

# **READING *AL-IBĀNAH*: HABIB SALIM BIN JINDAN'S ECLECTIC RESPONSES TO ISLAMIC RITUAL DEBATES IN EARLY 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY INDONESIA**

**Muhammad Abror<sup>1</sup>, Lufaefi<sup>2</sup>, M. Adib Misbachul Islam<sup>3</sup>,  
Yasrul Huda<sup>4</sup>, Muhammad Nuril Fauzan<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>*Ma'had Aly Sa'iidussiddiqiyah Jakarta, Indonesia*

<sup>2</sup>*Nurul Iman Islamic College of Parung, West Java, Indonesia*

<sup>3</sup>*Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, Indonesia*

<sup>4</sup>*Imam Bonjol State Islamic University Padang, Indonesia*

<sup>5</sup>*University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

\*Corresponding e-mail: [m.abror@saidussiddiqiyah.ac.id](mailto:m.abror@saidussiddiqiyah.ac.id)

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examines the construction of the concept of *bid'ah* in the manuscript *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah* by Habib Salim bin Jindan as a response to traditionalist and reformist debates in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia. Its aim is to trace how Habib Salim's eclectic perspective emerged through the interplay of hadith authority, Ba'Alawi genealogical tradition, and engagement with Islamic reformist discourse. The primary data are drawn from *al-Ibānah*, particularly sections addressing the definition of *bid'ah*, additions to prescribed religious practices, and ritual examples such as bodily movements during *dhikr*, *haul* commemorations, and non-canonical prayers (*Raghā'ib* and *Āshūrā*). The study employs philological methods to examine the structure and textual presentation of the manuscript, alongside a socio-intellectual historical approach to contextualize *al-Ibānah* within the development of Indonesian Islamic thought. The analysis reveals that the manuscript advances a framework of *bid'ah* that does not fully align with either traditionalist or reformist paradigms. Habib Salim challenges claim from both camps through more flexible classifications and hadith-based argumentation. The findings revise prevailing understandings of Hadrami scholars, who have often been positioned dichotomously in historical narratives. The article's contribution lies in its reading of religious manuscripts as sources of discourse, its explanation of the intellectual authority of Hadrami sayyids, and its reframing of the dynamics of religious critique within the intellectual history of Indonesian Islam.

**Keywords:** *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah manuscript, eclectic thought, Habib Salim bin Jindan, Hadrami scholars, religious authority, 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia*

## ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji konstruksi konsep bid'ah dalam manuskrip *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah* karya Habib Salim bin Jindan sebagai respons terhadap perdebatan tradisionalis dan reformis pada awal abad ke-20 di Indonesia. Tujuannya adalah menelusuri bagaimana pandangan eklektik Habib Salim dibentuk melalui perpaduan otoritas hadis, tradisi Ba'Alawi, dan interaksi dengan wacana pembaruan Islam. Data utama berasal dari naskah *al-Ibānah*, khususnya bagian yang membahas definisi bid'ah, tambahan terhadap amalan syar'i, dan contoh ritual seperti zikir dengan gerakan tubuh, peringatan *haul*, serta salat bid'iyah (*Raghāib* dan *Asyura*). Penelitian ini menggunakan metode filologi untuk menelusuri struktur dan bentuk penyajian teks, serta pendekatan sejarah sosial-intelektual untuk menempatkan *al-Ibānah* dalam konteks perkembangan pemikiran Islam Indonesia. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa naskah ini menawarkan kerangka bid'ah yang tidak sepenuhnya sejalan dengan pola tradisionalis maupun reformis. Habib Salim mengoreksi sebagian klaim kedua kubu melalui klasifikasi yang lebih fleksibel dan argumentasi berbasis hadis. Hasil penelitian ini merevisi pemahaman sebelumnya tentang peran ulama Hadrami yang sering ditempatkan secara bipolar dalam historiografi. Kontribusi artikel terletak pada pembacaan manuskrip keagamaan sebagai sumber wacana, penjelasan tentang otoritas intelektual sayyid Hadrami, serta pemetaan ulang dinamika kritik keagamaan dalam sejarah intelektual Islam Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** *Habib Salim bin Jindan, Indonesia abad ke-20, Manuskrip al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah, Otoritas keagamaan, Pemikiran eklektik, Ulama Hadrami*

## INTRODUCTION

Early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia was marked by vigorous debates over religious practices categorized as bid'ah. Traditionalist Muslims argued that not all bid'ah was blameworthy so long as they did not contradict the *sharī'a*, whereas modernists regarded every form of bid'ah as misguided and therefore to be rejected.<sup>1</sup> This polarization appeared in the writings of reformist

<sup>1</sup> Khairudin Aljunied, "Writing Reformist Histories," *The Public Historian* 37, no. 3 (2015): 10–28, <https://doi.org/10.1525/tph.2015.37.3.10>,

figures such as Ahmad Surkati, Mas Mansoer, and A. Hasan, and in those of traditionalists like Hasyim Asy‘ari and Sayyid Utsman bin Yahya. The debates extended beyond ritual matters to questions of religious authority, the legitimacy of local traditions, and the ties linking Indonesian Islam to Middle Eastern scholarly centers, making bid‘ah a central theme in the intellectual history of the period.<sup>2</sup>

Within this context, Habib Salim bin Jindan (1906–1969) emerged as a Hadrami scholar who authored the manuscript *al-Ibānah fī Tārikh al-Sunnah*. The work is not merely a reflection on bid‘ah polemics but a component of the complex landscape of Indonesian religious literature. Written in formal Arabic as a single manuscript, *al-Ibānah* presents definitions, classifications, and case examples of bid‘ah observed in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia. Habib Salim addresses practices such as rhythmic dhikr, the haul tradition, and the Tabut ritual in Bengkulu. His position as a hadith specialist,<sup>3</sup> an adherent of the Haddadiyyah paradigm, and a Hadrami sayyid situates this text within

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p. 15; Irman G. Lanti, Akim Ebih, and Windy Dermawan, “Examining The Growth Of Islamic Conservatism In Indonesia: The Case of West Java” (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2019), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep19934>, p. 24; Andrew F. March, “Naturalizing Sharī‘a: Foundationalist Ambiguities in Modern Islamic Apologetics,” *Islamic Law and Society* 22, no. 1/2 (2015): 45–81, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1500009>, p. 56; Siti Mariatul Kiptiyah, “Naskah Donga Slamet Dan Reformisme Orang Jawa,” *Jurnal Lektor Keagamaan* 18, no. 1 (2020): 29–57, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlka.v18i1.688>, p. 44; Rizki Damayanti, “Islam Nusantara and Local Traditions: Role and Challenges in Indonesia’s Cultural Diplomacy and International Relations,” *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 42, no. 1 (2025): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v42i1.45750>, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900–1942* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 1-34; Peter G. Riddell, “Arab Migrants and Islamisation in the Malay World During the Colonial Period,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 29, no. 84 (July 2001): 113–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639810120074753>, 6-10.

<sup>3</sup> Yasin Fadāni, *Ta‘līq Wa Tashīḥ Kifāyah al-Mustafīd Li Mā ‘Alā Min al-‘Asānid* (Dār Bashāir al-Islāmiyyah, n.d.), p. 6 ; Mar’ashlī, *Nathr Al-Jawāhir Wa al-Durar Fi ‘Ulamā’ al-Qarn al-Rābi’i‘Ashar* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma’rifah, 2006), 457.

intellectual networks linking local traditions to global Islamic discourses.<sup>4</sup>

It is important to emphasize that *al-Ibānah* is a handwritten work circulated in limited form and constitutes part of Habib Salim's corpus, which exceeds one hundred titles.<sup>5</sup> Thus, *al-Ibānah* functions not only as a normative text but also as a historical document recording scholarly responses to religious dynamics in Indonesia. Studies of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian critiques of religious tradition have largely remained confined to the traditionalist-modernist polarity, often focusing on prominent figures such as Sayyid Utsman bin Yahya.<sup>6</sup> The contributions of eclectic Hadrami scholars, particularly Habib Salim and his manuscript, have received comparatively little attention.

