



The Dynamics of Islamic Law Epistemology: The Transformation of the Ijtihad Method from the Classical to the Contemporary Era

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Abstract

This research departs from the dynamics of the development of Islamic legal thought which shows that the ijihad method continues to change along with the social and intellectual development of Muslims. Since the early days of Islam, law has been understood not only as a textual norm, but also as the result of a reasoning process aimed at safeguarding human welfare. Therefore, understanding the epistemological history of Islamic law is important to see how the ijihad method developed from the classical to the contemporary era in responding to the challenges of the times. This research aims to analyze the epistemological transformation of Islamic law and examine the development of the ijihad method from the classical period, the middle period, to the modern era. This research uses a qualitative approach with *the library research method*. Data were obtained from classical books of ushul fiqh, works by Islamic legal thinkers, and contemporary academic literature that discusses the epistemology of Islamic law. The analysis was carried out through a historical and conceptual approach to trace the development of ijihad methodology and paradigm changes in Islamic legal thought. The results of the study show that in the classical period, the epistemological foundation of Islamic law was formed through the systematization of ushul fiqh formulated by scholars, especially Imam al-Shafi'i. In the middle period, the development of legal thought underwent a phase of consolidation of madhhab which was marked by the strengthening of *the practice of taqlid* and the emergence of debates regarding the closure of the door of ijihad. Meanwhile, in the modern era, various attempts have emerged to reconstruct the ijihad method through the maqashid al-shariah approach, legal contextualization, and the thoughts of figures such as Fazlur Rahman and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. This study concludes that the epistemology of Islamic law is dynamic and adaptive to the changing times. Therefore, the development of contemporary Islamic law needs to integrate textual approaches, maqashid al-shariah, and an understanding of social reality so that ijihad remains relevant in answering the problems of modern society.

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic law from the early days of Islam to the contemporary period shows that there is a dynamic of thought that never stops (Habib, Nasution, Sinaga, Raihansyah, & Aufa, 2025). Islamic law is not only understood as a set of static norms, but as a system of knowledge that continues to develop through the process of interpretation, understanding, and methodological development by scholars (Maswanto, 2019). The Qur'an as the main source of Islamic law affirms that revelation was revealed to be a guide for human life as a whole, as stated in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:185 that the Qur'an is a guide

for mankind as well as an explanation of these instructions and the distinction between right and wrong. This verse shows that Islamic law has a normative as well as an epistemological dimension, because the content of revelation requires a process of human understanding so that it can be applied in various contexts of life. Therefore, since the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, the practice of legal reasoning has become part of the Islamic scientific tradition that allows the law to develop along with the dynamics of society.

The legitimacy of the use of legal reasoning is reflected in the hadith about the sending of Mu'adz

bin Jabal to Yemen (Rachmadhani, 2025). When the Prophet PBUH asked the method that Mu'adz would use in deciding the case, he replied that he would refer to the Qur'an, then the Sunnah of the Prophet, and if no clear provision was found, then he would *ijtihad* with his own opinion. The Prophet then justified the method. This hadith is often used as a normative basis that *ijtihad* is an important instrument in the development of Islamic law when the text does not provide an explicit explanation. Thus, since the beginning of Islam, it has provided space for intellectual activities in understanding and formulating laws through the *ijtihad* process.

In its historical development, the dynamics of Islamic legal thought were increasingly visible in the classical period when scholars formulated a systematic methodology of legal reasoning. This process gave birth to the discipline of *ushul fiqh* which functions as an epistemological framework in understanding the sources of law. Figures like Imam al-Shafi'i through his work *Al-Risalah* emphasizing the importance of methodology in the process of establishing law by compiling a structure of legal sources that includes the Qur'an, Sunnah, *ijma'*, and *qiyas* (Umar & Bafadhal, 2025). Through this approach, Islamic law does not only rely on text, but also on rational and systematic methods of interpretation. This tradition then developed in various schools of jurisprudence with different methodological characters, but remained rooted in the same source of revelation. The diversity of approaches shows that Islamic legal thought has had a wide space for intellectual dialogue in responding to societal problems since its inception.

