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Reconstructing Scholarly Authority through Islamic Education: Ibn Jamā'ah's Concept of the Ideal Muslim Teacher in the Modern Era

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Abstract : This study addresses the contemporary shift where public perception often prioritizes popularity over moral and intellectual integrity, thereby leading to a misconception of scholarly authority. The purpose of this study is to analyze the concept of the ideal Muslim Teacher *(ulama)* according to Ibn Jamā'ah in his book *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-'Ālim wa al-Muta'allim* (published by Dār al-Baṣā'ir al-Islāmiyyah, Beirut, 3rd edition, 2012 CE/1433 AH) and to contextualize it within the modern world. This study adopts a qualitative approach utilizing a library research method focused on textual analysis. The primary data source is derived from the work of Ibn Jamā'ah, supplemented by various relevant secondary literature. Data collection was carried out through documentation, while data analysis employed descriptive analytical methods. According to the research findings, an *ulama*'s ideal personality integrates intellectual, spiritual, and moral aspects, such as fear of Allah *(khashyah)*, upholding the dignity of knowledge, exemplifying asceticism *(zuhd)*, upholding integrity, and exhibiting dedication to the advancement of knowledge. These principles are still very important while dealing with the problems of modernity. As a result, this idea provides a crucial normative basis for rebuilding *ulama*'s academic and moral authority in the modern period.

Keywords : personality of *ulama*, ideal muslim teacher, Ibn Jama'ah, Contemporary Era

Abstrak **:** *Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh bergesernya makna ulama di era kontemporer yang lebih menekankan popularitas dibandingkan dengan kedalaman ilmu dan integritas moral, sehingga melemahkan otoritas keilmuan mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep kepribadian ulama ideal menurut Ibnu Jama'ah dalam kitab Tazkiratu al-Sami' wal Mutakallim fi Adab al-'Alim wal Muta'allim terbitan Dar al-Basa'ir al-Islamiyyah, Beirut, cetakan ke-3 tahun 2012 M/1433 H serta mengontekstualisasikannya dalam kehidupan keagamaan masyarakat modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (library research) dengan objek kajian berupa teks. Sumber data terdiri dari kitab karya Ibnu Jamaah sebagai data primer dan berbagai literatur relevan sebagai data sekunder. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui studi dokumentasi, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan metode deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepribadian ulama ideal mencakup kesatuan dimensi keilmuan, spiritual, dan moral, seperti sikap takut kepada Allah, menjaga kemuliaan ilmu, bersikap zuhud, berintegritas, serta*

berkomitmen dalam mengembangkan ilmu. Nilai-nilai tersebut tetap relevan dalam menghadapi tantangan modernitas. Oleh karena itu, konsep ini penting sebagai landasan normatif dalam membangun kembali otoritas keilmuan dan moral ulama di era kontemporer.

Kata kunci *: Kepribadian Ulama, Ulama Ideal, Ibnu Jamaah, Era Kontemporer*

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INTRODUCTION

As the prophets' heirs *(waratsat al-anbiyā')*, scholars *(ulama)* have a crucial role in the Islamic intellectual heritage, charged with preserving, clarifying, and promoting Islamic doctrines. They carry out the fundamental duties that the prophets formerly performed in this manner (Assiroji, 2020). *Ulama*'s responsibilities include social duty in leading the community, moral purity, and spiritual role-modeling, in addition to mastery of religious knowledge. As a result, the term "*ulama*" in traditional Islamic tradition refers to a person of noble character, piety, and a strong dedication to Islamic principles rather than just someone with a deep comprehension of religion. Nonetheless, the meaning of the term "*ulama*" has changed in the context of modern culture. In popular culture, the label of *ulama* is often informally assigned to those who possess popularity, rhetorical abilities, or substantial influence in the public realm, even if they lack the depth of knowledge, moral integrity, or personality reflecting the traditional character of *ulama*. The main criterion for this kind of attribution is social media renown or compelling public speaking, which turns them from intellectual and moral leaders into just well-liked public celebrities.

This condition has the potential to create epistemological and moral problems in the religious life of society, as distorted religious authority makes it difficult for the public to distinguish between genuine *ulama*' and figures known solely through rhetoric, ultimately weakening Islamic scholarly authority and diminishing standards of moral leadership. In classical Islamic scholarship, figures paid serious attention to the development of an *ulama*''s personality, as exemplified in *Tadzkirah al-Sāmiʿ wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-ʿĀlim wa al-Mutaʿallim* by Ibn Jamāʿah. This text serves as a classical reference in the Islamic educational tradition, systematically outlining the etiquette, ethics, and personality traits required of *ulama*' and students of knowledge, positioning spiritual, moral, and social dimensions as integral elements alongside mastery of knowledge.

Ibn Jamāʿah's idea of an *ulama*'s personality has to be reexamined in contemporary culture, especially in light of the changing definition of *ulama*. In order to reevaluate the ideal norms of an *ulama*'s personality in the Islamic tradition, Ibn Jamāʿah's philosophy provides a normative approach. It is believed that a more precise conceptual framework addressing the qualities of an ideal *ulama* may be formed by examining this idea and placing it within the context of modern society.