Existing scholarship tends to emphasize local cases, including the Sufi-order polemics in Minangkabau,<sup>7</sup> the Sufi debates

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<sup>4</sup> Fathurrochman, “Man Hum Al-Rafidah: Pandangan Kritis Habib Salim Bin Jindan Terhadap Syiah Rafidah di Nusantara Abad XX” (Tesis S-2, Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2021), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/71075>, p. 49; Ibnu Kharish, “Al-Ilmām Bi Ma’rifah al-Fātwā Wa al-Ahkam Karya Habib Salim Bin Jindan: Studi Tekstual Dan Kontekstual Fatwa Ulama Hadrami Di Indonesia Abad Ke-20” (Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2019), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/46328>, 39.

<sup>5</sup> Rozinah Nabihah, “Peran dan Kontribusi Habib Salim Bin Jindan dalam Bidang Dakwah (1925-1969)” (Universitas Indonesia, 2014), p. 24; Faisal Hamood Ahmed Esmail, “Tahqīq Makhṭūṭ Tanqīh Al-Akhbār Fī al-Nāsikh Wa al-Mansūkh Min al-Āthār Li Sayyid Sālim Bin Ahmad Bin Jindān” (Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2017), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/40895>, 43.

<sup>6</sup> Peter G. Riddell, “Arab Migrants and Islamisation in the Malay World During the Colonial Period,” *Indonesia and the Malay World* 29, no. 84 (July 2001): 113–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639810120074753>, p. 6-10.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmad Fauzi Ilyas, “Syekh Ahmad Khatib Minangkabau Dan Polemik Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah di Nusantara,” *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 1, no. 1 (September 19, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.30821/jcims.v1i1.1008>, p. 98; Apria Putra, “Ulama dan Karya Tulis: Diskursus Keislaman di Minangkabau Awal Abad 20,” *Fuaduna* 1, no. 2 (2017): 134–147, <https://doi.org/10.30983/fuaduna.v1i2.434>, 144.

in Sunda involving Mama Sempur,<sup>8</sup> Al-Raniri's criticism of wujūdiyyah,<sup>9</sup> and Shaykh Mukhtar al-Bughuri's responses to the martabat tujuh.<sup>10</sup> The dominant focus remains on factional conflicts and individual figures rather than on manuscripts offering theoretical formulations concerning bid'ah. This article fills that gap through a philological-historical study of Salim's manuscript, highlighting his eclectic position and offering new insights into orthodoxy, practice, and modernity in Indonesian Islam. The general problem addressed here is that studies of critiques of Indonesian religious traditions remain trapped in a traditionalist-modernist dichotomy, while the contributions of eclectic Hadrami scholars and their manuscripts remain under-studied.

To understand the dynamics of religious discourse and the concept of bid'ah, examining manuscripts such as *al-Ibānah* is crucial, for they contain both theoretical formulations and concrete responses to local practices. The core issue of this research lies in the lack of clear mapping of how *al-Ibānah* formulates an eclectic and independent concept of bid'ah and how this formulation challenges dominant narratives regarding the roles of traditionalists and modernists in critiquing Indonesian religious traditions. This study seeks to trace the categories of bid'ah articulated in the text, analyze how the manuscript positions specific Nusantara ritual practices, and reveal its implications for understanding Hadrami religious authority in Indonesia.

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<sup>8</sup> Arofah Nurfika, "Muzil Al-Majnum Fi Radd Tasfiyat al-Zunun (Respons Mama Sempur Terhadap Perkembangan Purifikasi Dan Pembaruan Islam Di Tatar Sunda Akhir Abad 19-Awal Abad 20 M)" (Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2019), 16.

<sup>9</sup> Ahmad Fairozi and Sulistya Ayu Anggraini, "Wahdatus Shuhūd, Kritik Al-Rāniri Atas Panteisme Ketuhanan," *Kanz Philosophia A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 6, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 119–38, <https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjpm.v6i2.91>, 13.

<sup>10</sup> A Rohmana Jajang, "The Discourse Of Malay-Indonesian Sufism In Mecca: A Response of Mukhtār 'Atārid of Bogor Towards The Doctrine of Seven Grades," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 19, no. 1 (2021): 1–36, <https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v19i1.923>, 29.

The central questions guiding this study concern how Habib Salim bin Jindan formulates the concept of *bid‘ah* in *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah* as an independent and eclectic framework beyond the traditionalist–modernist dichotomy. Additionally, the study examines the extent to which this concept reflects Habib Salim’s position as a Hadrami hadith scholar influenced by the Haddadiyyah paradigm and the reformist ideas of Rashīd Ridā.<sup>11</sup> Further, it explores how *al-Ibānah*, as a religious manuscript, contributes to reshaping understandings of religious critique and scholarly authority in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to reassess the construction of *bid‘ah* discourse more comprehensively, as the traditionalist–modernist dichotomy often oversimplifies the complexities of religious authority and obscures the contributions of alternative intellectual actors marginalized in mainstream narratives. The study aims to analyze Habib Salim bin Jindan’s responses in *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah* to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian religious practices through philological, socio-intellectual historical, and intertextual approaches. Its contributions are threefold: enriching the study of Nusantara Islamic manuscripts, offering new perspectives on Hadrami intellectual history, and deepening understandings of religious authority and the concept of *bid‘ah* in Indonesian Islamic discourse. By illuminating these dimensions, the article advances a more nuanced appreciation of Indonesia’s intellectual landscape and underscores the importance of recognizing diverse scholarly voices that shaped debates on orthodoxy, ritual authority, and self-definition.

This article offers a distinct contribution and novelty to contemporary Islamic historiography and diaspora studies by providing the first extended, text-based analysis of Habib Salim bin Jindan’s *al-Ibānah* as a Hadrami scholarly intervention in 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian debates on *bid‘ah*. By combining intertextual mapping with a socio-intellectual reading of manuscript transmission, it clarifies how Hadrami-authorised Sunni

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<sup>11</sup> Salim, *Al-Ibānah Fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*, n.d., 3.

norms were negotiated within local contestations between reformist and traditionalist currents. The study therefore not only documents a neglected manuscript and its argumentative structure, but also demonstrates the broader relevance of Indonesian Hadrami scholarship to transregional Sunni discourse beyond the Nusantara.

## METHOD

This study is grounded in an integrative theoretical framework combining Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality and Kuntowijoyo's social–intellectual history. Kristeva's intertextuality is employed to conceptualise *al-Ibānah* not as an isolated text, but as a discursive node situated within a web of prior and contemporaneous texts.<sup>12</sup> In intertextuality framework, meaning is produced through textual interaction rather than authorial intent alone. Accordingly, references, citations, implicit allusions, and argumentative parallels with works such as *al-Masā'il al-Thalāth*, *al-Manār*, and Indonesian religious writings are treated as evidence of dialogical engagement across regions and scholarly traditions. In citing classical works, I treat them not as timeless authorities but as historical-textual benchmarks that clarify the legal and discursive standards against which *al-Ibānah* formulates, justifies, and contests its critique of bid'ah.

Complementing this textual approach, Kuntowijoyo's social–intellectual historiography is used to situate *al-Ibānah* within its broader socio-historical context.<sup>13</sup> This framework enables analysis of how intellectual positions are shaped by social location, authority structures, and historical circumstances. In this study, it is applied to examine how Habib Salim bin Jindan's Hadrami lineage, scholarly training, and interaction with reformist and traditionalist dynamics influenced the construction of bid'ah discourse in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia. Together, these two frameworks allow the study to bridge textual

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<sup>12</sup> Julia Kristeva and Leon S. Roudiez, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, European Perspectives (Columbia Univ. Press, 1980), 66.

