

Justice and Virtue in the Qur'an: A Thematic Study of the Correlation of Islamic Social Ethical Values

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This article aims to explore the correlation between justice ('adl) and virtue (ihsan) in the Qur'an as principles of social ethics in Islam. **Method:** Through a thematic exegesis (maudhu'i) approach, this study gathers verses that include both concepts to analyze their linguistic meanings and practical implementation. **Results:** The study finds that justice is the minimum ethical foundation that must be upheld, while ihsan represents the highest form of ethical practice that surpasses justice. **Novelty:** This article emphasizes that the combination of justice and ihsan serves as the main pillar in building a harmonious and civilized society.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Among the basic human values brought by Islam and used as a pillar of personal life, households and society of the nation and state is justice [1]. Upholding justice becomes a non-negotiable obligation, so the Qur'an makes justice among humans the goal of the heavenly treatise [2], as Allah SWT says in Surah al-Hadid verse 25:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ...

"Indeed, We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs and We have sent down with them the Book and the balance (of justice) so that people can do justice...."

Justice is a very essential thing in realizing a human unity, because in the concept of monotheism there is no recognition and no discrimination based on race, gender, religion, language and ethnic considerations.

In this regard, it is concluded that the common thread of Islam is the religion of justice. Orientalists often distinguish that if Christianity is called a religion of love, then Islam is a religion of justice. In fact, there are some sociologists and anthropologists who say, because Islam is a religion of justice, then potentially every Muslim can become a troublemaker for an unjust establishment [3].

The real reality is that if justice is not upheld, then various crimes and crimes will appear in society. Not only that, even the government can be messy so it has to be reshuffled again. The case of the replacement of the National leadership that occurred in 1966 and 1998 can be used as a very clear example in this case [4]. And ironically, this

happens in an Indonesian country where the majority of the population is Muslim (religion of justice).

Doing justice is closely related to doing good in social ethics. When a benefactor gives some of his wealth to the underprivileged, he is already considered to be one who does good, but becomes of other value, when he only does good to others but not to his relatives. From there, justice becomes one of the main pillars of Islam, because it cannot be said that a person's goodness is perfect, a person's affection without him basing that kindness or affection with justice. Allah says in Surah Jonah verse 4:

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا إِنَّهُ يَبْدُوُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ
لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ
شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤﴾

To Him will you all return; as a true promise from Allah, Allah created the creature in its beginning and then revived it (after the resurrection), so that He might reward those who believe and do righteous deeds. And for the disbelievers there will be provided hot water and a painful punishment for their disbelief. (QS. Jonah : 4)

Problem Identification

This paper discusses one of the social behaviors that is considered ethical in society, namely being fair and doing good. As the title suggests, the focus of the discussion lies on being just (العدل) and doing good (الإحسان). Thus, in the discussion of this paper, it is more specific to the verses of justice that are directly correlated with the verses of virtue only, not to the discussion of all verses of justice or verses about virtue that are so widely discussed in the Qur'an.

Problem Formulation

To facilitate writing, the problem formulation is made as follows:

1. What is the description of the terms "justice" and "virtue" in the Qur'an?
2. How is the correlation between the two terms in the context of the Qur'an?

Research Objectives

The objectives of the research are:

1. To find out the description of the terms "just" and "virtue" in the Qur'an.
2. To know the correlation between justice and virtue in the context of the Qur'an

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Methods

This research uses qualitative research methods which are divided into two stages, including:

1. Data Collection

This method is included in non-empirical research that uses the study research method as one of the techniques in data collection.

2. Data Analysis

The method used in this case uses the thematic interpretation method (tafsir maudlu'i). That is the method of interpretation that collects verses of the Qur'an that have the same purpose in the sense of discussing the same topic and arranging it based on chronology and the cause of the descent of these verses [5].

Using the method offer from al-Farmawi [6], this paper uses a thematic interpretation method that collects a number of verses from various letters that both discuss one particular issue.

Writing Systematics

The systematics of writing this paper are as follows:

- I. Introduction
 - a. Background
 - b. Problem Identification
 - c. Problem Formulation
 - d. Research Objectives
 - e. Research Methods
 - f. Writing Systematics
- II. Discussion
 - a. Fair in a Language Perspective
 - b. Implementation of Justice and Doing Virtue in the Context of the Qur'an
- III. Conclusion

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

'Adl and Ihsan in a Linguistic Perspective

Adil comes from the Arabic word '*Adl*' which globally is the opposite of persecution (*dzulm*) which is interpreted as "straight, equal, middle" [7]. Al-Maraghi gives meaning by "conveying rights to their owners in a tangible way" [8]. Quraish Shihab makes it clearer, that this not only requires a person to give rights to another party, but also that right must be handed over without delay. Because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) once said: The delay of debt from a person who is able to pay his debt is persecution [9]. Whereas ar-Raghib means "to give equal rewards" [10].