Understanding the epistemological history of Islamic law is important because the development of law cannot be separated from the framework of knowledge that underlies it. The epistemology of Islamic law is concerned with fundamental questions about how law is understood, how reasoning methods are used, and how the relationship between the text of revelation and social reality is positioned (Dermawan, Syahnan, Khair, & Tanjung, 2025). In this context, the Qur'an provides a strong impetus for the use of reason and intellectual reflection. This can be seen in QS.

An-Nahl [16]:44 which affirms that the Qur'an was revealed so that humans can explain and understand its contents. This verse provides a theological basis that the understanding of the law does not stop at the text, but requires a continuous process of interpretation. Thus, the development of Islamic law epistemology reflects the interaction between revelation, reason, and social reality that is constantly changing.

Along with the changing times, the *ijtihad* method also faces various new challenges that arise from the social and intellectual development of society. The transformation of social structure, the advancement of science, and the emergence of the modern political and economic system have given birth to problems that are not directly discussed in classical *fiqh* literature (Aulia, 2023). In these conditions, Islamic legal thinkers seek to develop a methodological approach that is able to bridge the normative principles of sharia with the needs of modern society. This effort is inseparable from the basic principle that Islamic sharia is revealed to realize the benefit of humans, as stated in QS. Al-Anbiya [21]:107 that the Prophet Muhammad was sent as a blessing for the whole world. This principle of *rahmah* then gave birth to the concept of *Maqasid al-Syari'ah* which emphasizes that the main purpose of the Shari'ah is to maintain the benefits and prevent damage in human life.

In the context of modernity, various new approaches in *ijtihad* began to be developed to answer the challenges of the times. Contemporary Muslim scholars emphasize the importance of the *Maqasid*, collective *ijtihad*, as well as integration between Islamic disciplines and modern social sciences (Rosidah, Thahir, & Hakim, 2025). This approach aims to expand the methodological scope in understanding Islamic law so that it is able to respond to increasingly complex social changes. These developments show that the *ijtihad* method is not final, but has undergone transformation along with the dynamics of people's thinking and needs. Therefore, the study of the epistemological dynamics of Islamic law is important to understand how the *ijtihad* method developed from the classical to the contemporary era, as well as to see how Islamic law maintains its

normative authority in the face of the challenges of modernity.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature research method (*Library Research*), which is research that focuses on collecting and analyzing data sourced from scientific literature relevant to the object of study (Adlini, Dinda, Yulinda, Chotimah, & Merliyana, 2022). The data used in this study came from primary and secondary sources in the form of classic books of ushul fiqh, works by Islamic law thinkers, scientific journal articles, and academic books that discuss the development of the *ijtihad* method and the epistemology of Islamic law.

The approach used is a historical and conceptual approach. The historical approach is used to trace the development of *ijtihad* methods from the classical period to the contemporary period by looking at the social, intellectual, and scientific contexts that influenced the birth of various methods of legal reasoning in the Islamic tradition. Meanwhile, a conceptual approach is used to analyze ideas, concepts, and epistemological frameworks that develop in Islamic legal thought, particularly those related to the methodology of *ijtihad* in the discipline of ushul fiqh.

The data analysis technique is carried out in a descriptive-analytical manner by studying, comparing, and interpreting various views of Islamic law scholars and thinkers related to the development of the *ijtihad* method. Through this method, this study seeks to systematically describe the dynamics of the epistemology of Islamic law and the transformation of the *ijtihad* method in response to the changing times.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Epistemology of Islamic Law in Classical Times

The epistemology of Islamic law in classical times was formed through an intellectual process that seeks to formulate a systematic method of understanding and interpreting the sources of law (Furqon & Baroroh, 2025). In this period, scholars not only focused on gathering the laws from the

Qur'an and the Sunnah, but also developed a methodological framework that explained how the laws could be derived from both sources in a rational and structured manner. The need for such a methodology arises along with the expansion of the Islamic territory and the increasingly complex social problems faced by Muslims. In this context, Islamic legal epistemology develops as a discipline that explains the sources of legal knowledge, reasoning methods, and legal determination mechanisms in Islam.