<sup>13</sup> Kuntowijoyo, *Metodologi Sejarah* (Tiara Wacana Yogyakarta, 2003), 49.

analysis and social context, ensuring that doctrinal arguments are read simultaneously as intellectual production and as historically situated responses.

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach with an emphasis on textual historiography. Following Paul Ricoeur's conception of historiography as a "textual operation," the manuscript *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah* is treated as a representational act that constructs, selects, and stabilises collective Sunni memory rather than merely recording historical facts. The primary source of this study is the manuscript *al-Ibānah*, supported by related Hadrami, Middle Eastern, and Indonesian texts referenced explicitly or implicitly within it. Secondary sources include modern scholarship on *bid'ah* discourse, Hadrami diaspora, Islamic reform movements, and Nusantara intellectual history.

A philological approach is applied because *al-Ibānah* is a single-manuscript autographic codex preserved at the Al-Fachriyah Library in Tangerang. Direct observation records paper type, ink, handwriting, and layout. The philological stages include identification, codicological inventory, physical description, critical editing, and translation. Critical editing follows Baried et al. (1985) and Fathurahman et al. (2010), with limited corrections to orthography and punctuation without altering linguistic structure.<sup>14</sup>

To clarify the relationship between method and analysis, this study follows a four-stage analytical flow. First, the manuscript undergoes philological examination to verify textual integrity, identify key terminologies, and analyse its argumentative structure, establishing a reliable textual corpus. Second, relevant data are extracted by isolating passages on definitions of *bid'ah*, ritual classifications, use of *ḥadīth*, and polemical responses, which are then organised thematically. Third, the data are analy-

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<sup>14</sup> Siti Baroroh Baried et al., *Filologi Dan Islam Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusat Pembinaan dan Pengembangan Bahasa Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 1985), p. 68 ; Oman Fathurahman, "Filologi Dan Islam Indonesia" (Kementerian Agama RI Badan Litbang dan Diklat Puslitbang Lektur Keagamaan, 2010), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/34972>, 22.

sed through intertextual mapping and social–intellectual analysis to trace discursive links and authority negotiations across Hadrami and Indonesian contexts. Finally, these analyses are synthesised into theoretical and empirical findings that underpin the study’s contribution to Islamic historiography and Hadrami diaspora studies.

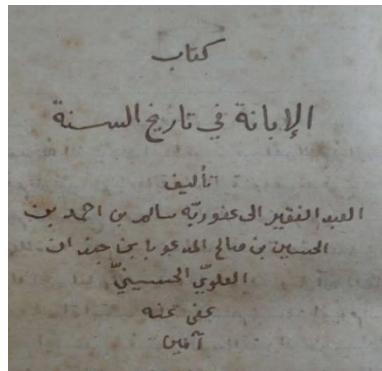
## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### Finding

#### A. Manuscript Description

The manuscript *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah* authored by Habib Salim is written in standard Arabic (fūshā) without vocalization marks, employing the principles of the *riq ‘ah* script. The manuscript is composed on plain paper whose physical quality remains relatively well preserved, though long-term storage has resulted in a brownish tone. The text is inscribed with black ink, accompanied by red circular frames on each folio, while the cover appears thicker than the internal pages. The manuscript measures 9.5 by 21 centimeters. Its overall condition is clear and legible, with no watermarks or rubrication. Before the *muqaddimah*, a crescent and star symbol is illustrated. The manuscript consists of sixty-four pages, though the final two are blank. This does not indicate incompleteness, for the closing formula on page sixty-two confirms completion, and the hard-cover binding is entirely intact.

To date, no copies of *al-Ibānah* have been identified. The manuscript exists solely in the Al-Fachriyah Library at Pesantren Al-Fachriyah, Tangerang, in the form of an autograph. No colophon appears indicating its date of composition, nor could Habib Ahmad, the custodian responsible for preservation, provide information about the year of writing. Nonetheless, references within the text to Jakarta as a regional context for religious criticism imply authorship after Habib Salim’s relocation there in 1939. The author’s name is explicitly stated on the inner cover (see, figure 1). Based on available evidence, the manuscript must be classified as a *codex unicus* and serves as the primary source for this study.



Source: Author's Documentation  
**Figure 1.**  
Inner Cover of the *al-Ibānah* Manuscript.<sup>15</sup>

In *Wa Kadhālika Yashhad*, another manuscript by Habib Salim whose themes parallel those of *al-Ibānah*, he critiques the practice of *salam merdeka* in Jakarta prior to Indonesian independence, explicitly dating the text to 1361/1942. This supports a more precise timeframe for the composition of *al-Ibānah*, suggesting that it was written after 1942.<sup>16</sup> The contents elaborate the concepts of *sunna* and *bid'ah* in Islam, including definitions, classifications, and illustrative cases. The terms stand in opposition: *sunna* refers to acts grounded in religious proof that merit reward, whereas *bid'ah* designates acts contrary to religious values, rendering their practitioners disobedient or even liable to punishment. For Habib Salim, the two concepts are inseparable and must be understood jointly.

Although theoretical in orientation, the manuscript includes numerous examples of *bid'ah* drawn from Indonesian religious life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These examples include celebrations of the Prophet's birthday, annual commemorations of the deceased (*haul*), ritual offerings, the Tabut tradition of Bengkulu, and Europeanized greetings, among others. At first

<sup>15</sup> Salim, *Al-Ibānah Fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*.

<sup>16</sup> Salim, *Wa Kadhalika Yashhad*, n.d., 133.

glance, the title might suggest that the manuscript addresses the historical development of hadith, given the inclusion of the term *tārīkh*, yet the work does not explore hadith historically. Instead, it offers an exposition of the meanings and implications of *sunna* and *bid'ah*, connecting them to contemporary ritual practices deemed incompatible with the Qur'an and hadith.

Another noteworthy feature is that Habib Salim, in the author identification on the manuscript's cover, omits the Shāfi'i attribution that appears in most of his works. This omission is striking given his frequent emphasis on legal affiliation elsewhere. The body of the text, however, reflects a detailed synthesis of doctrinal exposition and contextual critique. By juxtaposing normative discussions with empirical observations of Indonesian practices, Habib Salim constructs a theoretical yet socially embedded framework for evaluating religious innovations. His examples underscore the extent to which Indonesian Islam at the time was shaped by local customs, colonial sociocultural encounters, and competing understandings of orthodoxy. The manuscript's contribution is therefore twofold: first, it preserves a rare autographic record that illuminates the intellectual concerns of a prominent Hadrami scholar; second, it provides insight into how debates on ritual legitimacy unfolded within the broader landscape of Indonesian Islamic thought. By documenting both theoretical formulations and concrete examples, *al-Ibānah* functions as a bridge between abstract doctrinal discourse and the lived religious practices it seeks to assess. Its status as a *codex unicus* further enhances its scholarly value, underscoring the importance of conserving and studying such manuscripts to reconstruct the diversity of Islamic intellectual traditions in the archipelago.

Moreover, the manuscript highlights how tensions between inherited orthodoxy and emerging social habits demanded renewed interpretive frameworks that address textual fidelity while engaging cultural specificity, positioning *al-Ibānah* as a reference for understanding evolving modes of Islamic normativity. Overall, *al-Ibānah* reveals a coherent intellectual project aimed at clarifying the boundaries between legitimate tradition and illegitimate innovation. Through philological, contextual, and

conceptual precision, the manuscript demonstrates Habib Salim's attempt to articulate an evaluative model that integrates scriptural authority with critical engagement of local practices. The text thus contributes to understanding the discursive formation of *sunna* and *bid'ah* in 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia, highlighting the interplay between normative doctrine, social change, and the evolving authority of Hadrami scholarship.

