

Friday Sermon as a Medium of Religious Education for Muslim Society: An Analysis of the Management of Juristic Disagreement in the State of Johor

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Abstract

Islam places great importance on knowledge and understanding in the practice of its religious law, known as fiqh. The diversity of fiqh opinions in Islam has become a polemical issue among the general public who do not fully understand the reality of fiqh disagreement (*ikhtilaf fiqhi*). In the state of Johor, the Shafi'i school of thought has long served as the official reference in religious practice, particularly in matters related to *fiqh al-'ibadat* (jurisprudence of worship). However, the rapid development of information technology and social media has opened space for the dissemination of diverse fiqh opinions without adequate regulation from the state religious authorities. This article aims to analyse the role of the Friday sermon as a significant medium of religious education in addressing conflicts arising from fiqh disagreements in Johor. The study employs a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The findings reveal that the Friday Sermon functions as a mechanism for narrative control, public religious education, and the strengthening of the *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* identity in managing fiqh disagreements in a wise and institutionalised manner.

Keywords: Friday Sermon, Ikhtilaf, Religious Education

Introduction

Differences of opinion (*ikhtilaf*) in Islamic jurisprudence are an inevitable and necessary phenomenon within the Islamic intellectual tradition. Divergent views in subsidiary matters of fiqh are not only recognised but are also considered a manifestation of the flexibility and comprehensiveness of Islamic law. However, when fiqh disagreements are not managed with appropriate scholarly discipline and ethical conduct, they may shift from being a source of mercy (*rahmah*) to becoming a source of social and religious conflict.

During the 73rd meeting of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia (MKI) held on July 1, 2025, Tuanku Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, in his capacity as the Chairman of MKI, delivered a royal address emphasizing the need to respect differing views and to consolidate strengths. His Royal Highness asserted that the foundation of such strength stems from a Muslim community that is magnanimous, open-minded, broad-sighted, and self-confident—subsequently reflecting moderation, rejecting extremist culture, and not easily provoked into sensationalizing trivial matters.

The primary challenge in the digital era is the public's exposure to various jurisprudential (*fiqh*) views disseminated through social media, online lectures, and unauthorized content. A major cause for concern is the deluge of information providing all kinds of related perspectives without boundaries or academic discipline, whereas jurisprudential disagreements (*ikhtilaf fiqhi*) have boundaries that must be observed.

Furthermore, the authenticity and accuracy of the information provided remain questionable, as there is a possibility that these opinions are fabricated, haphazardly combined, or, more worryingly, constitute the spread of deviant teachings that corrupt faith (*aqidah*). This situation creates friction between the priority of defending the religious identity in Malaysia and the tendency of some segments of society to easily accept foreign views without methodological filtering.

We must take heed of tragedies that have occurred abroad, such as in the Middle East. Dangerous incidents have taken place where major clashes—even leading to shootouts—erupted among Muslims due to differing *fiqh* perspectives. In the Malaysian context, while the situation has not escalated to that level, such experiences necessitate that we take preventive and harmonious resolution measures.

In Malaysia, the administration of Islamic religious affairs falls under state jurisdiction as provided for in the Federal Constitution. In Johor, the religious authorities—namely the Johor State Islamic Religious Council (MAIJ), the Johor Mufti Department (JMJ), and the Johor State Islamic Religious Department (JAINJ)—stipulate the Shafi'i school of thought (*mazhab*) as the primary reference for *fatwas* (edicts) and the practices of the Muslim community in the state. Although other recognized (*mukhtabar*) schools of thought are acknowledged and may be referred to, their application is subject to necessity, hardship (*masyaqqah*), and the approval of the religious authorities.

This raises an important question: what mechanisms do the official Islamic religious institutions employ to regulate and shape public understanding regarding issues of disagreement in order to preserve religious identity, harmony, and the unity of the Muslim community in Johor? This article argues that the Friday sermon serves as an important medium of Islamic religious education, particularly in addressing conflicts related to *fiqh* disagreement in Johor.

