

CHARACTER BUILDING THROUGH HADITH PERSPECTIVE  
(STUDY ANALYSIS ABOUT HADITH IMAN, ISLAM, AND IHSAN)

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**Abstrak:** Character building is seen to be an essential answer of the grim value of education in which the gap is occurred between intellectual intelligence and social intelligence. On the intellectual intelligence side, education system successfully delivers brilliant people. Meanwhile, on the social intelligence, some of those who are educated regarded the education as a showcase to justify actions that actually adverse the commonsense. This is, of course, go against the true value of education in which the outcome is to shape a brilliant, well-mannered generation. This is also compatible with the mission of Prophet Muhammad who aimed to complete the morality of human being. Therefore, teachers as the primary key of education bear a huge responsibilities to transfer all the knowledge to the learners according to *Iman*, *Islam*, and *Ihsan* philosophy. All can be done as the teachers become role models of *Iman* (faith), *Islam* (religious), and *Ihsan* (good behaviour) to their pupils in their learning process.

**Kata Kunci:** *Iman*; *Islam*; *Ihsan*; Intellectual Intelligence.

## I. PREFACE

The gap between intellectual and social intelligence resulted by the low value of education has become one of Indonesia's biggest education problem. This is obvious that the proof is seen on media, both electronic and papers, the criminal reality broadcasted in a daily basis. Corruption, for example, has become a cancer for the country. The perpetrator is not a commoner but mostly those who are notorious for their intelligence and public figures. Another grim reality comes from the students themselves. Scuffling, violent demonstrations, motorcycle gang, street racing is yet unremovable stain in our education system. Cheating, class skipping, drugs, free sex, misbehavior and lack of respect for the parents is just another example.<sup>1</sup>

The educational institution is to blame for the reality above, according to the researcher. It failed to build well character to the generations. What the educational institution achieves is only an intellectual intelligence, but dismisses the social intelligence aspect. The ill-mannered committed by those who claimed themselves educated shows how delicate our character is. It is because not only do the formal

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<sup>1</sup> See Nurcholish Madjid, "Islam, Faith and Ihsan as Divine Teaching Trilogy?" in Budhy Munawar-Rachman (Ed), *Contextualization of Islamic Doctrine in History* (Cet. II; Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p. 463.

education system is well optimized, but also the informal system lack of system support.

In the religion perspective, the attendance of Islam, along with the Prophet Muhammad as the Holy Messenger is aiming to complete the morality of human being. The Prophet had mentioned in the Hadith remarked that I was sent to uphold and complement ethical values. Thus, the revelation of Quran and hadith is a complex and formulated curriculum to build human characters.

One of the hadith of Muhammad was taught by Jibril tells about iman, islam, and ihsan. The triplet, to Nurcholis Madjid, is regarded as trilogy of God's doctrine. These three aspects are the inception of all education materials sourced from Quran and Hadith. That is why the character building became a genuine obligation to every teachers. A teacher must be able to deliver Iman, Islam and ihsan value in every learning process in order to preserve strong confidence to the students.

## II. HADITH ABOUT *IMAN, ISLAM AND IHSAN*

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ قَالَ حَدَّثَنَا إِسْمَاعِيلُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو حَيَّانَ التَّمِيمِيُّ عَنْ أَبِي زُرْعَةَ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ بَارِزًا يَوْمًا لِلنَّاسِ فَأَتَاهُ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ مَا الْإِيمَانُ قَالَ الْإِيمَانُ أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَبِلِقَائِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْبَعْثِ قَالَ مَا الْإِسْلَامُ قَالَ الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَتُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ وَتُؤَدِّيَ الزَّكَاةَ الْمَفْرُوضَةَ وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ قَالَ مَا الْإِحْسَانُ قَالَ أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ قَالَ مَتَى السَّاعَةُ قَالَ مَا الْمَسْنُونُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ وَسَأُخْبِرُكَ عَنْ أَشْرَاطِهَا إِذَا وَلَدَتِ الْأُمَّةُ رَبَّهَا وَإِذَا تَطَاوَلَتْ رُغَاةُ الْإِبِلِ الْبُهْمُ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ فِي حَمْسٍ لَا يَعْلَمُهُنَّ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ تَلَا النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ( إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ) الْآيَةَ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ فَقَالَ رُدُّوهُ فَلَمْ يَرَوْا شَيْئًا فَقَالَ هَذَا جِبْرِيلُ جَاءَ يُعَلِّمُ النَّاسَ دِينَهُمْ (رواه البخارى)