## B. A Brief Biography of Habib bin Jindan

Habib Salim was born in 1865 CE (1282 AH) to Ahmad bin al-Husayn and Muznah bint 'Alī bin Muṣṭafā. He descended from a lineage tracing back to the Prophet Muhammad and spent his early life in Hadramaut, Yemen.<sup>17</sup> His mother was the second wife of Habib Ahmad.<sup>18</sup> As with many earlier generations of the 'Alawiyyin, his formative education began at home under the tutelage of his father, who served simultaneously as parent and first instructor. This familial foundation laid the groundwork for his intellectual and spiritual formation, situating him within a long-standing scholarly tradition that emphasized moral discipline, genealogical consciousness, and mastery of classical Islamic sciences.

As he entered adolescence, Habib Salim continued his studies under Habib 'Abd al-Qadir bin Ahmad Bilfaqih, a distinguished scholar of hadith and jurisprudence who later became head of Madrasah al-Khairiyah in Surabaya in 1337 AH/1919 CE. He also attended scholarly gatherings across the Indonesian archipelago, exposing him to diverse intellectual milieus.<sup>19</sup> His formal education included primary schooling at the Volkschool and training in several pesantren. His pursuit of religious knowledge persisted until 1930, when the rise of Pan-Islamic sentiment in the Ḥaramayn inspired him to perform the

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<sup>17</sup> Fathurrochman, "Man Hum al-Rafidah.", 43.

<sup>18</sup> Rozinah Nabihah, "Peran dan Kontribusi Habib Salim Bin Jindan dalam Bidang Dakwah (1925-1969)" (Universitas Indonesia, 2014), 18.

<sup>19</sup> Fathurrochman, "Man Hum al-Rafidah.", 43.

pilgrimage.<sup>20</sup> This first hajj, completed in 1349 AH/1930 CE, marked a significant milestone in his spiritual development and broadened his transregional scholarly networks.

From birth until 1934, Habib Salim resided in Surabaya. Between 1935 and 1938, He undertook extensive scholarly and missionary travels, engaging with scholars across various regions. His close association with Habib Ali al-Habsyi, widely known as Habib Ali Kwitang, proved influential and ultimately motivated his relocation to Jakarta in 1939, where he lived until his death. In Jakarta, he joined two prominent figures dedicated to da'wah, Habib Ali al-Habsyi and Habib Ali Alatas, forming a well-known triad from 1940 onward in Kwitang. Their collaboration consolidated his public reputation and positioned him as a central voice in urban Islamic preaching during a period of profound sociopolitical transformation.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to his prominence as a compelling preacher and influential urban missionary, Habib Salim was renowned for his prolific scholarly output across multiple disciplines. Ismā'īl classifies his handwritten corpus into four categories: first, works labeled by Habib Salim as complete and ready for publication, numbering fewer than twenty titles; second, texts consisting of scholarly attestations to his expertise; third, unfinished drafts awaiting revision; and fourth, concise thematic summaries addressing central issues in Islamic thought. Al-Dubyān identifies 133 detectable works,<sup>22</sup> while Rozinan Nabihah records as many as 151.<sup>23</sup> The majority focus on historiography, especially genealogy and intellectual transmission, as well as hadith and its

<sup>20</sup> Kharish, “Al-Ilmām Bi Ma’rifah al-Fātwā Wa al-Ahkam Karya Habib Salim Bin Jindan: Studi Tekstual Dan Kontekstual Fatwa Ulama Hadrami Di Indonesia Abad Ke-20,” 67.

<sup>21</sup> Ismail Fajrie Alatas, “Securing Their Place: The Ba’alawi, Prophetic Piety and the Islamic Resurgence in Indonesia” (Thesis, 2009), <https://scholarbank.nus.edu.sg/handle/10635/16742>, 36.

<sup>22</sup> Faisal Hamood Ahmed Esmail, “Tahqīq Makhtūt Tanqīh Al-Akhbār Fī al-Nāsikh Wa al-Mansūkh Min al-Āthār Li Sayyid Sālim Bin Ahmad Bin Jindān” (Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2017), <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/40895>, 43.

<sup>23</sup> Nabihah, “Peran dan Kontribusi Habib Salim Bin Jindan dalam Bidang Dakwah (1925-1969),” 49.

ancillary sciences, reflecting his sustained commitment to preserving authoritative knowledge within the Alawiyyin scholarly tradition. These contributions enhanced his legacy and shaped subsequent intellectual trajectories within Southeast Asian Islam for generations.

### C. The Concept of *Bid‘ah* According to Habib Salim

Within the landscape of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian religiosity, the polemic surrounding the concept of *bid‘ah* constituted a decisive ideological foundation for debates between traditionalist and modernist Muslims concerning the legitimacy of various religious practices.<sup>24</sup> From the traditionalist camp, KH Hasyim Asy‘ari, the eminent Javanese scholar, served as the primary point of reference. In his *Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah*, Hasyim articulated a comprehensive explanation of *sunnah* and *bid‘ah*.<sup>25</sup>

In early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia, *bid‘ah* functioned as a key term through which Muslims contested the legitimacy of ritual practice and, more broadly, religious authority. The debate often crystallized into two dominant tendencies.<sup>26</sup> Traditionalist scholars generally treated *bid‘ah* as a flexible legal category, while modernist reformers tended to define it as a uniformly deviant innovation. Habib Salim bin Jindan entered this landscape not by repeating factional slogans, but by mapping the

<sup>24</sup> Sofyan A. P. Kau, Zulkarnain Suleman, dan Irwan Irwan, “Traditional Islamic Religious Practice Arguments: Criticism of the Concept of Bid‘ah of Islam Salafi-Wahabi,” *Al-Ulum* 23, no. 1 (2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v23i1.3498>, p. 14; Miftahul Huda, “The Art of Maulid Ad-Diba’ Between Tradition and Islam in the Archipelago from a Multicultural Education Perspective,” *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 41, no. 1 (2024): 109–123, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v41i1.39798>, 114.

<sup>25</sup> Asy‘ari, , 14-19.

<sup>26</sup> Sofyan A. P. Kau, Zulkarnain Suleman, dan Irwan Irwan, “Traditional Islamic Religious Practice Arguments: Criticism of the Concept of Bid‘ah of Islam Salafi-Wahabi,” *Al-Ulum* 23, no. 1 (2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v23i1.3498>, p. 6; Miftahul Huda, “The Art of Maulid Ad-Diba’ Between Tradition and Islam in the Archipelago from a Multicultural Education Perspective,” *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 41, no. 1 (2024): 109–123, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v41i1.39798>, 115.

conceptual premises behind each stance and then proposing a contextual framework for evaluation.

Among traditionalists, KH Hasyim Asy'ari was a major reference point. In *Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, he defined *sunnah* as the divinely sanctioned path embodied by the Prophet and his Companions, and *bid'ah* as its opposite.<sup>27</sup> Drawing on 'Izz al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Salām, he endorsed a fivefold classification of *bid'ah* (obligatory, forbidden, recommended, discouraged, permissible), implying that innovation was not inherently blameworthy. Sayyid Utsman bin Yahya advanced a comparable position in *Manhaj al-Istiqrāmah fī al-Dīn bi al-Salāmah*, even without explicitly citing 'Izz al-Dīn. The key logic here is juridical: *bid'ah* is assessed through legal and ethical gradations rather than rejected wholesale.<sup>28</sup>

Modernist polemics moved in the opposite direction. Ahmad Surkati, founder of al-Irsyad, rejected typologies that divided *bid'ah* into legal categories.<sup>29</sup> In *al-Masā'il al-Thalāth*, he argued that all *bid'ah* is misguidance leading to punishment, citing Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions to support his claim. For Surkati, scholars who legalized "good innovations" committed a serious methodological error by normalizing what should be excluded from religion.<sup>30</sup> Habib Salim noted Surkati's influence and, in *al-Ta'zīr 'alā al-Qā'il bi Tahārah al-Khinzīr*, even labeled him a "disturber of the community," signaling

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<sup>27</sup> Hasyim Asy'ari, *Risālah Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa al-Jamā'ah* (Jombang: Maktabah al-Thurāth al-Islāmī, 1997), 14-19.