Based on this context and research gap, the study's research questions are as follows: how is the idea of the ideal *ulama*'s personality presented in Ibn Jamāʿah's book Tadzkirah al-Sāmiʿ wa al-Mutakallim; what personality values an *ulama*' must possess according to his thought; and how can this concept be contextualized within the reality of religious life in

contemporary society? Therefore, the goal of this research is to examine the notion of the ideal *ulama*'s personality in Ibn Jamā'ah's writings, determine the necessary academic ethics and personality values, and place these ideas in the context of the dynamics of modern religious life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term '*ulamā*' (plural of '*ālim*, meaning "learned person") is mentioned twice in the Qur'an(M. Quraish Shihab, 1995). The term '*ulamā*' appears twice in the Qur'an: first in Surah Fatir, and second in Surah Ash-Shu'ara [26:197]. Regarding the latter verse, Imam al-Qurtubi clarifies that '*ulamā*' refers to the scholars among the Children of Israel—both Jewish and Christian—who possessed profound knowledge of their respective scriptures, the Torah and the Gospel (al-Qurṭubī, 1964) In Islamic jurisprudence and pedagogy, '*ulamā*' represents individuals possessing holistic religious knowledge (Wahidin, 2014). This encompasses both textual authority over the Qur'an and Sunnah, as defined by Shaykh Bin Baz, and a broader understanding of cosmic laws alongside revealed texts (M. Quraish Shihab, 1995).

The position of scholars ('ulamā') in society is very prominent and high (Nourouzzaman Shiddiqi, 1996). During the era of the Companions, scholar-Companions or 'ulamā' were greatly needed to establish laws, particularly to govern a pluralistic society and foster social order to avoid friction among people who entered Islam from various religious origins. The populace in Persia was previously Zoroastrian, whereas those in former Byzantine territories were Christian. Due to the necessity of law regarding statecraft and social relations, legal deliberation became a critical topic. Scholar-Companions concentrated on addressing these legal matters, guided by the Qur'an and Hadith. Mastery of these sources was crucial, as scholars had to understand not merely the literal text, but also the implied meanings and intended legal objectives behind them.

If legal solutions were absent from both the Qur'an and Hadith, scholars deliberated collectively within the *Ahl al-Ḥall wa-l-ʿAqd* assembly led by the Caliph to formulate consensus, or *ijmāʿ* (Nourouzzaman Shiddiqi, 1996). Consequently, *ijmāʿ* emerged as a major source of Islamic jurisprudence alongside the Qur'an, Hadith, and individual *ijtihād* of the Companions. In contrast, the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties separated statecraft from religious authority, reducing the role of scholars to legitimizing monarchical rule and managing courts, though '*ulamā*' maintained grassroots influence through judicial reasoning (*mujtahid*) and *waqf* endowments (Habibullah, 2025). As caliphs permitted individual *fatwās*, rulers could shop for favorable legal opinions if a scholar's ruling dissatisfied them. Therefore, early scholar-Companions fundamentally shaped the legal system through unified institutions like *Ahl al-Ḥall wa-l-ʿAqd* (Nourouzzaman Shiddiqi, 1996), even though figures like ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās and ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUmar had already begun withdrawing from practical politics during the mid-caliphate of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān (r. 644–656 CE) to focus exclusively on sacred learning.

Generally, scholars ('*ulamā*') serve as central figures in Islamic society, conveying Islamic teachings as enshrined in the Qur'an, Sunnah, and classical heritage to the community (Suja ' i, 2022). Consequently, the role of the '*ulamā*' is intrinsically tied to education in the broadest sense—educating society through both instruction and exemplary conduct. As such, scholars occupy a strategic position as educators, preachers (*muballigh*), legal authority (*mufti*), and spiritual guides (*mursyid*). As educators, they guide and nurture the community in intellectual and ethical domains. As *muballigh*, they possess the authority to disseminate Islamic teachings derived from primary sources and scholarly tradition. As *mufti*, they are recognized as competent authorities for issuing religious rulings (*fatwās*). Meanwhile, as *mursyid*, they provide deeper guidance in spiritual practices and devotional life. In specific contexts, scholars also serve as vital reference points in socio-political affairs, offering moral counsel and influencing public attitude and policy.

According to M. Quraish Shihab, the '*ulamā*' fulfill four primary duties: first, conveying (*tablīgh*) the divine teachings in accordance with religious commands; second, explaining these teachings based on scriptural revelation; third, adjudicating affairs and resolving societal problems through Qur'anic principles; and fourth, exemplifying these teachings in practice, as reflected in the narration of ʿĀʾishah recorded by al-Bukhārī, which states that the Prophet's character was the living implementation of the Qur'an (M. Quraish Shihab, 1995). Inherently, the prophetic duties fall upon the scholars, as they serve as the heirs of the prophets. As prophetic successors, they carry forward the responsibility of propagating Islam, educating the *ummah*, and preserving the religious tradition (Arnawati, 2017)

Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, a former Grand Sheikh of al-Azhar, outlines the prophetic duties based on Quranic revelation. First, reciting the verses of Allah (*tilāwah*), which entails articulating words sequentially with structural consistency, where "verses" specifically denotes the Qur'an (Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, n.d.). Second, purifying the community (*tazkiyah*) from polytheism (*shirk*) and blameworthy traits. Third, teaching the Scripture (*al-Kitāb*) and wisdom (*al-Ḥikmah*). Here, *al-Kitāb* refers to the Qur'an, while *al-Ḥikmah* signifies the sayings and actions of the Prophet ﷺ, established by Allah as a noble model for humanity. Teaching in this context implies elucidating the underlying, hidden meanings of the text, thereby distinguishing it from mere recitation (*tilāwah*). Fourth, imparting knowledge previously unknown, encompassing matters inaccessible except through divine revelation. Among these newly taught domains were the methodologies for legal deduction (*istinbāṭ*) from textual sources and fundamental principles, alongside historical accounts of past nations, narratives of the prophets, and other realities beyond the independent reach of human intellect (Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, n.d.)