The formation of the discipline of ushul fiqh as the epistemological foundation of Islamic law is systematically often associated with the thought of Imam al-Shafi'i (Rohayana & Rohman, 2025). Through his monumental work *Al-Risalah*, Imam al-Shafi'i formulated a methodological framework that affirmed the hierarchy of legal sources and the principles of reasoning that must be used in the process of legal *istinbath*. He emphasized that the Qur'an is the main source of Islamic law that has absolute authority, as stated in QS. An-Nisa [4]:59 which commands the believers to obey Allah, the Messenger, and the authority bearers among them. This verse is understood by ushul fiqh scholars as a normative basis that every legal issue must first be returned to the Qur'an and Sunnah as the main authority in determining the law.

In the epistemological framework formulated by Imam al-Shafi'i, the Sunnah of the Prophet occupies an important position as an explanation and interpreter of the content of the Qur'an (Rohayana & Rohman, 2025). This is based on the words of Allah in the Qur'an. An-Nahl [16]:44 which states that the Qur'an was revealed so that the Prophet could explain to mankind what had been revealed to them. This verse shows that the Sunnah has an epistemological function as an interpretive authority that explains the meaning and implementation of the laws contained in the Qur'an. Therefore, in al-Shafi'i's methodology, the understanding of the Sunnah is an integral part of the process of establishing Islamic law.

In addition to formulating the position of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, Imam al-Shafi'i also provides a methodological basis for the use of *qiyas* as a method of legal reasoning. *Qiyas* is

understood as an effort to expand the law that has been established in the nash to new cases that have the same illat or legal reasons (Zainuddin, 2022). This method was born out of a practical need to answer a problem that was not explicitly explained in the text of revelation. The basis for the use of qiyas can be seen from the principles contained in QS. Al-Hashr [59]:2 which encourages people to take lessons and reason about an event. The scholars of ushul fiqh understand this verse as a legitimacy for the use of rational analogies in understanding the law. Thus, qiyas function as an epistemological mechanism that allows Islamic law to continue to develop without leaving the normative framework of revelation.

In addition to qiyas, the concept of ijma also played an important role in the epistemology of Islamic law in classical times. Ijma refers to the agreement of the mujtahid scholars at a time on a shari'i law (Zainuddin, 2022). This concept is based on the belief that Muslims will not agree in error, as reflected in the hadith of the Prophet who states that his people will not agree in error. From the perspective of legal epistemology, ijma functions as a collective mechanism that gives legitimacy to a legal provision (Wahyudi & Solehudin, 2025). The presence of ijma also shows that the process of forming Islamic law is not only individual, but also involves the scientific authority of the scholarly community as the guardian of the continuity of the legal tradition.

In addition to the qiyas and ijma methods, some scholars have developed the istihsan approach as a method of legal reasoning that considers the benefits and justice in determining the law. Istihsan is generally understood as leaving the result of a rigid analogy towards a choice of law that is considered stronger based on considerations of maslahat or more relevant postulates (Pane, Syahnan, & Adly, 2025). This approach was widely developed in the Hanafi school in response to the practical needs of society that sometimes cannot be fully resolved through formal analogies. Although Imam al-Shafi'i is known to be critical of the use of istihsan because it is feared that it opens up the space for subjectivity in the determination of law, this

debate actually shows the epistemological dynamics that have developed among classical scholars in formulating the most appropriate legal methodology (Pane et al., 2025).