<sup>28</sup> Utsman, *Manhaj Al-Istiqrāmah Fi al-Dīn Bi al-Salāmah* (Jakarta: Shirkah Maktabah al-Madaniyah, n.d.), 41.

<sup>29</sup> Bisri Afandi, *Syaikh Ahmad Surkati (1874-1945): Pembaharuan & Pemurnian Islam Di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 1999), p. 45; B Abdullah, "Dialektika al-Qur'an dalam al-'Urf: Studi Kritis Pergeseran Makna Budaya Mappasikarawa pada Perkawinan Bugis di Era Modern," *Al-Ulum* 25, no. 1 (2025): 1-17, <https://doi.org/10.30603/au.v25i1.6867>, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Bisri Affandi, "Shaykh Ahmad Al-Surkati: His Role in Al-Irshad Movement in Java in the Early Twentieth Century." (McGill University), accessed July 8, 2024, <https://escholarship.mcgill.ca/concern/theses/0k225g151>, p. 25; Salim, *Al-Ta'zīr 'Alā al-Qā'il Bi Tahārah al-Khinzīr*, n.d., 56.

disagreement with Surkati's uncompromising puritanism while still recognizing the reformist argument as a coherent position.

Habib Salim addressed these two orientations directly in *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*. He wrote:

"...(أحدهما) مذهب من يتسع في معناها فيحملها على ما  
أحدث بعد عهد النبوة سواء أكان راجعا إلى العبادات أم  
المعاملات، وسواء أكان حسنا أم قبيحا... (ثانيهما) مذهب من  
يفسر البدعة بالطريقة المخترعة على أنها من الدين و ليست  
من الدين في شيء. فهي مذمومة في كل حال. و لا يدخل في  
حقيقة واجب أو مندوب أو مباح..."<sup>31</sup>

"The first group interprets *bid'ah* broadly, encompassing all post-prophetic developments in ritual and social life, which may be praiseworthy or blameworthy. The second defines *bid'ah* strictly as an unwarranted religious innovation, rendering every instance reprehensible and excluding it from obligatory, recommended, or permissible acts."

This passage is not merely descriptive; it establishes the conceptual "choice points" in the debate: whether *bid'ah* should be treated as (1) a broad category requiring internal differentiation, or (2) a strict category whose definition already implies condemnation. Salim presents both without simplistic endorsement. In *Wa Kadhablikā Yashhad*, he described modernists as *mutashaddid*, influenced by Rashīd Riḍā, Ibn Ḥazm, and Ibn Taymiyah, while traditionalists appeared *mukhaffif*.<sup>32</sup> His own posture, however, is neither an empty middle nor a rhetorical compromise. It is a method: evaluate practices by considering their relation to the *sharī'ah*, their ethical texture, and their effects on communal welfare.

Two examples show how this method works. First, Salim appreciated 'Izz al-Dīn's legal classification of *bid'ah*, yet he rejected a permissive example often associated with it, treating

<sup>31</sup> Salim, *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*, 49-50.

<sup>32</sup> Salim, *Wa Kadhablikā Yashhad*, 71.

diverse foods as a “permissible innovation.” For Salim, excess in consumption could signal vanity; therefore, ethical discernment and social meaning matter as much as formal legal labeling. Second, he engaged modernist scholarship seriously. In *al-Ibānah*, he recommended ‘Alī Maḥfūz’s *al-Ibdā’ fī Maḍarr al-Ibdā’* as important reading on *bid’ah*, but he criticized Maḥfūz’s prohibition of standing to honor teachers. Such a gesture, Salim argued, belongs to etiquette rather than worship; it cannot be treated as a religious innovation simply because it is new or socially contested.

Taken together, these moves reveal an eclectic and independent conception of *bid’ah*. Salim neither clings rigidly to traditionalist gradations nor adopts the modernist blanket condemnation. Instead, he frames *bid’ah* as a category that must be applied with methodological caution: rejecting innovations that contradict the *sharī’ah* while permitting practices that function as commendable custom, ethical discipline, or communal benefit. In doing so, Salim shifts the discussion from factional boundary-making to reasoned evaluation, anchoring the concept of *bid’ah* in moral judgment and social responsibility rather than partisan reflex.

## Discussion

### A. Ideological Conflicts in the Responses to Religious Traditions in 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesia

To trace the intellectual roots of Islamic reform in Indonesia, Azra argues that this movement had emerged as early as the seventeenth century through three influential scholars, al-Raniri (d. 1658), al-Sinkili (d. 1693), and al-Makassari (d. 1699), who promoted the harmonization of law and Sufism as a form of *tajdīd* (renewal).<sup>33</sup> Hamka and Federspiel, however, maintain

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<sup>33</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Pergolakan politik Islam: dari fundamentalisme, modernisme hingga post-modernisme* (Paramadina, 1966), 299-300; Ahmad Najib Burhani, “Pluralism, Liberalism, and Islamism: Religious Outlook of Muhammadiyah,” *Studia Islamika* 25, no. 3 (2018): 433–470, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v25i3.7765>, p. 440; D. Nurohman, “Selling Religious Rituals in Indonesia: Commodification of Umrah Pilgrimage by Travel Agents,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022): 399–425, <https://jiis.org/index.php/jiiis/article/view/100>.

that meaningful reform began only in the nineteenth century with the rise of the Padri movement in West Sumatra.<sup>34</sup> Deliar Noer contends that Islamic reform crystallized in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when many Indonesians practiced forms of Sufism viewed by reformists as exceeding legal boundaries.<sup>35</sup>

Arberry reinforces this view by noting a widespread inclination toward spiritual practices misaligned with Islamic morality.<sup>36</sup> Noer acknowledges the influence of the Arab world since the eighteenth century, though he argues that its impact was largely political rather than doctrinal. As Indonesia entered the 20<sup>th</sup> century, responses to inherited religious traditions became increasingly polarized between modernists and traditionalists. The concept of *bid'ah* emerged as a key analytical tool for identifying innovations absent in the prophetic era. For modernists, all *bid'ah* constituted misguidance, prompting

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uinsby.ac.id/index.php/JIIS/article/view/2627, p. 412; Ajat Sudrajat, “Pemikiran Wujudiyah Hamzah Fansuri Dan Kritik Nurudin Al-Raniri,” *Humanika* 17, no. 1 (January 16, 2019): 55–76, <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v17i1.23123>, 60.

<sup>34</sup> Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia*, 1st Equinox ed (Jakarta: Equinox Pub, 2009), p. 4; Hamka, *Ayahku, Riwayat Hidup Dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama di Sumatera* (Djakarta: Djayamurni, 1963), p. 26; E. Asrawijaya, “Harmonization between Customs and Islam in the Jalawastu Community,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022): 378–398, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.2.378-398>, 381.

<sup>35</sup> Deliar Noer, *Gerakan Modern Islam Di Indonesia 1900- 1942* (Jakarta: LP3ES, 1999), 7-36.