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach to analyze Ibn Jamā'ah's perspectives on the ideal scholar profile and its contemporary relevance. As asserted by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, qualitative research serves as an analytical procedure centered on words, phrases, sentences, and rich textual meanings (Abdurahman, 2026). According

to Moleong, a qualitative approach attempts to comprehensively explain the phenomena experienced by subjects through descriptive words embedded in their natural context (Raisyah Aulia Nabila Lubis, Dian Armanto, 2026) The type of research used is library research, which is a study utilized to collect information and data through various materials available in libraries, such as documents, books, magazines, historical accounts, and other relevant sources (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023). The primary data source in this study is the work of Ibnu Jama'ah, specifically the book *Tadzkiratus Sami' wal Mutakallim fi Adabil 'Alim wal Muta'allim*, while secondary sources include books, journal articles, previous research findings, and other relevant documents about the theme of scholars' personalities, academic ethics, and contemporary dynamics.

This study collects data through documentation techniques by examining written materials from the classical literature of Ibnu Jama'ah and contemporary sources. Documentation in qualitative research is a systematic process to review or evaluate both printed and electronic documents as part of the research data sources (Nur Intifada Zahroh, 2025). Subsequently, the data are processed through content analysis to provide a comprehensive description of the ideal scholar's personality. As Krippendorff asserts, content analysis allows researchers to draw valid and testable inferences from textual material relative to its surrounding context (Sumarno, 2023).

The data analysis process is conducted through three main stages: (1) data reduction, which involves sorting, selecting, and focusing on literature relevant to the main discussion of the scholar's personality; (2) data display, which involves organizing information into main sub-themes, such as Ibnu Jama'ah's concept of educator/scholar ethics and the challenges faced by scholars in the contemporary era; and (3) conclusion drawing, which entails formulating a synthesis and the relevance of Ibnu Jama'ah's perspective on the ideal scholar's personality in addressing the current needs of religious leaders.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Biography of Ibn Jama'ah

The full name of Ibn Jama'ah is Abu Abdillah Badruddin Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Sa'dullah bin Jama'ah. His kunya (patronymic title) is Abu Abdillah, and his laqab (honorific title) is Badruddin (Muhammad 'Adnan Qaytaz, n.d.). He was born in 639 AH in Hama, Syria, and passed away (Khairuddin bin Mahmud bin Muhammad bin Ali bin Faris, 2002) in Egypt in 734 AH (Tāj al-Dīn ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Kāfī al-Subkī, n.d.). His father was Qadi Badruddin Ibn Jama'ah (d. 675 AH), who was also a scholar. He learned to recite the Qur'an under his father and studied numerous disciplines. In his youth, he studied under several scholars in Hama, Syria, including Sharafuddin 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Ansari (d. 662 AH), ar-Radhi Ibn al-Burhan (d. 664 AH), Rashid al-'Attar (d. 662 AH), an-Najjar Ibn al-'Asqalani (d. 651 AH), and at-Taqi Ibn Abi al-Yusr (d. 672 AH). He acquired extensive knowledge from al-Qadi Baha'uddin Ibn az-Zanki (d. 682 AH) and studied Arabic grammar (nahw)

under Imam Ibn Malik (d. 672 AH). Devoted and diligent in his pursuit of knowledge, he ultimately surpassed his peers. His scholarship was later recognized by Imam an-Nawawi, who praised his abilities and acknowledged his excellence.

Ibn Jama'ah was appointed as a *qadi* (judge) in Jerusalem (*al-Quds*) in 675 AH at a young age. He later resigned from the position. Subsequently, he was reappointed as *qadi* in Jerusalem in 687 AH, alongside being assigned as a *khatib* (preacher) there. Later, he was summoned to Egypt and appointed as a *qadi* for the region of *al-Diyar al-Mishriyyah* (the Egyptian territories) in 690 AH, where he was also entrusted with delivering sermons at the Al-Azhar Mosque. He resigned in 693 AH, resumed office in 696 AH, and was appointed once more in 699 AH. Additionally, he was assigned as a *khatib* and the Sheikh of Teachers—a combination of prestigious appointments that had never previously been held by a single individual. He continued to hold various positions until the passing of Sheikh Taqiyuddin Ibn Daqiq al-'Id in 702 AH, after which he was once again appointed as *qadi* of Egypt, holding the post until 710 AH. After stepping down, he was reappointed in 711 AH and served until his final resignation in 727 AH. Despite his lengthy tenure as a judge, his career was marked by fairness and justice in delivering rulings, earning him a reputation as a just judge.

Imam Ibn Jama'ah was an experienced educational practitioner who taught at various institutions and across multiple regions during his era (Maulana, 2022). He taught at several *madrasas* in Damascus—including al-Qimariyyah, al-'Adiliyyah al-Kubra, and ash-Shamiyyah al-Baraniyyah—and in Cairo, his teaching extended to the *madrasas* of al-Salihiyyah, an-Nasiriyyah, and al-Kamilah, alongside lectures at the Al-Hakim Mosque, the Ibn Tulun Mosque, and various other prestigious institutions. Over the course of his distinguished career, he educated a generation of celebrated scholars, including prominent figures such as Ibn Badr ad-Din (d. 767 AH), Salah ad-Din ash-Safadi (d. 764 AH), Shams ad-Din adz-Dhahabi (d. 748 AH), and Taj ad-Din as-Subki (d. 771 AH) (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012).