The development of these methods shows that the epistemology of Islamic law in classical times was not monolithic, but was formed through intense intellectual dialogue among scholars (Tanuri, 2024). The diversity of methodological approaches ultimately enriched the tradition of ushul fiqh and became the foundation for the development of Islamic law in the later periods. With a systematic methodological framework, scholars are able to relate the text of revelation to social reality in a more rational and structured way, so that Islamic law can continue to develop without losing its theological legitimacy.

B. The Development of Islamic Legal Thought in the Middle Period

The middle period in the history of Islamic legal thought is often associated with the consolidation phase of the schools of jurisprudence that had been formed in the classical period. In this phase, intellectual activity in the field of law is no longer dominated by the formation of new methodologies as occurred in the early period, but rather focuses on strengthening the authority of the school and reproducing the opinions of previous scholars. This condition gives birth to a strong tendency towards the practice of taqlid, which is to follow the opinions of certain scholars or schools without conducting independent legal reasoning. This phenomenon arises in line with the increasing respect for the scientific authority of the imams of the sect who are considered to have reached a very high level of scholarship in understanding the sources of the Shari'a (Habib et al., 2025).

The tendency towards taqlid cannot be separated from the social and intellectual context of Muslims at that time. After the formation of major schools of fiqh such as Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali, the scholars played more roles as interpreters and developers of the opinions of their respective sects. The books of fiqh produced in this period mostly contain syarah, hasyiyah, and commentaries on the works of previous scholars

(Suswita, 2025). Thus, legal authority is practically centered on the traditions of the school. Although this approach provides stability in legal practice, in the long run it also gives rise to the tendency of intellectual conservatism that limits the space for creativity in the *ijtihad* process.

In fact, normatively Islam provides a strong encouragement for the use of reason and reasoning in understanding the law. The Qur'an repeatedly encourages people to think and reflect on God's signs in life. One of the verses that is often used as an epistemological foundation is QS. Az-Zumar [39]:9 which states that those who have knowledge are not the same as those who do not have knowledge. This verse shows that the search for knowledge and deep understanding is an important part of the Islamic intellectual tradition. In addition, in QS. Al-Hashr [59]:2 there is also a command to take lessons and make rational reflections on the events that occurred. These principles implicitly affirm that the activity of legal reasoning is an integral part of the dynamics of Islamic thought.

It is in this context that the idea known as "*closing the door of ijtihad*". This term refers to the view of some scholars that in a certain period there are no longer mujtahids who have the same scientific capacity as the imams of the madhhab, so Muslims are considered to be sufficient to follow the opinions that have been formulated previously. Although there is no formal consensus that actually establishes the institutional closure of *ijtihad*, the idea developed in scientific practice and influenced the orientation of legal thought in the medieval period. As a result, methodological creativity in *ushul fiqh* has slowed down, and intellectual activity is more focused on the internal elaboration of the madhhab (Zulhendra, 2023).

However, the idea of closing the door of *ijtihad* did not go unnoticed by critics. A number of scholars reject this view, asserting that *ijtihad* is a necessity that cannot be abolished in the development of Islamic law. Ibn Taymiyyah, for example, argued that the ability of *ijtihad* is not limited to a certain generation, but can appear at any time as long as there are scholars who have adequate scientific competence (Muthalib, 2019). According to him, limiting *ijtihad* only to the early

generation has the potential to hinder the ability of Islamic law to respond to social changes. A similar view was also put forward by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah who emphasized that Islamic law basically aims to realize justice, benefit, and wisdom for human beings (Ridlo & Muhajirin, 2022). Therefore, the method of determining the law must always be open to *ijtihad* efforts that are able to maintain the goals of the sharia.