Significance of the Study

The Management of Jurisprudential Disagreements (*Ikhtilaf Fiqhi*) is a significant field within the context of contemporary Muslim community development. The importance of this issue has also garnered attention at the national level. In 2023, the 10th Prime Minister of Malaysia,

Anwar Ibrahim, recommended that the work *Adab al-Ikhtilaf* written by Taha Jabir Al-Alwani—which was translated into the Malay language in 1989—be republished and distributed to government agencies as well as relevant stakeholders. This effort aims to strengthen the culture of managing differing views within society (Perpustakaan Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 2023).

This study can provide benefits to several parties, as follows:

1. **Religious Authorities**, such as the State Islamic Religious Councils, Mufti Departments, and State Islamic Religious Departments in Malaysia. This study can assist religious authorities in understanding the effectiveness of Friday sermons (*khutbah*) as an instrument for community education, a medium for controlling religious narratives, and a mechanism for strengthening the identity of *Ahli al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah* among the Muslim public.
2. **The General Public**. This study also serves as a medium for religious education literacy that can help the community evaluate and distinguish between recognized (*muktabar*) jurisprudential views and misleading ideologies through a face-to-face educational approach. Additionally, this study is expected to contribute to efforts in reducing conflict and strengthening harmony within the Muslim community.

Literature Review

This article reviews the literature to examine the concept of *fiqh ikhtilaf* from the perspective of the Islamic scholarly tradition and its contemporary manifestation in the state of Johor. In addition, the concept of the Friday sermon is also explored as part of the literature review to provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the phenomenon of fiqh disagreements within society.

Fiqh Disagreement in the Islamic Intellectual Tradition

According to Ibn Mandzur and Al-Fairuzabadi, the term *ikhtilaf* linguistically originates from the root word *خالف* which produces the derivative *الخلافا*, meaning contradiction or opposition. The term *اختلف* also derives from the same root and carries the meaning opposite to agreement or consensus (Al-Fairuzabadi, 2005; Mandzur, 1993)

Meanwhile, Al-Jurjani defines *khilaf* as a debate occurring between two or more opposing groups with the aim of establishing truth or refuting falsehood (Al-Jurjani, 1983). Al-Fayumi further emphasises that a legitimate disagreement must involve individuals possessing a certain level of scholarly expertise. If those involved in the disagreement lack sufficient knowledge, their differences cannot be recognised as a valid scholarly disagreement. He explains that *ikhtilaf* refers to the disagreement of one scholar with another scholar (Al-Fayumi, n.d.).

According to Arief Salleh Rosman, *fiqh disagreement* refers to the diversity of opinions produced by different *mujtahids* when deriving legal rulings from scriptural texts and evidences based on their respective *usul al-fiqh* methodologies (Arief Salleh Rosman, 2016).

Fiqh Disagreement in Johor

In the context of Johor, the Shafi'i school has historically served as the primary reference for the administration of Islamic affairs. Nevertheless, certain groups have shown a tendency to

reject the long-standing tradition of adhering to a recognised madhhab. These groups often argue that following a particular school of jurisprudence constitutes blind fanaticism.

Additionally, fiqh disagreements have generated disputes regarding *khilafiyah* issues in daily acts of worship, leading to confusion among Muslim communities. One of the contributing factors is a narrow understanding of the concepts of *bid'ah* and *khilafiyah*, which are disseminated through religious lectures delivered by uncredentialed individuals either in traditional settings such as mosques and prayer halls or through online platforms.

Such disputes may potentially disrupt harmony within families and communities. In some cases, younger generations influenced by differing interpretations have begun to question and criticise the religious practices of earlier generations, labelling them as *bid'ah dhalalah*. This situation can lead to tension and division within society.

In this context, the official Islamic authorities in Johor play an important role in clarifying misconceptions and preserving communal unity. One of the key channels utilised for disseminating religious guidance is the Friday sermon.

Concept of Friday Sermon

The term *sermon* originates from the Arabic root خ ط ب, which refers to a speech delivered from a pulpit. According to Al-Nawawi, a sermon can be defined as:

وهو الكلام المؤلف المتضمن وعظا وابلاغا

Meaning: *A structured speech containing elements of admonition, guidance, and communication* (Al-Nawawi, 1983).