In the field of writing, Ibn Jama'ah was a prolific scholar who authored numerous books. Among his renowned works are *Al-Manhal ar-Rawi*, *Al-Fawa'id al-La'iḥah fi Surat al-Fatiḥah*, *Al-Tibyan li Muhimmat al-Qur'an*, *Al-Masalik fi 'Ulum al-Manasik*, and *An-Najm al-Lami' fi Sharḥ Jam' al-Jawami'*, alongside several other titles. In the realm of education, he penned his famous treatise, *Tazkiratu al-Sami' wal-Mutakallim fi Adab al-'Alim wal-Muta'allim*.

Morally, Ibn Jama'ah was known for his asceticism (*zuhd*), scrupulousness (*wara'*), righteousness, maturity of thought, excellent character, steadfastness in religion, devotion to worship, and frequent remembrance of God (*dhikr*). He possessed dignity, firmness, and strength in upholding the truth, striking a balance that was neither harsh nor weak.

Ideal Scholar's Personality

1. Fear of God (*Khauf*)

An ideal scholar possesses a personality grounded in a constant fear of God (*khauf*). This fear is reflected in their attitude and expressions, as they continuously feel under divine supervision (*muraqabah*) in every action, rest, word, and deed. This aligns with the statement of Ibn Jama'ah:

Table 1: Fear of God in Ibn Jama'ah perspective

No.	Data	Translation
1	دوامُ مراقبةِ الله تعالى في السرِّ والعلانيةِ، والمحافظةُ على خوفِه في جميعِ حركاتِه وسكناتِه، وأقوالِه وأفعالِه، فإنه أمينٌ على ما أودِعَ من العلومِ، وما مُنِحَ من الحواسِّ والفهوم (ص: ٤٨)	To continuously feel monitored by Allah Ta'ala, whether in secret or in public, and to maintain a sense of awe and fear of Him in all movements and rests, as well as in speech and actions. This is because scholars are those entrusted with knowledge and endowed with senses and understanding (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

A scholar's knowledge must be visibly reflected in their demeanor through composure, dignity, humility, scrupulousness (*wara'*), and devotion to Allah. This aligns with al-Ghazali's assertion that an educator must maintain purity of heart and speech, refraining from vulgarity, insults, and backbiting (Hidayat et al., 2024). Indeed, true scholars (*'ulama'*) are defined as those whose deep knowledge engenders a profound reverence and awe (*khasyyah*) of Allah (Huda, 2024). Al-Qurtubi also transmitted the statement of Ar-Rabi' bin Anas, who noted, "*Whoever does not fear Allah Ta'ala is not truly a scholar ('alim) (Muhammad al-Qurthubi, 1964).*"

Preserving the Dignity of Knowledge as the Righteous Predecessors (*Salaf*) Preserved It

A scholar must actively preserve the dignity of knowledge. Among the key indicators of safeguarding this noble stature is refraining from using knowledge as an instrument for worldly gain and avoiding the practice of a scholar humbling themselves by seeking out students. Ibn Jama'ah cited the statement of Az-Zuhri, "Knowledge is demeaned when a scholar takes it to the learner's doorstep instead of requiring the learner to seek it from the scholar." (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)."

A Quran teacher visiting a student's home is a common modern phenomenon often referred to as private tutoring. According to Ibn Jama'ah, this practice generally undermines the dignity of knowledge or fails to preserve its exalted status. However, if there is a genuine need, a state of necessity, or an overarching religious benefit (*maslahah*) that outweighs the associated harm, accompanied by a sincere intention, then it is permissible. Indeed, certain early scholars (*salaf*) visited rulers and authorities—such as Az-Zuhri and Al-Shafi'i—not to seek worldly gain, but for higher religious ends (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012). Conversely, if the primary objective of such visits is the pursuit of worldly gain, the dignity of knowledge is compromised.

Being detached from worldly pursuits

Table 2: Ibn Jama'ah's view Being detached from worldly pursuits

No.	Data	Translation

1	أن يتخلّق بالزهد في الدنيا، والتقلّل منها بقدر الإمكان الذي لا يضرّ بنفسه أو بعياله، فإن ما يحتاج إليه لذلك على الوجه المعتدل من القناعة ليس يعدّ من الدنيا. (ص: ٥٠)	A scholar should embody an attitude of asceticism (*zuhd*) toward worldly matters, taking only as much as necessary without harming himself or his family. Indeed, obtaining what is reasonably needed with contentment (*qana'ah*) does not constitute an excessive love for the world.(Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

Zuhud encompasses two core values: qana'ah, which means being content with what one possesses, and tawassuth, which refers to maintaining a balance in one's needs.(Nurkhalis N, 2015). *Ulama* are expected to maintain a moderate attitude toward worldly affairs, avoiding both excessive attachment to material wealth and the neglect of personal and family needs. Practicing *zuhd* enables scholars to uphold and communicate the truth objectively, without allowing material interests to influence their judgments or conduct. Consequently, they do not compromise, commodify, or exchange truth for worldly gain. This understanding is consistent with al-Ghazali's view that scholars who become attached to worldly interests are unlikely to fulfill their moral responsibility to *enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong* (*al-amr bi al-ma'ruf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*).