Meaning:

Abu Huraira reported: the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) appeared before the public that a man came to him and said: Prophet of Allah, (tell me) what is iman. Upon this he (the Holy Prophet) replied: that you affirm your faith to Allah, His angels, His books, His meeting, His messengers and that you affirm your faith in the resurrection hereafter. He (again) said: Messenger of Allah, (tell me) what does al-Islam signify. He (the Holy Prophet) replied: al-Islam signifies that you worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him and you establish obligatory prayer and you pay the obligatory poor-rate (zakat) and you observe the fast of Ramadan. He (the inquirer) again said: Messenger of Allah, what does al-ihsan imply? He (the Holy Prophet) replied: that you worship Allah as if you are seeing Him, and in case you fail to see Him, then observe prayer (with this idea in your mind) that (at least) He is seeing you. He (the inquirer) again said: Messenger of Allah, when would there be the hour of (doom)? He (the Holy Prophet) replied: the one who is asked about it is no better informed than the inquirer. I, however, narrate some of its signs of doom. (moreover) when the sheperds of black (camels) would exult themselves in buldings, this is one of the signs of (doom). (doom) is one of the five (happenings wrapped in the unseen) which no one knows but Allah. Then he

(the Messenger of Allah) recited (the verse): “Verily Allah! With Him alone is the knowledge of the hour and He it is Who sends (down the rain) and knows which is in the wombs and no person knows whatsoever he shall earn tomorrow, and a person not in whatsoever land he shall die. Verily Allah is knowing, aware”. He (the narrator, Abu Huraira) said: then the person turned back and went away. The Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: bring that man back to me. They (the companion of the holy Prophet present there) went to bring him back, but they saw nothing there. Upon this the Messenger of Allah remarked: He was Jibril who came to teach the people their religion. (Bukhari)

The Hadith above is quite well-known. It presents in a few book of hadith. According to the takhrij result using keyword al-Islam, this hadith available in:

1. Shahih Bukhari, The book of Iman chapter 27 & 34; Kitab Syahadat chapter 26; Kitab Tafsir verse 31;
2. Sahih Muslim the book of Iman chapter 5, 7-8;
3. Sunan Abu Dawud Kitab Sunnah Chapter 16;
4. Sunan al-Turmudzi the book of Iman chapter 4;
5. Sunan al-Nasa’iy the book of Iman chapter 5-6; Kitab Salat chapter 4;
6. Sunan Ibn Majah Kitab Muqaddimah chapter 9-10;
7. Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal, chapter I page 37, 52, 162 & 319; chapter II page 107, 426; chapter IV page 129, 164 285, 446; chapter V page 3.

### **III. CHARACTER BUILDING CONCEPT IN HADITH IMAN, ISLAM, AND IHSAN**

Every muslim knows very well that Islam (al-Islam) is parallel with iman (al-iman), and iman is incomplete without ihsan. On the contrary, ihsan is none without iman, and iman cannot be standalove without Islam. The definition of those three are entangled each other, according to the latest experts research. Their meaning are linked up to another, that each of the words included the similiar meaning of others. Iman contains Islam and ihsan, in Islam there are iman and ihsan, and within ihsan there are also iman and Islam. From this point of view, iman, Islam and ihsan can be considered as trilogy of God’s doctrine.

#### **A. Iman**

According to the hadith above, when the inquirer (jibril) asked about the definition of iman, the prophet Muhammad answered that iman:

First, affirming the faith to Allah, the Almighty, the par excellence faith. Such faith enables human to understand more in a higer dimension about their bonds in the universe. Tauhid is the undoubtable revelation. This process embraces all aspect of bonds, such as the bond between human and themselves, social bond, and the bond between human and the universe as the temporary vessel of all the mortals. With the concept of tauhid, all those aspects have transcended, molded based on the law of divinity.

Having faith to Allah will foster the good manners in accordance to the guidance of God. The concept of Allah as the all source of kindness would become their conviction that the path of God becomes their centerpiece.<sup>2</sup>

Second, affirming faith to His angels is a concept of teaching that something intangible (cannot be touched or seen) is also a thing that exists. Beyond this physical universe lies another unseen world such as *alam malakut*, or the world of divinity. It lies on the other dimension that is higher than ours. This is a sign to us that our rational is completely narrow and limited compare to the upper dimensions.<sup>3</sup>

Affirming faith to angels can also diminish the pride that is often possessed by most of the people. The limitedness in our way of thinking rationally emerges us to look into the Boundless entity (Allah) to observe more the intangible entities' world. This is also a power to conceive the idea that human world today is nothing but a mirage, and that the world is just an impermanent place for us to go to the other worlds where the angels have been waiting for us as juries in a verdict to hold responsible of our behavioral today.