Based on this definition, a sermon can be understood as a formal and structured communication medium intended to provide beneficial advice to listeners. Similarly, Al-Hajilaani describes the sermon as a form of rhetorical art designed to influence an audience:

بأنها فنّ من فنون الكلام، يقصد به التأثير في الجمهور عن طريق السمع والبصر معا

Meaning: *Sermon is a form of public speaking aimed at influencing the audience through both hearing and visual engagement* (Al-Hajilaani, 2002).

Based on these definitions, the sermon may be understood as a strategic communication instrument managed by legitimate religious authorities (*ulil amri*) that plays an important role in shaping the attitudes and perspectives of Muslim communities.

The Position of the Friday Sermon Compared to Other Sermons

There is a significant difference between the position of the Friday sermon and other types of sermons. In Islam, besides the Friday sermon, there are several other sermons that are prescribed, such as the Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha sermons, the marriage sermon (*nikah*), the rain-seeking prayer sermon (*istisqa'*), and the eclipse prayer sermon (*khusuf*).

The following table illustrates the differences between the Friday sermon and other sermons.

No.	Aspects	Friday Sermon	Other Sermons
1	Legal Ruling	Obligatory	Recommended
2	Condition for the Validity of Worship	Yes	No
3	Obligation to Listen	Yes	No
4	Specific Pillars	Present	None
5	Timing	Before the Prayer	After the Prayer

Based on the table, the Friday sermon is obligatory to be delivered compared to other sermons, which are not obligatory and are only recommended (sunnah) because they accompany certain prayers. If the ruling of the prayer is obligatory, then the sermon associated with it also becomes obligatory. This obligation exists because the Friday sermon is one of the conditions for the validity of the Friday prayer performed during the time of Zuhr. The Friday sermon also has specific pillars that must be carefully observed in its implementation. In addition, the Friday sermon is delivered before performing the Friday prayer, which differs from other sermons that are usually delivered after the prayer.

The Ruling and Etiquettes of Friday Prayer

According to Wahbah al-Zuhayli, performing the Friday prayer is fard 'ain upon every adult, sane, and free Muslim male. Anyone who denies its obligation may be judged as committing disbelief because the evidence establishing the obligation of Friday prayer is qat'i (definitive) (Az-Zuhaili, 1985). The Prophet ﷺ said:

الْجُمُعَةُ حَقٌّ وَاجِبٌ عَلَى كُلِّ مُسْلِمٍ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ إِلَّا أَرْبَعَةً: عَبْدٌ مَمْلُوكٌ، أَوْ امْرَأَةٌ، أَوْ صَبِيٌّ، أَوْ مَرِيضٌ

Meaning:

“Friday prayer is an obligatory right upon every Muslim to be performed in congregation except four (groups): a slave, a woman, a child, or a sick person.”

Another distinctive feature of the Friday prayer is that it must be performed in congregation with a minimum number of worshippers, and it is not valid if performed individually. The Friday prayer must also be conducted in a location determined by the authorities in order to realize the objective of Muslim unity. In addition, the recitation of the Qur'an in the Friday prayer is performed aloud (jahr) even though it takes place during the time of Zuhr, unlike the regular Zuhr prayer which is recited silently (sirr) (Fadhullah, 1999).

There is also a specific warning for those who neglect the Friday prayer based on a hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, which strongly emphasizes the obligation of attending Friday prayer for those without a valid excuse, with the threat that they may be included among the negligent. The Prophet ﷺ said:

لَيَنْتَهِيَنَّ أَقْوَامٌ عَنْ وَدْعِهِمُ الْجُمُعَاتِ أَوْ لَيَخْتِمَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَيَكُونُنَّ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

Meaning:

“People must cease neglecting the Friday prayer, or Allah will seal their hearts and they will become among the heedless.”

Based on this hadith, the Friday prayer is a serious obligation that must be given proper attention by those who are required to perform it. According to Wahbah al-Zuhayli, those who abandon the Friday prayer deserve severe punishment because the Prophet ﷺ once stated that he had intended to order that the houses of those who failed to attend the Friday prayer be burned (Az-Zuhaili, 1985)

Besides the obligation of performing the Friday prayer, Islam also emphasizes proper etiquette while listening to the khutbah. The congregation is required to give full attention to the sermon and avoid any actions that may nullify or reduce the reward of Friday prayer. The Prophet ﷺ said regarding the importance of remaining silent and listening to the khutbah:

إِذَا قُلْتَ لِصَاحِبِكَ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ أَنْصِتْ. وَالْإِمَامُ يَخْطُبُ فَقَدْ لَغَوْتَ

Meaning:

“If you say to your companion on Friday ‘Be quiet’ while the imam is delivering the khutbah, you have engaged in idle speech.”