The criticism of the stagnation of legal thought is also based on the principle *Maqasid al-Syari'ah* which emphasizes that the Shari'ah was revealed to realize the benefits of human beings (Umar, Bafadhal, & Putri, 2025). This principle has a strong basis in the Qur'an, one of which is in QS. Al-Anbiya [21]:107 states that the Prophet Muhammad was sent as a blessing for the whole world. The scholars understand this verse as an indication that Islamic sharia has a universal welfare orientation. Thus, Islamic law cannot be understood rigidly without considering the dynamics of human life. If *ijtihad* is stopped, then the ability of Islamic law to maintain the benefit of the community has the potential to stagnate.

The debate on *taqlid* and *ijtihad* in the middle period shows that the development of Islamic legal thought did not completely stagnate, but was in a phase of consolidation as well as critical reflection on the methodology that had been inherited by classical scholars. Although the dominance of the madhhab strengthened the stability of the law, criticism of the practice of *taqlid* also opened up space for the emergence of a movement for the renewal of legal thought in the following period. This dynamic is an important point in the history of Islamic law epistemology, because from this debate was born the realization that *ijtihad* is still needed so that Islamic law is able to respond to social and intellectual changes that continue to develop.

C. Reconstruction of the *Ijtihad* Method in the Modern Era

The development of modern society, characterized by the advancement of science, globalization, and the complexity of social relations, poses new challenges for Islamic law. Many contemporary issues such as the modern

financial system, bioethics, human rights, and state governance are not explicitly found in classical fiqh literature (Gofar, Amina, & Fajrin, 2025). This condition encourages modern Muslim thinkers to reconstruct the ijihad method so that Islamic law is still able to answer the needs of society without giving up its normative foundation. The reconstruction basically departs from the realization that the sharia not only contains textual rules, but also contains fundamental goals that must be realized in human life.

One of the approaches that stands out in the reconstruction of the ijihad methodology is the *Maqasid al-Syari'ah*. This approach emphasizes that the establishment of law must take into account the main objectives of sharia that are oriented towards the benefit of humanity. Concept *Maqasid* It has actually been formulated by classical scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Al-Syatibi, but in the modern era this approach has gained wider attention as a methodological framework to answer contemporary problems (Rock, 2025). Basic principles *Maqasid* can be traced in various verses of the Qur'an which affirm that the Shari'ah was revealed to bring convenience and goodness to humans. In QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:185 for example affirms that Allah wants ease for man and does not want difficulties. Similarly in QS. Al-Maidah [5]:6 states that Allah does not intend to make people difficult, but to purify and perfect His favor. These verses show that Islamic law has a beneficial orientation that is the basis for the development of a more contextual method of ijihad.

The *maqasid* approach then developed into an analytical framework that not only looked at the text literally, but also considered the moral and social goals contained in it. With this approach, the ijihad process does not stop at the search for textual evidence, but also at the effort to understand the wisdom and purpose behind a legal provision. This is in line with the general principle in the Qur'an which affirms that the Prophet Muhammad was sent as a blessing for the whole world as mentioned in the Qur'an. Al-Anbiya [21]:107. The principle of rahmah is the basis that Islamic law must provide benefits and protection for human life. Therefore, *the maqasid* approach is an important instrument in

formulating laws that are relevant to the needs of modern society without ignoring the basic values of sharia.

In addition to the *Maqasid*, the reconstruction of ijihad in the modern era is also marked by efforts to contextualize Islamic law (Priyatna, Nurjanah, Hermanto, & Zulaikha, 2025). This contextualization aims to understand sharia texts in relation to the social, historical, and cultural conditions of society. This approach departs from the awareness that revelation is revealed in a certain social context, so understanding the background of the descent of verses and hadith is important in the process of interpreting the law. The Qur'an itself gives a hint about the importance of understanding the message of revelation reflectively, as stated in QS. Shad [38]:29 that the Qur'an is a book full of blessings for people to reflect on its verses and learn from them. This verse shows that understanding revelation is not mechanical, but it requires a process of deep intellectual reflection.