ومن استولى عليه حب الدنيا لم يقدر على الحسبة على الأراذل فكيف على الملوك والأكابر

> "Whoever is overcome by love of worldly affairs will be unable to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong among the common people, let alone confront kings and other figures of authority (Al-Ghazali, n.d.)"

Preserving the dignity of knowledge by avoiding anything that may undermine its honor

A scholar is expected to uphold the integrity and dignity of knowledge by ensuring that it is not exploited for worldly interests. This principle requires scholars to refrain from seeking material or personal benefits from their students simply because the students study under their guidance or maintain close intellectual relationships with them. Such benefits may include money, services, favors, or other forms of advantage. Nevertheless, contemporary realities indicate that some scholars may use their relationships with students to advance personal interests, including gaining popularity, prestige, social recognition, or material benefits. Al-Ghazali characterizes such figures as *'ulama' al-dunya* or *'ulama' al-su'*, namely scholars whose pursuit of knowledge is driven primarily by worldly gratification, social status, positions of authority, or personal advantage.

Table 3: The dignity of knowledge by avoiding anything that may undermine its honor

No.	Data	Translation
1	أن يُنَزِّهَ علمَه عن جعله سُلَّمًا يتوصّل به إلى الأغراض الدنيوية من جاهٍ، أو مالٍ، أو سُمعةٍ، أو شهرةٍ، أو خدمةٍ، أو تقدُّمٍ على أقرانه (ص: ٥٠)	A scholar should preserve the dignity of knowledge by refraining from using it as a means to pursue worldly ambitions, such as attaining status, wealth, popularity, fame, personal

	favors, or gaining superiority over peers. (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

Rather than treating knowledge as a moral responsibility, they instrumentalize it as a means of achieving worldly ambitions (Maftuh, 2016). This ethical orientation can also be seen in the exemplary character of Manshur ibn al-Mu'tamir (d. 132 AH), Abu 'Attab al-Sulami al-Kufi, whom Ibn Jama'ah describes as a scholar distinguished by intellectual precision, devotion to worship, and virtuous character. Manshur reportedly never sought assistance or personal favors from those who came to him with particular needs (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012). His conduct illustrates the importance of maintaining scholarly independence and protecting knowledge from becoming a means of personal exploitation. Accordingly, scholars should avoid patron–client relationships and any feudalistic tendencies that may undermine the dignity and ethical integrity of the teacher–student relationship.

Avoiding occupations that may undermine the dignity of a scholar

Ibn Jama'ah argues that scholars should refrain from occupations that are considered socially undignified according to prevailing customs. This principle is closely related to the concept of *muru'ah* in hadith scholarship, whereby a narrator is regarded as upright (*'adl*) when he preserves his dignity and propriety. *Muru'ah* entails refraining from actions that may be legally permissible but could nevertheless expose a person to social criticism or disapproval according to prevailing customs (*'urf*) (Sayid Muhammad Ramdhan, 2022). In social life, this ethic is referred to as *murūʾah*, or preserving one's self-respect, which is understood as propriety of conduct that upholds the scholarly dignity of the educator(Aziz et al., 2025).

Table 4: Avoiding occupations that may undermine the dignity of a scholar

No.	Data	Translation
1	أن يتنزّه عن دنيء المكاسب ورذيلها طبعًا، وعن مكروهها عادةً وشرعًا: كالحجامة، والدباغة، والصرف، والصياغة (ص: ٥١)	A scholar should avoid occupations that are traditionally regarded as beneath the dignity of scholarship, particularly those considered disreputable according to prevailing customs and Islamic legal norms, such as cupping, leather tanning, money changing, and goldsmithing (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

One of the principal responsibilities of scholars is to teach the Qur'an and Sunnah and to guide the community away from polytheism and reprehensible moral conduct. To fulfill these responsibilities effectively, scholars are therefore expected to maintain their personal dignity and public image, as their conduct may influence the community's perception of religious knowledge and authority.

Upholding the outward observance of Islamic rites and laws

Sha'a'ir refers to the symbols or visible manifestations of the greatness of Islam through which people can recognize teachings as distinctly Islamic, whether they involve religious obligations or prohibitions associated with particular places or times. Examples include the call to prayer (*adhan*), the hijab, the Ka'bah as a central symbol of the pilgrimage (*hajj*), Ramadan, and other Islamic observances.

Table 5: Upholding the outward observance of Islamic rites and laws

No.	Data	Translation
1	أن يُحافِظَ على القيام بشعائر الإسلام، وظواهر الأحكام: كإقامة الصلوات في مساجد الجماعات، وإفشاء السلام، وإظهار السنن للخواص والعوام، والأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر (ص: ٥١)	A scholar should uphold the outward observance of Islamic rites and legal teachings, such as performing congregational prayers in the mosque, spreading greetings of peace, demonstrating the Sunnah in both private and public settings, and enjoining what is right while forbidding what is wrong." (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

The veneration of these Islamic symbols and manifestations can be expressed through practices such as performing congregational prayers in the mosque, spreading greetings of peace, and actively enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. If a scholar does not participate in congregational prayer at the mosque, an important question arises: how can the visible manifestations of Islamic teachings be maintained within the community, particularly when scholars are expected to serve as role models for Muslims?