This hadith indicates that even speaking with the intention of reminding others to remain silent is still considered *laghw* (vain or idle speech), which may diminish the reward of the Friday prayer. Overall, the Friday prayer possesses its own unique characteristics in terms of obligation, procedures of performance, legal rulings, and etiquettes, distinguishing it from other obligatory prayers.

The Objectives of the Friday Sermon

After examining the position of the Friday prayer and its sermon, it is clear that the Friday sermon serves specific purposes in guiding the Muslim community. According to Suriati (2012), several main objectives of the Friday Sermon include (Suriati, 2012):

1. Strengthening Taqwa

One of the pillars of the Friday sermon is the exhortation for the Muslims to fear Allah with true piety. This call aims to remind Muslims to always obey Allah's commands and avoid His prohibitions.

2. Disseminating Knowledge

The Friday sermon functions as a medium for delivering knowledge to the Muslims so that they may possess basic understanding related to *aqidah*, worship, morality, and contemporary issues affecting the Muslim community. Therefore, the authorities are responsible for organizing appropriate topics and scholarly materials so that the message conveyed is consistent and beneficial to society.

3. Motivating Good Deeds

The khatib is responsible for delivering the Friday sermon with enthusiasm in order to motivate the Muslims to increase their righteous deeds (Bakar, 2024). This concept is known as *targhib*, which encourages good deeds by highlighting the rewards promised by Allah.

4. Persuasive and Wise Approach

One of the approaches in Islamic preaching is to use gentle and wise words. Therefore, in the Friday sermon, the khatib adopts a persuasive approach to encourage society to make positive changes toward better conduct.

5. Addressing Contemporary Issues

The Friday sermon serves as a weekly platform that responds to current issues faced by society within a particular state or country, whether related to religion, social matters, education, economy, security, and others.

6. Forming of the Muslim Society Understanding

Through systematic and continuous sermons, the community can be guided to abandon the negative practices of *Jahiliyyah* and move toward the beauty of Islam and noble character. The khatib is encouraged to strengthen arguments with accurate data regarding the issues discussed.

7. Influencing and Convincing Society

When the Friday sermon is delivered, the Muslims is in an atmosphere of worship and obedience. Therefore, the Friday sermon serves as a powerful communication medium capable of shaping the beliefs and attitudes of the community.

8. Conveying Information

The Friday sermon also functions as a channel for disseminating information to society, particularly regarding policies or religious advice that must be conveyed to all levels of the community.

Arrangement of Friday Sermon Themes in Johor

Sermon themes are usually adjusted according to current contexts. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, sermon texts emphasized the importance of protecting life and obeying the directives of authorities as part of the objectives of Islamic law (Nordin, 2023).

In the context of the state of Johor, the publication of Friday sermon texts is supervised by the Mosque Management Division of the Johor Islamic Religious Department (Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri Johor). Sermon texts are prepared annually by considering Islamic celebrations, current issues, and national observances such as Teachers' Day, Labour Day, and others (Zakaria et al., 2020).

Among the matters emphasized in the Friday sermon guidelines is the prohibition of addressing issues related to:

- The sovereignty of the Malay Rulers
- Teachings that contradict Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah
- Partisan political elements
- Incitement and slander
- Any matter that contradicts Islamic teachings

Every Friday sermon text in Johor must undergo several levels of review, beginning with the Head of the Sermon and Tafsir Unit, followed by the Review Committee (Lujnah Penyemak) consisting of the Mufti, Deputy Mufti, Chief Kadi, and the Chief Imam of Johor before it is printed and distributed (Zakaria et al., 2020).

Although the obligation to attend Friday prayer applies only to Muslim men, they play a role as heads of families who are responsible for conveying the message to their families and the wider community. Therefore, the Friday sermon functions as an important instrument in shaping religious understanding and influencing the attitudes of the Muslim community more broadly.