Within the framework of this contextualization, a number of modern Muslim thinkers have made important contributions in formulating a new approach to ijihad. One of the influential figures was Fazlur Rahman who developed the concept *Double Movement Theory*. According to Rahman, the process of interpreting Islamic law must go through two main steps, namely understanding the meaning of the text in the historical context when revelation was revealed, and then drawing the universal moral principles of the text to be applied to the conditions of modern society. This approach aims to maintain a balance between fidelity to the text of revelation and the need to respond to changing social realities (Syauqi, 2022). Thus, Islamic law is not understood literally, but as an ethical system that has a moral purpose that can be applied dynamically in various contexts.

In addition to Fazlur Rahman, another contemporary thinker who played a role in the development of the ijihad method was Yusuf al-Qaradawi. He emphasized the importance of the approach of fiqh al-waqi' (understanding of reality) and fiqh al-*Maqasid* in the process of establishing the law (Hidayat, 2024). According to al-Qaradawi, a mujtahid is not enough to understand the texts

of the sharia, but also to understand the social conditions of the society that are the object of the application of the law (Hidayat, 2024). This approach is based on the principle that the sharia is revealed to regulate human life in real terms, so that the determination of the law must take into account the changing times and the needs of society. In many of his thoughts, al-Qaradawi emphasized that collective *ijtihad* through fatwa institutions and *fiqh* academies is one of the important mechanisms in formulating Islamic law that is responsive to global problems.

The reconstruction of the *ijtihad* method in the modern era ultimately shows that Islamic law has adaptive ability to deal with the changing times. Approach *Maqasid*, the contextualization of law, as well as the thinking of modern Muslim scholars show an attempt to integrate the classical intellectual tradition with the challenges of contemporary society (Firdaus & Achmad, 2024). Through this approach, *ijtihad* is not only understood as an individual activity in interpreting texts, but also as an intellectual process oriented towards achieving benefits and justice in human life. Thus, this methodological transformation is an important part of the epistemological dynamics of Islamic law in maintaining the relevance of sharia in the midst of the development of the modern world.

D. Epistemological Implications for the Development of Contemporary Islamic Law

The development of Islamic law epistemology from classical to modern times has important consequences for the way Islamic law is developed and applied in the context of contemporary society. Legal epistemology is not only concerned with the source of law, but also concerns the method of reasoning, the framework of interpretation, and how to relate the text of revelation to the ever-changing social reality (Anam & Susantin, 2025). Therefore, the transformation of the *ijtihad* method that has occurred throughout the history of Islamic thought has methodological implications for efforts to formulate Islamic law that remains rooted in the principles of sharia as well as responsive to the dynamics of the times.

One of the most fundamental epistemological implications is the strengthening of the paradigm that Islamic law must be understood integratively between normative texts and sharia goals (Scott, 2025). In this perspective, the text of the Qur'an and the Sunnah is understood not only as a literal source of law, but also as a source of ethical values and principles that have the purpose of benefiting humans. This principle has a strong basis in the Qur'an, one of which is in QS. An-Nahl [16]:90 which affirms that Allah commands justice, virtue, and giving to others and forbids heinous acts and enmity. This verse is often understood by scholars as a universal principle that becomes the moral foundation for all legal provisions in Islam. Thus, the development of Islamic law in the contemporary era must be able to maintain the orientation of justice and welfare as the main goal of sharia.

Another epistemological implication is related to the need for a multidisciplinary approach in the *ijtihad* process. The complexity of modern problems demands an understanding that comes not only from classical Islamic sciences, but also from various other disciplines such as economics, politics, sociology, and health sciences. Such integration is necessary so that the process of establishing the law is not separated from the social reality that is the context of its application (Auliya & Kurjum, 2025). This principle is in line with the encouragement of the Qur'an which encourages humans to use reason and make observations of the reality of life. In QS. Al-'Alaq [96]:1-5 For example, the first revelation revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) commanded humans to read and study as a basis for the development of knowledge. This verse provides epistemological legitimacy that the search for knowledge is an important part of the effort to understand and implement Islamic teachings in life.