<sup>36</sup> A. J. Arberry, “Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam,” Routledge & CRC Press, accessed July 8, 2024, <https://www.routledge.com/Sufism-An-Account-of-the-Mystics-of-Islam/Arberry/p/book/9780415442572>, p. 121; M. L. Fauzi, “Changing Trends in the Study of Sharia in Indonesia: An Account on Relevant Bibliographies,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 16, no. 2 (2022): 511–533, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2022.16.2.511-533>, p. 520; Waharjani Waharjani et al., “The Deliverance of Hadith by Khateeb in Friday Prayers from the Perspective of Hadith Science: As an Islamic Cultural Practice,” *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 41, no. 1 (2024): 80–94, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v41i1.38668>, 87.

categorical rejection of emerging rituals and devotional customs.<sup>37</sup>

Organizations such as Persis institutionalized these purify-catory aspirations by establishing several publications, including *Pembela Islam* (1929), *Al-Fatwa* (1931), *Al-Lisan* (1935), *At-Taqwa* (1937), *Aliran Islam* (1948), and *Risalah* (1962).<sup>38</sup> Traditionalists, by contrast, argued that innovations were not inherently reprehensible; practices remained acceptable so long as they did not violate the *sharī'ah*. Vocal modernist critics of *bid'ah* included Ahmad Surkati, Mas Mansoer, and A. Hasan, all of whom authored influential reformist works.<sup>39</sup> Traditionalist scholars such as KH Hasyim Asy'ari, Sayyid Utsman, and Habib Salim bin Jindan articulated more elastic interpretive frameworks.

The ideological foundations of the modernist project were deeply shaped by Egyptian reformism associated with Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad 'Abduh, and Rashīd Riḍā, whose conceptualization of *bid'ah* drew upon Imam Mālik and was later elaborated by Ibn Waqqās, Ibn Taymiyah, Ibn Rajab, and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Conversely, traditionalist thought in the Indonesian archipelago followed the Shāfi'i school, enriched by the legal reasoning of 'Izz ibn 'Abd al-Salām and widely cited by Hasyim Asy'ari in *Risālah Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* and by Sayyid Utsman in *Manhaj al-Istiqa'mah*. These divergent

<sup>37</sup> Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam...*, p. 10-21; Syamsul Rijal, "Revitalizing Hadhrami Authority: New Networks, Figures and Institutions Among Habā'ib in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 27, no. 2 (2020): 239–272, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v27i2.9382>, 250; Muhammad Dwi Fajri dan Amrin Amrin, "Integration of Deep Learning in Teaching Local Wisdom Values in Islamic Education," *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 42, no. 1 (2025): 25–43, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v42i1.45709>, 32.

<sup>38</sup> Beggy Rizkiyansyah, "The Birth of Islamic Press in Indonesia," *Jejak Islam*, accessed July 24, 2023, <https://jejakislam.net/lahirnya-pers-islam-di-indonesia/>.

<sup>39</sup> Joko Subando, Badrun Kartowagiran, and Sudji Munadi, "Development of Curriculum Design Evaluation Instruments in Strengthening Al-Irsyad Ideology in Indonesia," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)* 10, no. 4 (December 1, 2021): 1426, <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i4.21758>, 13.

lineages underpinned a broader contestation over authority, orthodoxy, and the legitimate boundaries of religious innovation within the evolving landscape of Indonesian Islamic discourse.

## B. The Eclectic Views of Habib Salim in His Religious Responses

Emerging from a traditionalist educational background and living through the transition from the nineteenth to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which exposed him to a wide range of modernist Muslim thought, Habib Salim developed a deep interest in hadith studies and engaged extensively with works of hadith scholars generally oriented toward jurisprudence. Consequently, he possessed not only conceptual independence in defining innovation (*bid'ah*) but also a notable neutrality in several of his religious responses. The ideological mapping of Habib Salim supports Alatas's findings that his interactions with reformist currents fostered an adaptive epistemological synthesis between traditionalism and reformism.<sup>40</sup> This paper outlines his 20<sup>th</sup> century Indonesian religious responses, focusing on three representative issues: bodily movement during *dhikr*, the commemoration of haul, and the validity of *Raghaib* and *Ashura* prayers.

### 1. The Legal Status of Bodily Movement During *Dhikr*

Habib Salim bin Jindan addresses bodily movement during *dhikr* as part of a wider juristic reorientation within Hadrami Sufism associated with the nineteenth-century Ḥaddādī paradigm. Rooted in the teachings of Imam ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Alawī al-Ḥaddād, this paradigm prioritized practical piety and foundational religious instruction over speculative metaphysics. Transmitted from Hadramawt to Java, it also brought a shift in textual authority: Ḥaddādī teaching relied on Arabic juridical manuals such as Sālim bin Sumayr's *Safrīnah al-Najāh* and ‘Abdullāh bin Husayn bin Ṭāhir's *Sullam al-Tawfīq*, whereas court-centred Islam often drew upon Javanese compositions (serat, suluk,

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<sup>40</sup> Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority?: Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 87.

babad) that blended mystical symbolism with local literary idioms. This intellectual backdrop helps explain why Habib Salim evaluates kinetic *dhikr* primarily through a legal lens rather than through courtly or speculative mystical registers.<sup>41</sup>

The practice itself was contested. Supporters argued that remembrance of God may occur “in all states,” citing Qur’anic references such as Āl ‘Imrān 3:191 and al-Aḥzāb 33:35.<sup>42</sup> Some Shāfi‘ī-leaning jurists allowed bodily motion as a permissible variation in devotional condition; Muḥammad al-Khalīlī, for instance, treated such movement as allowable in certain contexts.<sup>43</sup> Modernist critics, however, tended to read rhythmic motion as an illicit addition to worship. Rashīd Riḍā, writing in *Al-Manār*, condemned choreographed movement during *dhikr* as *bid‘ah*,<sup>44</sup> and Aḥmad Surkati’s broader critique of ritual accretions in *al-Masā’il al-Thalāth* supported a similar boundary: worship should not be expanded by invented forms.<sup>45</sup>

Habib Salim aligns with this critical line when the movement is intentional and structured. In *al-Ibānah*, he categorizes rhythmic motion attached to *dhikr* as an “addition” to a prescribed devotional act, writing:

”...و إما زيادة على أمر مشروع كالذكر يقرن بالرقص في حركات متطابقة...”  
“Some practices amount to additions to devotional acts, such as *dhikr* accompanied by rhythmic motions.”

<sup>41</sup> Muhamad Abror, *Islam Indonesia Dalam Pandangan Orang Arab Eklektik* (Bogor: Abdi Fama, 2024), 54.

<sup>42</sup> Qaydarī, *Dīnāmiyyah Al-Naṣṣ al-Ṣūfī* (Beirut: Kitāb Nāṣirūn, 2020), p. 65; Ferit Akova, “Returning to God: Constructing Agency through the Practice of Dhikr in Sufi Islam,” in *Routledge Handbook of Islamic Ritual and Practice*, ed. O. Leaman (London: Routledge, 2022); Dody S. Truna, “The Illustrations of Indigenization of Islam in Indonesian Cultural Landscape,” *Religious: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama dan Lintas Budaya* 5, no. 3 (2021): 337–346, <https://doi.org/10.15575/rjsalb.v5i3.13804>, 76.

<sup>43</sup> Khalīlī, *Fatāwā Al-Khalīlī ’alā Madhhab al-Shāfi‘ī*, vol. 1, 1867, 36.

<sup>44</sup> Riḍā, *Majallah Al-Manār* (Mesir-Aga: Idārah Majallah al-Manār, 1930).

<sup>45</sup> Surkati, *Al-Masā'il al-Thalāth*, 45.

<sup>46</sup> Salim, *Al-Ibānah Fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*, 51.

In *al-Ibānah* he argued that such acts rest on fabricated reports:

..." كالرقص في حال الذكر... أن النبي تواجد واهتز حتى سقط  
الرداء عن منكبه..."<sup>47</sup>

"Among innovations are deeds based on forged *hadīth*, such as dancing during *dhikr*, justified by a narration claiming that the Prophet shook until his turban fell," he deemed fabricated entirely."

These passages anchor his main claim: deliberate, synchronized movement transforms *dhikr* into a performed ritual form and therefore introduces an extraneous element into worship. His argument is not merely sociological; it is evidentiary. The problem lies in the legal character of the act, namely an addition to a regulated devotion, and in the weakness of the textual proofs used to authorize it.