In the Qur'an, the context of justice is also often relied on the word *al-qisth*. According to Ibn Faris, *al-Qisth* means fairness, part, scales or justice. This word contains the concept of justice related to human rights in a balanced manner. In line with this opinion are al-Baidhawi, Yusuf Ali and Sayyid Quthb [11]. However, slightly different from this opinion, Quraish Shihab in his commentary states that *al-Qisth* is not just Adil. When referring to the opinion of al-Ghazali in his book *asma' al-husna* when explaining the nature of Allah *al-Muqsith* which is taken from the root word *al-Qisth*, he defines *al-Muqsith* as the one who wins/defends the persecuted from the persecutor by making the persecuted and the persecutor both willing, equally satisfied, and equally happy with the results obtained. So from there it is concluded that *al-Qisth* has a deeper meaning than *al-'adl*, because in terms of justice, there is justice that does not please one party, such as

when imposing just sanctions on the persecutor. *Qisth* is fair but at the same time makes both parties, or all parties, get something to please him [12].

The term fair in the Qur'an using the word '*adl*' is found 16 times, including in Surah al-Baqarah : 48, 123, 282; an-Nisa' : 3, 58, 129; al-Maidah : 8, 95, 106; al-An'am : 152; an-Nahl : 76, 90; as-Shura : 15; al-Hujurat : 9; and at-Thalaq : 2. Meanwhile, using the word *iqsath* with various forms of verbs is found in 6 places, including in surah al-Baqarah : 282; An-Nisa: 3; al-Maidah : 42; al-Ahzab: 5; al-Hujurat : 9; and al-Mumtahanah : 8. And using the word *al-Qisth* repeated 15 times in the Qur'an, namely Surah Ali Imran : 18, 21; an-Nisa' : 127, 135; al-Maidah: 8, 42; al-An'am: 152; al-A'raf: 29; Jonah: 4, 47, 54; Hud: 85; al-Anbiya' : 47; ar-Rahman: 9; and al-Hadid: 25.

Doing virtue, which in this case uses the meaning of the word *Ihsan*, etymologically can be interpreted as *benevolence, charity, and almsgiving*, which are generally good [13]. *Ihsan* has a deeper meaning than other words of meaning such as *al-birru* or *al-khair*. This word by al-Harrali as quoted by al-Biqai' is the peak of good deeds. In the relationship between servants, the meaning of this word will be achieved when a person looks at himself in another person so that he gives to him what he has to give for himself. When correlated with the relationship between a servant and Allah, *Ihsan* is the melting of a servant's self so that he only 'sees' Allah SWT. So whoever sees himself in the position of the needs of others and does not see himself in the time of worshipping Allah, then he is *a muhsin*, and then he has reached the peak in all charity. So according to al-Haralli in the interpretation of Quraish Shihab [14]. Ibn Kathir described *Ihsan* as having a better mood than his outward appearance, being the opposite of *Fahsyah* and *Munkar* which he defined as being better than his heart [15].

It is further expanded according to the interpretation of ar-Raghib al-Asfahani to the recitation of *Ihsan*. According to him, the term *Ihsan* is used in two ways; first, giving favors to others, and second, good deeds. Therefore, the term *Ihsan* is broader than just doing good or giving favors, but its meaning is higher than the content of the meaning of "fair" because fair is treating others the same as they treat us. Whereas *Ihsan* is to treat him better than he treats us [16].

Al-Maraghi gives the meaning of *mujmal* to *ihsan*, namely as one of the human behaviors that is based on faith in Allah and manifested in good deeds to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor and other fellow human beings. So according to him (al-Maraghi), the actualization of *ihsan* is not only limited to physical behavior but also psychologically (psychological) [17].

When tracing the word *al-ihsan* in the Qur'an, 37 places were found, including Surah al-Baqarah: 83, 112, 177, 195; Ali Imran: 134, 148; an-Nisa' : 125, 128; al-Maidah: 85, 93; al-A'raf: 56; at-Taubah : 100, 120; Jonah: 26; Hud: 115; Yusuf : 22; an-Nahl : 30, 90, 128; al-Isra': 7; al-Kahfi : 39; al-Hajj: 37; al-Qashash: 77; al-Ankabut: 69; Luqman: 3, 4, 5, 22; ash-Shaffat : 80, 105, 110; az-Zumar: 10, 34; al-Ahqaf: 12; an-Najm: 31; ar-Rahman: 60; al-Mursalaat : 44.