The Effectiveness of Friday Sermons (Khutbah) as a Medium for Education and Social Formulation

The Friday sermon (*khutbah*) holds significant strategic value as an educational medium for the Muslim community because it is delivered periodically, carries authority, and takes place within a ritual of worship that demands the attention and internalization of the congregation. In contrast to social media platforms, which are open and less regulated, the Friday sermon is supervised by official religious institutions and possesses both legal and social legitimacy within Muslim society. This condition positions the Friday sermon as a more structured and influential channel of *da'wah* (missionary) communication in shaping public understanding.

According to Suriati (2012), the Friday sermon does not merely fulfill a ritual requirement, but also functions as an effective *da'wah* instrument in shaping the understanding, motivation, and attitude change of the Muslim community. She explains that a systematic and well-planned sermon delivery is capable of increasing religious awareness and influencing the community's thought orientation toward contemporary issues. This indicates that the Friday sermon plays a major role in shaping the mindset and social behavior of the Muslim public (Suriati, 2012).

Furthermore, Hamzah (2022) states that the Friday sermon is a highly suitable medium for conveying information regarding updates in the administration of religious affairs, particularly during critical situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The dissemination of messages through the Friday sermon is seen as capable of unifying the understanding of the Muslim community more effectively because it is delivered through official channels that hold religious authority. In this context, the sermon serves not only as an information-sharing medium but also plays a role in fostering uniformity in public perception and action (Hamzah et al., 2022).

Jafilus (2021) asserts that the Friday sermon has proven effective as a weekly platform for delivering *da'wah* messages and reminders to the Muslim community. The Friday sermon is also regarded as an effective mass communication medium for conveying religious policies and guidelines to the public. According to him, the responsibility of religious authorities extends beyond ensuring that the Muslim community complies with Sharia law; it also encompasses efforts to safeguard society from misconceptions about religion and the influence of deviant teachings (Jafilus et al., 2021).

In the context of contemporary *da'wah* communication, the Friday sermon possesses its own distinct advantages compared to other mediums because it is scheduled, structured, and falls under the authority of religious institutions. In addition to being compulsory (*wajib*) for Muslim men to listen to, the sermon takes place within an atmosphere of worship that fosters a more effective reception of the message. Past studies indicate that the Friday sermon is capable of shaping public thought, conveying religious policies, and serving as a narrative control medium for contemporary issues affecting Muslims. Therefore, examining the role of the Friday sermon in managing jurisprudential disagreements (*ikhtilaf fiqhi*) holds practical and significant value within the context of the contemporary Muslim community.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach through in-depth interviews with eleven informants, consisting of officers from the Johor Islamic Religious Department, the Johor Mufti Department, academics, representatives from Islamic NGOs, and religious scholars.

In addition, document analysis was conducted on official Friday sermon texts in Johor as well as other relevant official documents to identify the narratives, themes, and approaches used in addressing issues related to fiqh disagreements.

Research Findings

Based on the research findings analysed thematically, the researchers found that the majority of informants agreed that the Friday sermon is a significant medium of religious education in managing fiqh disagreements in Johor. This is because the Friday sermon serves as a weekly channel of *da'wah* that plays a role in guiding public understanding regarding differences of opinion among scholars in a wise and ethical manner.

Document analysis further reveals that official Friday sermon texts in Johor commonly begin with the recitation of Surah al-Nisa' verse 59, which calls upon believers to obey Allah, the Messenger, and those in authority, and to refer disputes back to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

Meaning :

“O believers! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. Should you disagree on anything, then refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you ‘truly’ believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is the best and fairest resolution.”

The inclusion of this verse aims to instill awareness among the community about the importance of obeying the leaders in the state of Johor, as long as the commands given do not contradict the teachings of Islam based on the Qur’an and the Sunnah.

The findings of the study indicate that the role of the Friday sermon as a medium of religious education in managing conflicts arising from fiqh disagreements can be observed through three main dimensions, namely narrative control, public education, and the strengthening of religious identity.