At the same time, Habib Salim does not adopt an absolute prohibition. His framework turns on a key distinction between contrived choreography and spontaneous spiritual overflow (*shawq*). If bodily motion arises involuntarily from intense longing for God, he does not classify it as *bid'ah*. What is forbidden is the deliberate staging of movement performed as a planned component of the rite. He supports this allowance by appealing to the authority of Shaykh Abū Bakar bin Sālim of Tarim, a major sixteenth-century figure, thereby grounding experiential piety within a recognized chain of scholarly precedent rather than treating it as uncontrolled excess.

This distinction produces a coherent mediating position. Habib Salim accepts the modernist warning that worship must not be expanded by invented procedures, yet he also preserves a space for embodied spiritual experience when it emerges without contrivance. In other words, he polices the *form* of ritual innovation while acknowledging the reality of devotional affect. The result is an eclectic legal-spiritual synthesis: *dhikr* remains

<sup>47</sup> Salim, *Al-Ibānah Fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*, 51.

under juridical consciousness, but sincere movements that arise naturally can be read as signs of *shawq* rather than as unlawful innovation.

## 2. The Legitimacy of the One-Year Death Commemoration (Haul)

Annual rituals commemorating a revered figure's death anniversary (*haul*) are widely practiced in Indonesia. Often traced to Hadramawt, Yemen, the custom was introduced by Ḥadramī *sādah* and serves to sustain collective memory of ancestors believed to possess elevated spiritual stature. As Alatas notes, the persistence of *haul* in Indonesia is shaped not only by spiritual motives but also by social and political dynamics<sup>48</sup> especially shifts in religious authority and the democratization of learning that accompanied 20<sup>th</sup> century reformist currents.<sup>49</sup>

Because *haul* combines grave visitation with public commemoration, it became a focal point in modernist-traditionalist disputes over *bid'ah* and the limits of lawful veneration. Modernist critics such as Ahmad Surkati (echoing Mas Mansur) classified *haul* as a major innovation and a potential gateway to

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<sup>48</sup> Al Furqon, "Contested Authorities in the Haul of Sheikh Jumadil Kubro in Tralaya," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 15, no. 2 (2021): 409–432, <https://doi.org/10.15642/jiis.2021.15.2.409-432>, 420; Khoiriyah Khoiriyah et al., "Haul as a Medium for Character Education: Building Local Wisdom through Kiai Tradition," *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 42, no. 1 (2025): 44–53, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v42i1.46282>, p. 48; Mahmudi Mahmudi dan Alvin Noor Sahab Rizal, "Reviving Values through Tradition: Integrating the Haul of KH. R. As'ad Syamsul Arifin into Character Education," *Mimbar Agama dan Budaya* 42, no. 1 (2025): 14–24, <https://doi.org/10.15408/mimbar.v42i1.45982>, 22.

<sup>49</sup> Ismail F. Alatas, "The Upsurge of Memory In The Case of Haul: A Problem of Islamic Historiography in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 1, no. 2 (December 1, 2007): 267, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2007.1.2.267-279>, p. 270-276; Rabith Jihan Amaruli et al., "Preserving Memory, Campaigning Nationalism: The Haul of Habib Hasan bin Thaha and the Remaking of the Hadhrami-Arab Identity in Indonesia," *Cogent Social Sciences* 8, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2125145>, p. 30.

idolatry.<sup>50</sup> Against this polemical backdrop, Habib Salim bin Jindan approached *haul* through a jurisprudential frame that criticizes abuses while preserving what he saw as the practice's legitimate religious functions.

In *al-Ibānah*, Habib Salim wrote,

..."وَمِنْ أَضَرَ الْبَدْعَ مَا يَكُونُ إِتْلَافًا لِلْمَالِ... كَإِيقَادِ الشَّمْوَعِ عَلَى  
قُبُورِ الْأُولَيَاءِ... أَوِ الْإِحْتِفَالُ عَلَيْهِ كُلَّ عَامٍ مَا يَسْمُونَهُ  
بِالْحَوْلِ..."<sup>51</sup>

“Among the most harmful innovations is wasting wealth, such as lighting candles at the graves of saints, building domes, and commemorating them annually in what is called *haul*.”

This passage anchors his first claim: what makes *haul* most blameworthy is not commemoration itself, but extravagant display and the diversion of resources into acts he regarded as lacking clear legal warrant. In *Wa Kadhalika Yashhad*, he extends the critique from economy to theology, warning that in contemporary practice *haul* can be misconstrued as petitioning the dead, thus blurring the boundary between honoring the pious and directing devotion to God alone.

Although Habib Salim did not cite his source, the argumentative pattern closely mirrors Rashīd Riḍā's cautions in

<sup>50</sup> George Quinn, “Where History Meets Pilgrimage: The Graves of Sheikh Yusuf Al-Maqassari and Prince Dipanagara in Madura,” *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 3, no. 2 (2009): 249–266, <https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2009.3.2.249-266>, 153; Verena Meyer, “Grave Matters: Ambiguity, Modernism, and the Quest for Moderate Islam in Indonesia,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 92, no. 1 (2024): 160–179, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfae061, p. 166>; Verena Meyer, “Learning at Graves: The Living, the Dead, and Questions of Belonging in Islamic Java,” *History and Anthropology* (advance article, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2025.2452450, p. 56>; Nelly van Doorn Harder and Kees de Jong, “The Pilgrimage to Tembayat: Tradition and Revival in Indonesian Islam,” *The Muslim World* 91, no. 3–4 (2001): 325–354. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-1913.2001.tb03720>, 330.

<sup>51</sup> Salim, *Al-Ibānah Fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*, 56.

*Al-Manār*. Three indicators support Riḍā’s influence: Habib Salim frequently cited him when critiquing ritual customs; he described *Al-Manār* as a primary reference in the introduction of *al-Ibānah*; and his rationale for caution echoes Riḍā’s worry about practices that come to resemble quasi-idolatrous conduct (framed through the example of the Sāmīriyah). The point, however, is not wholesale adoption: Habib Salim uses this reformist-inflected caution to draw theological boundaries while still leaving room for regulated commemoration.

His second claim is historical: *haul* was unknown to the Prophet, the Companions, and the early generations, and only crystallized in later centuries (he associates its institutionalization with al-Ḥāfiẓ Ahmād bin Muḥammad al-Na‘ālī al-Baghdādī). Yet he did not treat historical lateness as sufficient for blanket condemnation. For Habib Salim, legal evaluation depends on intent and content. *Haul* remains permissible when its aims are limited to honoring scholars and strengthening faith, and when it avoids superstition, excess, and any practice implying reliance on the dead.

To specify the acceptable form, Habib Salim pointed to *haul* gatherings that emphasize Qur’ān recitation, *dhikr*, supplication, and religious instruction. He wrote,

"فهو حسن محمود لا شيء فيه من المنهيات... واغتنام  
الفرص للعلماء أن يجمعوا العامة و يذكروهم لعلهم  
يهدون..."<sup>52</sup>

"Such *haul* rituals are good and praiseworthy, without any legal prohibition; indeed, they offer opportunities for scholars to admonish communities and disseminate religious values."

Accordingly, his prohibitions target specific acts he deemed polytheistic or misleading—such as rubbing tombs, kissing gravestones, and requesting favors from the deceased—rather than the commemorative gathering as such.

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<sup>52</sup> Salim, *Al-Ibānah Fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*, 63.

This conditional permissibility differentiates Habib Salim from modernist rigor. Where Surkati reduced grave-related practice to minimal supplication and reminders of death, Habib Salim accepted later communal forms of *haul* insofar as they could be disciplined toward lawful ends and stripped of excess and illicit gestures.<sup>53</sup> Taken together, his argument positions him between strict rejection and unconditional acceptance: *haul* may be an innovation historically, but it is not automatically deviant. It is permissible when functioning as instruction, remembrance of death, and a social medium reinforcing faith, provided it avoids extravagance and any gesture that shifts devotion from God to the dead.