Upholding Sunnah Practices

In Islamic spirituality, Sunnah practices provide an important means of supplementing shortcomings in the fulfillment of obligatory acts. Scholars, who are deeply conscious of their own spiritual limitations, engage in continual *muhasabah*, or self-examination, to evaluate the quality of their religious practice. Their awareness is further strengthened by *khawf*, a profound sense of reverential fear of Allah that makes them concerned about the acceptance of their obligatory worship. This spiritual awareness encourages scholars to go beyond the minimum requirements of religious obligation by consistently engaging in additional Sunnah practices.

Table 6: Upholding Sunnah Practices

No.	Data	Translation
1	أن يُحافِظَ على المندوبات الشرعية: القوليّة والفعلية، فيلازم تلاوة القرآن، وذكر الله تعالى بالقلب واللسان، وكذلك ما ورد من الدعوات والأذكار، في أثناء الليل والنهار، ومن نوافل العبادات من الصلاة والصيام وحجّ البيت الحرام، والصلاة على النبي (ص: ٥٢)	A scholar should consistently observe the recommended Sunnah practices prescribed in Islamic teachings, whether expressed through words or actions. This includes regularly reciting the Qur'an, remembering Allah through

		both the heart and the tongue, and practicing the supplications and forms of remembrance taught in the Islamic tradition throughout both the day and night. Other recommended practices include performing voluntary prayers, observing voluntary fasting, undertaking the pilgrimage to the House of Allah, and sending blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad. (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

The fear of Allah that characterizes the piety of scholars functions as a moral force that encourages obedience and restrains individuals from prohibited conduct (Darsih & Suralaga, 2024). This disposition places scholars among those who strive to be foremost in righteousness. Qur'an, Surah Fatir (35:32), describes three categories of Allah's servants, the highest of which are those who are *foremost in good deeds*. This category is characterized by commitment to both obligatory and recommended acts of worship, together with consistent avoidance of what has been prohibited.

Conducting Oneself with Noble Character

According to Ibn Jamāʿah, the personality of a scholar or educator is built upon a foundation of humanity, social generosity, and deep empathy. A teacher's ethical professionalism—reflected in honesty, fairness, discipline, empathy, and consistency between words and actions—plays a central role in facilitating the internalization of students' character values through everyday classroom interactions and school culture (Khairat, 2026).

Table 7: Conducting oneself with noble character

No.	Data	Translation
1	معاملة الناس بمكارم الأخلاق؛ من طلاقة الوجه، وإفشاء السلام، وإطعام الطعام، وكظم الغيظ، وكفّ الأذى عن الناس، واحتماله منهم، والإيثار وترك الاستئثار، والإنصاف وترك الاستنصاف، وشكر التفضّل، وإيجاد الراحة، والسعي في قضاء الحاجات، وبذل الجاه في الشفاعات، والتلطّف بالفقراء، والتعجّب إلى الجيران والأقارب، والرفق بالطلبة وإعانتهم وبرّهم (ص: ٥٤)	A scholar should consistently observe the recommended Sunnah practices prescribed in Islamic teachings, whether expressed through words or actions. This includes regularly reciting the Qur'an, remembering Allah through both the heart and the tongue, and practicing the supplications and forms of remembrance taught in the Islamic tradition throughout both the day and night. Other recommended A scholar should cultivate noble character in dealing with others, demonstrating kindness through a welcoming demeanor, offering

	greetings of peace, providing food, controlling anger, refraining from causing harm, and patiently enduring difficulties caused by others. Such conduct also includes practicing *ithar*, or giving preference to others over oneself, while avoiding selfishness; upholding justice without demanding that others treat oneself justly; expressing gratitude for the kindness received from others; creating ease and comfort for people; assisting them in meeting their needs; and using one's social position or influence to intercede on behalf of those in need. A scholar should also show compassion toward the poor, maintain good relations with neighbors and relatives, and treat students and seekers of knowledge with kindness, patience, and generosity by assisting and supporting them in their pursuit of knowledge. (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

Ibn Jamāʿah further underscores the necessity of affection and care toward students. This approach directly shapes student behavior by alleviating fear and reluctance, thereby fostering open communication and enhancing their receptivity to learning (Haromaini, 2019). Teaching is inherently an act of guidance, which cannot be effective unless the learner feels comfortable with the educator

Purifying the Inner and Outer Self from Negative Character Traits

While Sunnah practices related to worship strengthen one's relationship with Allah through acts such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, supplication, and expressing gratitude for His blessings, the Sunnah also encompasses interpersonal relations, often referred to as *Sunnah mu'amalah*. This dimension of the Sunnah promotes harmonious relationships among people through ethical practices such as praying for others, concealing their shortcomings, communicating with wisdom, and cultivating mutual love for the sake of Allah (Nor Amni Bazilah Binti Mohd Zain, 2025). Therefore, a scholar is expected to observe and embody both dimensions of the Sunnah, maintaining a balanced commitment to devotion to Allah and ethical conduct toward others.