Fair Correlation and Doing Good in the Qur'anic Context

Being fair and doing good are two positive attitudes that support humans in the success of building social relations among the community. Each of them has a fairly basic existence as the main pillar of Islam in terms of human relations. For example, regarding the commandment to be just, Allah says in surah ar-Rahman verse 9:

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾

And set the scales justly, and do not diminish the balance. (QS. Ar-Rahman : 9)

Likewise, when this context of justice is associated with doing good deeds, it indicates that justice does not only dwell on the issue of law and trade, but the context of justice also falls into the area of ethical values in society. Allah SWT said:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾﴾

Indeed, Allah commands (you) to be just and to do good, to give to the relatives, and Allah forbids evil deeds, iniquity and enmity. He teaches you so that you can learn lessons. (QS. An-Nahl : 90)

In an effort to uphold social justice, Islam has touched all social aspects from the smallest of personalities, family to those related to social interaction.

The attitude of justice and *acts of courtesy* that correlate with individuals can be seen in a *moment* where the Prophet PBUH once said to Abdullah bin 'Amr when he reduced his own rights by continuously fasting during the day and praying at night:

"Verily, for your body you have a right (to rest), and indeed for your eyes you have a right and for your family you have a right and for those who visit you also have a right." (Muttafaqun 'Alaih) [18].

Likewise, in the Qur'an Allah SWT says about individual justice:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ....

O you who have believed, be true enforcers of justice, be witnesses for Allah even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. (QS. An-Nisa' : 135)

Thus, the enforcement of justice is not a monopoly of certain parties, but an obligation of God to all humans, especially for those who hold power or rulers [19].

The correlation of justice and *ihsan* related to family relations, one of which is found in surah al-An'am verse 152:

..... وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ، وَبِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَلِكُمْ وَصَّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ.

"And when you say, then you shall be just, even though he is (your relative), and fulfill the promise of Allah. That is what Allah has commanded you to remember."

According to Ibn Kathir, the verse is the same as surah al-Maidah verse 8, namely:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ...

"O you who believe, be those who always uphold (the truth) for the sake of Allah, be witnesses justly..." (QS. Al-Maidah : 8)

In this connection, Allah commands to be fair in all actions and speeches, both to those who are near and far away. Allah always commands to do justice to everyone and in every time and circumstance, justice must still be upheld [20].

Likewise, in terms of marriage rules, especially in the matter of polygamy, the Qur'an gives provisions to the husband. One of them is that husbands with limited abilities must be able to act as fairly as possible to their wives. Allah said:

وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا كُلَّ الْمِيلِ فَتَذَرُوهَا كَالْمُعَلَّقَةِ وَإِنْ تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا

رَّحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾

"And you will never be able to be fair between your wives, even if you are very anxious to do so, so do not be too inclined (to your loved ones), so that you leave the others in the lurch. And if you make amends and take care of yourselves (from deceit), then verily Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (QS. An-Nisa' : 129).

This context of fairness and virtue also discusses a lot about the ethics of social interaction between fellow humans. For example, God forbids humans to be picky, humans must be able to be just, even to their enemies. Allah says in surah al-Maidah verse 8:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَتَانُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

"O you who believe, be those who always uphold (the truth) for the sake of Allah, be witnesses justly. And do not let your hatred of a people cause you to act unjustly. Be just, because justice is closer to piety. And fear Allah, for Allah is Aware of what you do."

The above verse according to Quraish Shihab is a verse that shows the substance of Islamic teachings. If there is a religion that makes love the highest guidance, Islam is not. This, because love in personal life, let alone society, can have a bad impact. If a person commits a violation and deserves severe sanctions, then then love should not play a role because it can hinder the fall of the law on him, when what is required is fair, that is, inflicting a punishment that is commensurate on him [21]. In essence, Islam is a just religion, there is no term favoritism in it.

In another verse, Allah says:

سَمْعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكَلُونَ لِلسُّخْتِ فَإِنْ جَاءُوكَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَإِنْ تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

﴿٤٢﴾

They are the ones who like to hear false news, and eat a lot of what is unlawful. If they come to you (to ask for a verdict), then decide between them, or turn away from them; if you turn away from them, they will not give you any harm. And if you decide their case, then judge between them justly, for Allah loves those who are just. (QS. Al-Maidah : 42)

The above verse according to Quraish Shihab is a continuation of the previous verse which talks about the temporary qualities of the Jews, that the Jews have the following qualities:

1. Likes to hear, accept and justify fake news.
2. Likes to 'eat' illicit wealth obtained from unlawful means, such as usury, bribery, etc.