Third, affirming faith to His messengers, the bridge between this world and the heaven. A reminder for us the two worlds are connected with His messengers as the bridge between earth and the heaven.<sup>4</sup>

Affirming faith to the messengers will shape the character of prophets within our life. It is a big lesson to take from the messengers who served various way of living, especially those who are known as the *Ulul azmi*. They are a role model to their followers.

Fourth, affirming faith to His books. Messages from Allah for the human kind. The genuine meaning of the holy books (Quran is excluded), however, is often distorted by the influence of human thoughts, resulting the misleading of the true meaning of the previous books due to the misinterpretation by human. But Quran is a different story. It is guaranteed by Allah that the purity will always be preserved until the judgement day.<sup>5</sup>

Believe in the holy books will foster a strong heart that will always seek for a guidance from the holy book as a benchmark of way of living. The messenger of Allah had told us that one should not be gone astray as long as they grasp on the Quran and hadith.

Fifth, believe in the hereafter. This is a message for human that they will absolutely journey to the next unexplored world. This also means that life does not end up in death. Today's living is just a start line and must be lived up earnestly. Today is just a brief time and preparation for the next living with infinite lifespan. How we will face it depends on how we live today. Believe in the hereafter also makes people to be more responsible for every actions they commit, because in the hereafter, every little

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<sup>2</sup> See A. Rahman Zainuddin, "Zakat: The Implication of Equity" in *Budhy Munawar-Rachman (Ed), Contextualization of Islamic Doctrine in the History*. (Cet. II; Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p. 430

<sup>3</sup> A. Rahman Zainuddin, *Zakat*, p. 431.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*,

piece of our actions on earth will take into account and be held responsible. Allah, His messengers, and all the believers will witness the verdict (al-Taubah [9]: v. 94 and 105).<sup>6</sup>

Sixth, affirming faith to the al-qadr (predestination), a good and bad fate. A good example of lesson of how vulnerable we are as a human kind in this universe, despite our effort to worship and pray or struggling to change our life. Awaken by the fact that we are a being who always rely on something that is not in our control.<sup>7</sup> Believing in the al-qadr will teach us to always be dependent on the universe.

Faith (iman) is a form of worship to Allah. it is sometimes hard to do, but it is no more than a test to get us closer to Him. Iman has to be maintained within our heart, because it brings peacefulness to every of our serenity. That serenity comes from the wrongdoings we commit, and can be a stain to our faith.<sup>8</sup> Faith is very dynamic. It could shrink or expand, decreased or increased, strong and weak. It is not fixed. Those who are said to be faithful but at the same time are sinful obviously has a weak iman.<sup>9</sup>

## **B. Islam**

The prophet Muhammad explained as Jibril asked about what Islam is. Here are the explanations:

**First**, worship only to Allah and never associate Him to anything else. Other chronicles explanation is to recite *Shahadah*, which is the profession of faith, a declaration implies that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger.<sup>10</sup>

**Second**, performing the obligatory prayers. It is a midpoint of the believer. It represents the focus point of our goal, symbolizes good social interactions, and an act of obedience to of the superior.<sup>11</sup>

Aware of Allah as the final destination will encourage people to behave. Because eventually we will return to Allah, driven by the fact that if He forbid something to do, then we do only things He permit us to do. This is the true path, a pristine (*fitrah*) and truthful (*hanif*) way for human kind.<sup>12</sup>

**Third**, paying compulsory giving. A manifestation of our tangible wealth. *Zakat*, or almsgiving, is a deduction of one's wealthiness in the name of Allah.<sup>13</sup> It is given to the poor and other specific muslim community. *Zakat* is the purification of our wealth in which certain amount of it belongs to the needy and poor. By paying the *zakat*, it will

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>10</sup> A. Rahman Zainuddin, *Zakat.....*, p. 432.

<sup>11</sup> A. Rahman Zainuddin, *Zakat.....*, p. 432.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 401.

<sup>13</sup> A. Rahman Zainuddin, *Zakat.....*, p. 433.

encourage a new growth in the society, especially those in the economic hardship, because the money will circulate among them.<sup>14</sup>

This compulsory giving will foster social empathy characters within one's self, care for others and averted from being a money slave.