Table 8: Purifying the Inner and Outer Self from Negative Character Traits

No.	Data	Translation
1	أن يُطهِّر باطنه وظاهره من الأخلاق الرديئة، ويعمّره بالأخلاق المرضيّة.فمن الأخلاق الرديئة: الغِلّ، والحسد، والبغي، والغضب لغير الله تعالى، والغشّ،	A scholar should strive to purify both the inner self and outward conduct from reprehensible character traits and cultivate virtues that are morally

والكبر، والرياء، والعجب، والسُّمعة، والبخل، والشحّ، والبطر، والطمع، والفخر، والخيلاء، والتنافس (ص: ٥٤)	sound and pleasing to Allah. Among the qualities that should be avoided are *ghill* (resentment or ill will), *hasad* (envy), injustice, anger driven by motives other than seeking Allah's pleasure, deceit, arrogance, *riya'* (showing off in acts of worship), *'ujb* (self-admiration), *sum'ah* (seeking recognition through publicizing one's good deeds), stinginess, miserliness, *batar* (arrogance arising from worldly blessings), greed, self-glorification, conceit, and unhealthy competitiveness (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

Striving Diligently to Acquire and Advance Knowledge

According to Ibn Jama'ah, a scholar should devote virtually all of their time to the pursuit of knowledge and righteous deeds, which constitute their primary purposes. Time may be spent on other activities only insofar as they are necessary, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, taking sufficient rest to relieve fatigue, fulfilling the rights of one's spouse, receiving guests, earning a livelihood, attending to essential personal needs, alleviating illness or discomfort, and fulfilling other unavoidable necessities. In this way, a scholar is expected to manage time carefully and avoid activities that do not contribute to their intellectual and spiritual development

Table 9: Striving Diligently to Acquire and Advance Knowledge

No.	Data	Translation
1	دوام الحرص على الازدياد، بملازمة الجدّ والاجتهاد، والمداومة على وظائف الأوراد: من العبادة، والاشتغال والاشتغال، والحرص على قراءة، وإقراء، ومطالعة، وفكراً، وتعليماً، وحفظاً، وتصنيفاً، وبحثاً (ص: ٥٧)	A scholar should remain committed to continually increasing both knowledge and righteous practice through diligence, perseverance, and consistency in maintaining regular devotional routines (*awrad*). This commitment should extend to both acts of worship and scholarly pursuits, including reading, teaching, studying, critical reflection, memorization, writing, and conducting research (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

The scholarly writing tradition of classical Islamic scholars is deeply rooted across various Islamic disciplines and has contributed significantly to intellectual thought.

Grounded in the spirit of the first revelation emphasizing the importance of reading, this writing practice was pursued as a spiritual devotion to ensure the sustainable transmission of knowledge across generations (Bahrul Ulum, 2019). What Ibn Jamāʿah articulates is remarkably forward-looking and highly relevant today, where scholars must preserve their ideas and discoveries through writing to ensure their enduring impact.

Being Humble in Seeking Knowledge from Others

A scholar should cultivate a continuous thirst for knowledge, recognizing that the scope of divine knowledge is boundless. The Qur'an illustrates the immeasurable extent of Allah's knowledge by stating that even if the sea were used as ink, it would be exhausted before the words of Allah were exhausted. From an Islamic perspective, knowledge may be regarded as something that believers are continually called to seek and reclaim.

Table 10: Being Humble in Seeking Knowledge from Others

No.	Data	Translation
1	أن لا يستنكف أن يستفيد ما لا يعلمه ممن هو دونه منصبًا أو نسبًا أو سنًّا، بل يكون حريصًا على الفائدة حيث كانت، والحكمة ضالّة المؤمن يلتقطها حيث وجدها (ص: ٥٨)	A scholar should approach the pursuit of knowledge with humility, without feeling reluctant or embarrassed to learn from someone who may be regarded as inferior in terms of social status, lineage, or age. Instead, scholars should actively seek beneficial knowledge wherever it can be found. Knowledge and wisdom should not be judged by the social standing of the person who possesses them; rather, they should be valued for their intrinsic worth. Wisdom is like a lost possession of the believer, who should reclaim it wherever it is found (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

This principle reflects the concept of lifelong learning, an idea that has been embedded in Islamic tradition for approximately fourteen centuries and is reflected in numerous prophetic traditions (Nik Din et al., 2018). Accordingly, a scholar who possesses a genuine thirst for knowledge should remain open to learning from anyone, regardless of whether the source is younger or older, poorer or wealthier.

Dedicating Oneself to Scholarly Writing and the Compilation of Works

Imam al-Shafi'i famously likened knowledge to a hunted animal, with writing serving as the means of securing and preserving it (Ahmadi Ahmadi, 2023). For scholars, writing books is therefore an important means of safeguarding and transmitting knowledge, preventing it from being lost, forgotten, or distorted, while also ensuring its systematic

inheritance by future generations. Through written works, knowledge can transcend geographical and temporal boundaries, allowing its benefits to reach a wider audience.

Table 11: Dedicating Oneself to Scholarly Writing and the Compilation of Works

No.	Data	Translation
11	الاشتغال بالتصنيف، والجمع والتأليف؛ لكن مع تمام الفضيلة، وكمال الأهلية؛ فإنه يطّلع على حقائق الفنون، ودقائق العلوم، لاحتياج إلى كثرة التفتيش والمطالعة، والتنقيب والمراجعة (ص: ٥٩)	A scholar should devote substantial time and effort to producing, compiling, and organizing scholarly works. Such intellectual activity, however, should be grounded in sound scholarly competence, intellectual maturity, and a well-developed mastery of the relevant disciplines. Through writing and systematic engagement with knowledge, scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the fundamental principles of various fields as well as their intricate details. This process requires extensive research, reading, critical examination, and continual review, all of which contribute to the development and refinement of scholarly understanding (Ibnu Jamaah, 2012)

Scholarly writing also represents an intellectual responsibility for scholars to convey knowledge, clarify religious teachings, and address the various issues and challenges faced by the Muslim community. Moreover, writing provides a space for scholars to develop their ideas, refine their intellectual contributions, and enrich the broader Islamic scholarly tradition.

