamic education that is inclusive, relevant, and transformative, while fostering generations of Muslims who can contribute positively to pluralistic societies.

Further research is recommended to examine the concrete implementation of al–Alwani's educational principles within institutions operating in plural social environments, particularly in Muslim minority contexts. Comparative studies involving thinkers such as Ismail Raji al–Faruqi, Syed Muhammad Naquib al–Attas, and Tariq Ramadan would further enrich contemporary Islamic education discourse. In addition, longitudinal research on the impact of *maqāṣid*–based approaches is necessary to assess their effectiveness in shaping Muslim generations that are inclusive, contextually grounded, and socially contributive.

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