In some narrations it is stated that this verse is about an incident in which two Jews committed adultery. The event occurred after the hijrah where the book of the book in their hands they had changed, which was initially the punishment for the adulterer of *Muhson* was to stone them with a sling 100 times, smeared his face with charcoal, and was raised on a donkey upside down and carried around the city [22].

So that they agreed to come to ask the Prophet for the decision of the matter, then Allah in this case gave two alternatives; deciding their case with justice or not deciding it, because it is basically decided or not, will not give any harm. Because their goal is actually only to demand a verdict that suits their desires, not to seek the true law [23].

Likewise, in the field of mu'amalah, Allah regulates so justly in matters of mu'amalah. Allah says in surah al-Baqarah verse 282:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْعَدْلِ.

"O you who believe, when you do mu'amalah not in cash for the appointed time, you should write it down. And let a writer among you write it right."

This verse is so detailed in explaining the ethics of mu'amalah that it makes it the longest verse in the Qur'an. The context of 'just' in the verse is more interpreted in the sense of 'right'. This means that the writer must write it according to reality, not make it up. The use of the word '*adl*' in the verse is intended so that the writer must be fair, not to take sides with each other so that he writes according to the actual incident [24].

From the context of these verses, it can be concluded that Islam always teaches its people to uphold justice in any circumstance, any situation or with anyone and anything, then justice must always be upheld, where when justice has been upheld, then a person will be free from the deeds of *dzulm* (persecution), and when he is free from the deeds of *dzulm*, then he has realized one of the purposes of the *Courtesy* of Scott.

In another verse Allah SWT says:

إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعَدَ اللَّهُ حَقًّا إِنَّهُ يَبْدُوُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُمْ
لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ
شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

To Him will you all return; as a true promise from Allah, Allah created the creature in its beginning and then revived it (after the resurrection), so that He might reward those who believe and do righteous deeds. And for the disbelievers there will be provided hot water and a painful punishment for their disbelief. (QS. Jonah : 4)

Justice and doing good have been the missions of the messengers of Allah, not only the Prophet Muhammad, but also the previous prophets who were sent by Allah to call upon his people to uphold justice and do good. It is narrated in surah Hud verse 85:

وَيَقُومُوا أَوْفُوا الْمِكْيَالَ وَالْمِيزَانَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ
وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

And Shu'aib said: "O my people, measure and weigh justly, and do not deprive people of their rights, and do not do evil on the earth by doing damage.

Islam as a religion of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, comes with all ordinances that are mostly offerings for humans so that – in accordance with the purpose of the Qur'an revealed – they become a guide so that they do not get lost in navigating life in the world. Humans who have the status of caliphs who are endowed with reason to think, are indeed appropriate to do everything that Allah has commanded for the benefit of their affairs in the world. In addition, in the end there will be accountability where humans will be accountable for all their deeds before Allah SWT. and at that time all deeds will be decided by Allah with His justice. Allah says in surah al-Anbiya' verse 47:

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ
شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا
حَاسِبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

We will set up the right scales on the Day of Resurrection, so that no one will be harmed in the slightest. And if it were only a grain of wheat, then We would have brought a reward for it. And We as the Calculator are enough.

With this discussion of the correlation between justice and ihsan, it is hoped that there will be a little enlightenment for personal or congregational introspection, because one thing that is so sad is the fact that Indonesia as a country whose population is still surveyed as a religion whose majority is Islam, is still not able to uphold justice both in the area of law and social relations. So of course this situation is so contradictory to the teachings of Islam which prioritize justice that it has been nicknamed *the religion of justice*.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : Being fair and doing good are two positive attitudes that support humans in the success of building social relations among the community. Each of them has a fairly basic existence as the main pillar of Islam in terms of human relations.

Implication : The urgency of these two positive behaviors is reflected in the verses that discuss both, where the verses that discuss justice and the attitude of ihsan regulate human life from the smallest side, namely the individual, the family to the wider community. **Limitation :** While the concepts of fairness and doing good are clearly emphasized in the verses, the analysis is limited to their role as ethical principles without further empirical examination of how these values are implemented in diverse social and cultural contexts. **Future Research :** Future research could explore comparative studies on how the values of fairness and doing good are interpreted and practiced in various Muslim communities, as well as how these principles can be operationalized in modern societal governance and interpersonal relations.

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