**Forth**, fasting in Ramadan. It is a personal, secluded type of worship. Only them and Allah knows the process. The keypoint of fasting in Ramadan is the understanding concept that Allah is all-seeing. This is the essence of *takwa* to be a well-mannered personality. Ramadan fasting is a strong secluded thread between Allah and His worshippers.<sup>15</sup>

**Fifth**, the pilgrimage. This is a concept of the unity and equality of human kind, a symbol of international community, a sacrifice, a concept of human rights in Islam, etc.<sup>16</sup> The sermon of the prophet Muhammad during *hajj wada* (the farewell pilgrimage) explained the relation between *hajj* and humanity values. It highlighted that *hajj* is a equality, the preservation of soul, wealth and dignity of others, and prohibition of oppressing small people both physically and economically.<sup>17</sup>

At present days, *al-Islam* is better known for a religion's name presented by the holy Prophet. Generally, Islam is not a proper noun. The word *al-Islam*, as an active verbal, has the meaning of submit God. That is the real spiritual way of living recognized by Allah (Ali Imran [3]: v. 19).<sup>18</sup> *al-Islam* is not just a religion's name, but it also recognized by its real meaning, which is submitting to God.<sup>19</sup>

### C. Ihsan

Textually, *ihsan*, according to the hadith above, is worshipping Allah with the understanding concept that Allah is witnessing everything. When it comes a hardship to see Allah, know that Allah is seeing you. From that point, *ihsan* is a teaching concept that Allah is exist in every aspect of our life, as if we performing salat before Him. *Ihsan* is a concept of education that literally same as its meaning.<sup>20</sup>

In other words, *ihsan* is a sign of awareness that Allah undeniably presents and look on in our daily basis. It makes us to be more aware of our doings, be more fully responsible and have a strong commitment.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 434.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415-416.

<sup>16</sup> A. Rahman Zainuddin, *Zakat.....*, p. 432.

<sup>17</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, 'Hajj' in Budhy Munawar-Rachman, *Contextualization of Islamic Doctrine in History*. (Cet. II; Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p. 446.

<sup>18</sup> Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam.....*, p. 465.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

<sup>20</sup> Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam.*, p. 472.

According to M. Quraish Shihab, ihsan is incomparable virtue. A virtue above all virtues. This word is preferred to two things; first, giving benevolence to others; second, the goodness itself. Thus, ihsan is not just a common virtue such as sharing goodness to others. It is a concept of giving more and taking less. As a human being, ihsan is a state when you see yourself within others and that you give what they deserve. Ihsan, however, as a servant of God, is a state where you see nothing but Allah Himself.<sup>21</sup>

Nurcholish Madjid prefers to consider ihsan as a real concept in tasawwuf (Islamic philosophy) to be implemented in Tariqah, and at the final analyses it is a science about absolute truth in its own dimension. The absolute truth is the top level above all truths that has a little possibility for human to reach. A science that is hard to digest and contains paradoxes. Whoever tries to reach that point, if they understand the paradoxes, will understand the true meaning of ihsan.<sup>22</sup>

Eventually, submitting everything to Allah, which is the meaning of Islam, is futile without affirming faith to Allah, the iman meaning in which it bring forth the positive-optimistic on Allah and His creation. It is also clear to see that Islam brings peacefulness (salam) and salvation (salamah), and iman provides welfare and protection (amanah), and ihsan comes as a guide for the happiness (hasanah).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The mission of the holy prophet Muhammad is to complement the ethical value of humankind to create well-mannered people according to Quran. The fundamental elements in the curriculum based on Quran and hadith is all about iman, Islam, and ihsan. This is similiar to the lesson given by Jibril to the prophet Muhammad throughtout question and answer.

Iman, which consists of believe in Allah, His angels, books, messengers, hereafter and the predestinations contains valuable messages that has to be implemented. Islam, a brief explanation of syahadah, salat, fasting, almsgiving, and pilgrimage (hajj) comprises outstanding character values to be a benchmark for one's spiritual measurement. Ihsan, as the final outcome of iman and Islam, is the core focus of the character itself, in which the meaning is that we do good manner in a fully aware that we are seeing Allah or we are being seen by Him.

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<sup>21</sup> See M. Quraish Shihab, *Sowing Divine Messages: The Qur'an and the Dynamics of Community Life* (Cet. I; Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2006), p. 16-17.

<sup>22</sup> Nurcholish Madjid, *Islam.....*, p. 478.

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