### 3. Critique of the *Raghā'ib* and 'Āshūrā' Prayers

A recurrent target of early 20<sup>th</sup> century *bid'ah* criticism was the emergence of devotional prayers whose legitimacy could not be traced to reliable Qur'anic or *ḥadīth* foundations. Across ideological lines, both modernist critics and jurisprudentially oriented traditionalists shared a baseline legal concern: ritual acts framed as *ibādah* require sound textual evidence, and practices lacking such grounding are treated as impermissible innovations. From the modernist camp, Ahmad Surkati in *al-Masā'il al-Thalāth* presented this position in categorical terms, arguing that any devotional practice without scriptural support constitutes misguided innovation, including controversial prayers such as *ṣalāt Raghā'ib* and *ṣalāt 'Āshūrā'*.

Within traditionalist milieus, however, the same legal concern could coexist with selective permissiveness at the regional level. KH Abdul Hamid of Pamekasan (Madura), for example, recommended *ṣalāt 'Āshūrā'* in his *Tarjumān*, prescribing four cycles with eleven recitations of *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* per unit and omitting an initial *tashahhud*. Such endorsements did not necessarily resolve questions of textual legitimacy; instead, they functioned as mechanisms of transmission that helped

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<sup>53</sup> Mansoer, *Risalah Tahuid Dan Sjirik*. 1970; Surkati, *Al-Masā'il al-Thalāth*. n.d., p. 26; A Hasan, *Kitab Al-Tauhied* (Pasuruan: Al Muslimun, 2021), 54.

embed the rite in local devotional repertoires despite its contested normative basis.<sup>54</sup>

Habib Salim bin Jindan represents a stricter jurisprudential response that rejects these prayers precisely because they are framed as worship without valid proof. In *al-Ibānah*, he classifies ṣalāt Raghā'ib and ṣalāt 'Āshūrā' as devotional innovations wholly lacking scriptural foundation. He wrote,

"إِنَّمَا إِحْدَاثُ أَمْرٍ فِي الدِّينِ غَيْرِ مَشْرُوعٍ مِّنْ أَصْلِهِ كَصَلَاةٍ  
الرَّغَائِبِ فِي رَجَبٍ وَصَلَاةٍ لِلَّيْلَةِ عَاشُورَاءِ..."<sup>55</sup>

"There are religious practices that possess no grounding whatsoever in the law, such as the *Raghā'ib* prayer in Rajab and the prayer performed on the eve of 'Āshūrā'," emphasizing their status as illegitimate devotional innovations.

For Habib Salim, these two prayers exemplify a wider pattern: popular worship expanding through unsanctioned forms and sustained by misunderstanding of what counts as normative *'ibādah*. He notes their recognizable performance patterns, with *Raghā'ib* commonly performed in twelve cycles between Maghrib and 'Ishā' on the first night of Rajab, and 'Āshūrā' performed in four or more cycles at dusk on the ninth of Muḥarram, yet he treats their popularity as evidence of diffusion rather than legitimacy.

To strengthen this critique within a traditionalist legal register, Habib Salim's stance can be read alongside authorities widely cited in the region. Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn al-Malībarī, for instance, lists *Raghā'ib*, 'Āshūrā', the one-hundred-cycle mid-Sha'bān prayer, the ten-cycle prayer on the final Friday of Ramaḍān, and ṣalāt *usbū'* as rituals without legal foundation, arguing that the *ḥadīths* used to justify them are *mawḍū'* (fabricated) and therefore doctrinally unusable.<sup>56</sup> A parallel conclusion

<sup>54</sup> Abdul Hamid, *Tarjumān* (Pamekasan: Al-Itsbatiyah Pesantren Banyuanyar, 1980), 86.

<sup>55</sup> Salim, *Al-Ibānah Fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah*, . 50.

<sup>56</sup> Malībarī, *Irshād Al-'Ibād Ilā Sabīl al-Rashād* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2014), . 40.

appears in KH Hasyim Asy'ari's ruling on the Rebo Wekasan prayer: he rejects it for lacking verifiable sources and equates its status with *Raghā'ib*, '*Āshūrā'*, and mid-*Sha'bān* prayers, attributing their circulation to non-authoritative works such as al-Dayrabī's *Mujarrabāt* and al-Ṣafūrī's *Nuzhah al-Majālis*.<sup>57</sup>

Seen together, critiques of *Raghā'ib* and '*Āshūrā*' thus converge from two directions while operating with different argumentative emphases. Modernists such as Surkati foreground a reformist demand for scriptural precedent and a general suspicion of ritual innovation, whereas jurisprudential traditionalists such as Habib Salim and Hasyim Asy'ari reject specific practices on the narrower ground of absent or invalid legal proof. The persistence of endorsements like KH Abdul Hamid's, however, shows that "traditionalism" did not yield a single outcome: it could generate strict legal rejection, selective accommodation, or pragmatic maintenance of locally valued devotions. This diversity helps explain why Habib Salim insists that devotional acts without valid foundations remain *bid'ah* even when justified as honoring sacred times, an insistence that clarifies his commitment to legal-Doctrinal discipline within a landscape of evolving popular piety.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that *al-Ibānah fī Tārīkh al-Sunnah* constructs a systematic concept of *bid'ah* through definition, classification, and case-based illustration. Across debated practices, including bodily movement in *dhikr*, *ḥaul* commemoration, and innovative prayers such as *Raghā'ib* and '*Āshūrā*', the manuscript highlights the role of *mawdū' ḥadīth* in evaluative judgment and clarifies the boundaries between unauthorized ritual additions and practices that lack any religious basis. These findings position *al-Ibānah* as a Hadrami-authored articulation of Sunni normativity within a transregional intellectual setting, not merely a reaction to local Indonesian ritual disputes. Furthermore, these findings are highly relevant to

<sup>57</sup> PWNU Jawa Timur, *NU Menjawab Problematika Umat*, vol. 1 (Surabaya: PW LBM NU Jatim, 2015), 13-15.

the study of the Hadrami diaspora and to global Islamic discourse.

Theoretically, the article refines approaches to *bid'ah* beyond a conventional traditionalist-modernist dichotomy by conceptualizing critique as a negotiated field shaped by genealogical, textual, and institutional authorities. It also proposes a transferable typology of religious critique consisting of destructive critical, accommodative, accommodative critical, and accommodative critical independent approaches as an analytical tool for comparing modes of scholarly engagement with ritual practice across Muslim societies.

Empirically, the study provides the first sustained textual and contextual analysis of Habib Salim bin Jindan's *al-Ibānah*, situating the manuscript within early 20<sup>th</sup> century socio-religious contestations and mapping its intertextual engagements with reformist and local scholarly writings. It demonstrates how authority was produced through argumentation and manuscript circulation, expanding the empirical corpus of Nusantara Islamic manuscripts and clarifying the intellectual role of Hadrami scholars in Indonesia.

The implications extend beyond Indonesia: *al-Ibānah* illustrates how diasporic scholars negotiated Sunni norms across regions and how Southeast Asian materials can revise broader historiographies of Sunni discourse, ritual legitimacy, and reform.

The findings support cultural-policy priorities to preserve, catalogue, and digitally curate under-studied Arabic manuscripts as part of Indonesia's intellectual heritage, especially works that document internal Muslim debates with careful legal reasoning. For programs on religious moderation, *al-Ibānah* offers a model of disciplined critique that distinguishes levels of legitimacy rather than collapsing disagreement into blanket condemnation, which can inform educational and public-literacy initiatives on diversity within Sunni legal-ritual traditions.

Future research should examine *al-Ibānah*'s concept of *sunnah*, compare it with Habib Salim's other manuscripts, and trace transmission, readership, and reception in Hadrami and Indonesian communities, including comparisons with contempo-

rary digital *bid'ah* debates to map changing configurations of authority.

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### **Informan:**

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