In addition, the development of the epistemology of Islamic law also has implications for the importance of collective *ijtihad* in answering contemporary problems. In contrast to the classical period when *ijtihad* was more carried out individually by great scholars, in the modern era the complexity of legal issues often requires

cooperation between various experts from different fields (Rahmatullah, 2025). Therefore, international fatwa institutions and jurisprudence academies began to develop a collective ijihad model as a mechanism to formulate more comprehensive and accountable laws. This approach is also in line with the principle of deliberation in Islam as mentioned in the Qur'an. Ash-Shura [42]:38 which describes that the affairs of the ummah are resolved through a process of consultation and mutual consideration. In the context of legal epistemology, deliberation is an important mechanism to bring together various scientific perspectives in the law-making process.

Another equally important implication is the need to reaffirm the role *Maqasid al-Syari'ah* as a methodological framework in the development of contemporary Islamic law. Approach *Maqasid* allows Islamic law to focus not only on the formal form of legal provisions, but also on the moral and social goals that the sharia seeks to realize (Fikri, Rizki, & Ramadhan, 2026). With this approach, Islamic law can be more flexible in dealing with new problems without losing its normative orientation. This principle has a theological foundation in various verses of the Qur'an that affirm that Allah does not want difficulties for humans, as mentioned in the Qur'an. Al-Hajj [22]:78 which affirms that Allah does not make narrowness in religion. This verse shows that flexibility in the application of law is part of the basic character of Islamic law.

In the end, the epistemological implications of the development of Islamic legal thought show that the sharia has the ability to adapt to the changing times without losing its normative essence. The integration between the text of revelation, the purpose of the sharia, and the understanding of social reality is the key in formulating Islamic law that is relevant to the needs of modern society. With a more open and reflective epistemological approach, Islamic law can continue to evolve as a legal system that is not only rooted in classical intellectual traditions, but is also able to respond to the global challenges facing Muslims in the contemporary era.

IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

The epistemological dynamics of Islamic law show that the development of the ijihad method is the result of the interaction between the source of revelation, the intellectual traditions of scholars, and the social changes faced by Muslims in various historical periods. In the classical period, scholars succeeded in building a methodological foundation through the discipline of ushul fiqh which provides a systematic framework in understanding and deriving the laws of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This methodological structure is the main foundation for the formation of Islamic legal authority as well as opening up space for the use of reason through reasoning mechanisms such as qiyas, ijma, and various other istinbath methods.

In the middle period, the development of Islamic legal thought experienced a phase of consolidation of the school which was marked by the strengthening of the practice of taqlid. Although this condition provides stability in legal practice, it also raises criticism of the idea of closing the door of ijihad, which is considered to limit intellectual dynamics in Islamic law. This criticism then became one of the factors that prompted the emergence of methodological reform efforts in Islamic legal thought in the next period.

Entering the modern era, social transformation and the development of science require the reconstruction of the ijihad method so that Islamic law remains able to answer contemporary problems. The approach of maqashid al-shariah, the contextualization of the understanding of the text, and the thinking of modern Muslim scholars show that ijihad continues to develop as an adaptive mechanism in maintaining the relevance of Islamic law. Thus, the epistemology of Islamic law is not static, but continues to develop through a process of intellectual reflection that connects the normative principles of sharia with the ever-changing reality of life.

B. Suggestion

The development of contemporary Islamic law needs to continue to encourage the strengthening of an integrative ijihad methodology by

combining textual approaches, maqashid al-shariah, and an understanding of social reality. Academic studies in the field of ushul fiqh also need to be developed in a more interdisciplinary manner in order to be able to respond to modern problems that are increasingly complex. In addition, scientific institutions and fatwas need to strengthen collective ijihad mechanisms involving various fields of expertise so that the process of determining laws becomes more comprehensive, contextual, and relevant to the lives of Muslims in the global era.

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