Narrative Control

In managing conflicts of fiqh disagreement, the Friday Sermon functions as a medium to regulate religious narratives within society by providing the Muslims with exposure to the existence of beliefs and practices that contradict the official religious stance in Johor. Through the sermon, the community is given clarification regarding religious issues occurring in society in order to prevent confusion and division among Muslims.

According to the findings of the study, an informant who serves as an officer at the Johor Mufti Department explained that the Friday sermon helps develop public awareness regarding the importance of referring to legitimate religious authorities when understanding religious matters. He stated:

“That is why in the state of Johor, every Friday this is included in the sermon so that the people of Johor know who this authority is. When they know, they will eventually seek knowledge and learn. Previously it was not included, but later it was gazetted.”

In addition, the Friday sermon is also utilized as a platform to respond to contemporary issues related to Islam that arise within society. According to another informant:

“Last week’s Friday khutbah discussed this issue regarding the problem. We do certain things in order to address it.”

Controlling narratives represents one of the important proactive approaches in curbing the spread of ideas that are not aligned with the realities and traditions of Muslim society in the state of Johor. This approach has proven effective in preventing the influence of ideologies that could potentially generate conflict within society.

Public Education

Apart from controlling religious narratives, the Friday Sermon also plays a role as a medium of public education in delivering knowledge that must be clearly understood by the community. The main emphasis is placed on the theme of aqidah compared to matters of

shariah and morality, because issues of aqidah do not fall within matters of legitimate scholarly disagreement (*khilaf*) (Zakaria et al., 2020).

The findings show that the Friday sermon serves as an important channel for the dissemination of knowledge in developing proper understanding of specific issues, enabling society to evaluate and distinguish between teachings that conform to Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah and those that contradict it. According to another informant:

“The Friday sermon is very important in providing understanding to society so that they can evaluate.”

In addition to the delivery of knowledge through the sermon from the pulpit, the Mosque and Surau Management Division of the Jabatan Agama Islam Negeri Johor also produces infographic materials summarizing the key points of the weekly Friday sermon. These materials are distributed through social media and official websites.

This initiative is highly beneficial to the community in Johor, particularly for those who may not fully focus while listening to the khutbah or those who do not attend Friday prayer, such as women and individuals with valid excuses.

With the provision of accurate knowledge, society becomes capable of making appropriate decisions and avoiding influence from narrow interpretations or views that are unsuitable for practice in the state of Johor. Therefore, the Friday sermon has the potential to manage conflicts related to fiqh disagreement.

Empowerment of Religious Identity

Identity refers to the characteristics possessed by a person or entity that distinguish it from others. In the context of fiqh disagreement, it is important for the state of Johor to preserve the religious identity that has long been established within its society, namely adherence to Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, and in terms of jurisprudence, the Shafi'i School. Through the Friday sermon, this religious identity can be strengthened because it is communicated clearly and consistently on a weekly basis.

According to one informant, various beliefs and movements entering society are carefully studied before an official stance is issued by the authorities (Ulil Amri). Groups promoting different teachings are summoned to provide explanations before discussions are conducted and a decision is made whether the view should be accepted or rejected. If the view contradicts the official religious identity of Johor, its dissemination will be restricted. According to another informant:

“Indeed, we study these matters carefully because there are unusual views that appear, which we then address through khutbahs in Johor.”

Furthermore, based on the analysis of official documents, it is frequently emphasized in the second Friday sermon that the religious identity of Islam in the state of Johor is grounded in the creed of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah, particularly the theological traditions of the Ash'ari School and the Maturidi School.

This emphasis increases awareness among Muslims regarding the official religious identity and doctrinal orientation of Johor, while also introducing them to the Ash'ari and Maturidi theological traditions. This policy simultaneously conveys the message of safeguarding Islamic creed and avoiding influence from doctrines that are inconsistent with Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jama'ah.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the study demonstrate that the Friday sermon is a significant medium of religious education in managing conflicts related to fiqh disagreement in the state of Johor. This effectiveness can be observed through the function of the sermon as a medium for controlling religious narratives, providing public education, and strengthening religious identity among the Muslim community.

Through this approach, the Friday sermon and Friday prayer have the potential to create a significant impact in harmonising differences, prioritising brotherhood and social ties (*ukhuwah silaturrahim*), and preserving the unity of the Muslim ummah.

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