The Relevance of *Ulama* Character in the Contemporary Era

Contemporary life has been profoundly shaped by technological advancement, globalization, and economic transformation, all of which have significantly altered patterns of social life. While modernity has brought greater convenience and expanded opportunities across various dimensions of human life, it has also generated several moral challenges, including materialism, hedonism, consumerism, and a weakening of spiritual awareness (Putri, 2025). In contemporary society, material achievement and social status are increasingly perceived as primary indicators of success, while ethical and spiritual values tend to be marginalized (Hosen et al., 2025). This condition reflects a concern that the Prophet Muhammad had already anticipated more than fourteen centuries ago.

The Prophet Muhammad expressed his concern in these words: *"I do not fear poverty for you; rather, I fear that worldly wealth will become abundant among you."* (Reported by Ahmad)

Thus, one of the personality traits that a scholar must possess according to Ibn Jama'ah—namely an attitude of asceticism (*zuhd*) toward worldly matters—remains relevant today. In a modern society often trapped in the flow of consumerism, *zuhd* helps individuals manage their desires, allowing them to focus more on things that yield a positive impact, both spiritually and socially (Fadlillah & Wasil, 2025). As role models for the community, it is an absolute necessity for scholars to embody *zuhd.*

Ibnu Jama'ah argues that a scholar must continuously safeguard their knowledge from anything that might demean it. Knowledge is inherently of high value; thus, its nobility must be preserved. A seeker of knowledge must go to the scholar, not the other way around. This ensures that the dignity of knowledge is maintained and serves as a preventive measure so that scholars do not fall into low, worldly pursuits. Upholding scientific ethics plays a crucial role in building public trust in academic institutions (Khaironita, 2024). Consequently, the community's trust in scholars remains intact through the preservation of the honor of knowledge itself.

Ibn Jama'ah also argues that a scholar should avoid low-status occupations, such as cupping (*hijama*). This is intended to preserve a scholar's *muru'ah* (dignity and honor). As a virtue, *muru'ah* holds a high status; it is used by literary scholars (*udaba*) as praise, and by religious scholars (*ulama*) to denote character and spirit in the application of noble ethics (Sayid Muhammad Ramdhan, 2022). Although the profession of a cupper is considered low, it is by no means forbidden. Such occupations may suit certain individuals who might not possess other skills. In a contemporary context, a scholar should leave these roles to others without despising or belittling the work itself..

A scholar must also outwardly uphold Islamic symbols (*sha'a'ir*) and Islamic rulings, such as making a habit of performing congregational prayers in the mosque. Scholars hold a position as exemplary role models as well as the primary authority in Islamic jurisprudence. They serve as Allah's proof (*hujjah*) for the general public, so their actions and behavior are constantly observed and emulated. Consequently, when a scholar fails to practice their knowledge, society strays even further from benefiting from that knowledge. In fact, a mistake committed by a scholar carries a massive impact, as it can cause widespread damage due to the public's tendency to follow their example. Exemplarity (*keteladanan*) is one of the most powerful and effective methods in shaping students' intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social character (Abdullah, 2019). In the context of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) education, the *kiai* serves as a living role model for students in emulating the character of Prophet Muhammad SAW as the ultimate representation of ethics in Islam (Siti Marfuah, 2025).Therefore, it is imperative for scholars to preserve Islamic symbols—which remain highly relevant today—so that laypeople can follow their lead.

Another characteristic of a scholar is not being too proud or hesitant to learn what they do not yet know from someone lower in status than themselves. This aligns closely with the concept of lifelong education. Lifelong learning is highly relevant in the modern era, where a person's knowledge undergoes a decline in utility over time due to changing eras. Rapid technological innovation, population mobility, and evolving economic and

political systems drive continuous advancements in knowledge (Muchamad Mufid, 2024). Furthermore, this personality trait corresponds with the features of today's professional educators, specifically a commitment to enhancing educational quality, faith, piety, and noble character (Husaini, 2018).

A scholar should occupy themselves with writing (scholarly works), collecting, and composing (texts). This statement by Ibn Jama'ah is highly relevant to the demands placed on modern scientists and scholars, who are expected to publish their works for the public benefit. Documenting knowledge through writing, note-taking, and literacy is essential in the academic world so that it can be understood and studied by future generations (Ahmadi Ahmadi, 2023). Ultimately, scholars will be remembered by posterity through their written works.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the concept of an ideal scholar's personality according to Ibn Jama'ah positions scholarship, spirituality, and morality as an inseparable unity. A scholar's character is measured not only by the depth of their knowledge, but also by their fear of Allah, preservation of the dignity of knowledge, practice of asceticism (*zuhd*) toward worldly matters, integrity, and consistency in implementing Islamic law and advancing knowledge. Consequently, scholars are positioned as exemplary role models who bear the responsibility of guiding the community, making personal quality the primary foundation in maintaining the authority of Islamic scholarship

In a contemporary context, these personality values of a scholar remain relevant as a critique of the phenomenon wherein the meaning of a scholar (*ulama*) is reduced and tends to be based on popularity. The principles of maintaining the independence of knowledge, avoiding worldly orientation, and committing to academic development serve as an important foundation for rebuilding the authority of scholars in today's society. Therefore, this study recommends the need to revitalize the concept of a scholar's personality grounded in classical heritage within Islamic education, as well as strengthening scholarly ethics for academics and religious figures, so as to cultivate scholars who are not only intellectually superior, but also possess solid moral and spiritual integrity.

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