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The Qur'an and humanism: Tracing the relationship between religion and humanity

Halizah Maghfira Izzani

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Al-Qur'an As-Syifa Subang, Indonesia

Sansannnn.zhfiraaa13@gmail.com

Abdul Rohman

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Al-Qur'an As-Syifa Subang, Indonesia

abdulrohman@stiq.assyifa.ac.id

Abstract

The understanding of humanism in the context of human life has become increasingly complex due to the plurality of cultures, races, and religions, as well as the prevailing perception that the teachings of the Qur'an are often interpreted exclusively. This has led to the assumption that universal human values are incompatible with Islamic principles, even though the Qur'an in fact contains teachings that emphasize justice, compassion, and solidarity. This study aims to explore the Qur'an's contribution to humanist thought by highlighting these core values and offering a new perspective that the Qur'an can serve as a source of humanist ethics relevant to modern society. The study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between the Qur'an and humanism, thereby strengthening universal human values within the Islamic context and contributing positively to intercultural dialogue and tolerance in contemporary human life. Employing a qualitative approach through library research, this study examines various books, articles, and other relevant sources to formulate a conceptual framework on the relationship between the Qur'an and humanism. The stages of the research include topic selection, information gathering, formulation of the research core, data collection, data presentation, and report preparation. The findings indicate that the Qur'an makes a significant contribution to humanist thought through its emphasis on justice, compassion, and solidarity. These values are not only spiritual in nature but can also serve as essential ethical foundations for modern society. Understanding the Qur'an as a guide that supports universal human values allows for the construction of a bridge between religion and humanity, fostering more constructive dialogue in addressing contemporary social and cultural challenges.

Keywords: relationship; Qur'an; humanism.

Introduction

Humanism is a philosophical concept that places human beings at the center of life, emphasizing respect for individuals based on their technical and normative capacities. In various societies, humanism is reflected in the appreciation of art and culture, as seen in the ability to create works of high aesthetic value. Moreover, values such as solidarity and communal harmony are fundamental principles in fostering socially cohesive relationships. In many communities, the spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance remains an essential part of social identity. Other key characteristics of humanism include peacefulness, tolerance, and intellectual capacity in managing various aspects of life, which continue to evolve in response to the demands of changing times.

However, understanding humanism becomes increasingly difficult without a solid grasp of the cultural diversity inherent in each individual. In other words, pluralism and heterogeneity in society are objective realities that play a crucial role in shaping one's comprehension of humanism—both for educators and learners. Diversity in ethnicity, race, religion, belief systems, and culture constitutes an integral identity of individuals and serves as a starting point for internalizing the concept of humanism within educational contexts.

Globalization has brought about significant changes in human life. Although it initially emerged in the Western world, globalization has led to fundamental transformations that impact traditions, religious practices, worldviews, and societal behaviors across the globe. These changes are inevitable and have triggered a range of responses, one of which is the rise of fundamentalism as a reactionary stance against modernization and cultural openness. In the 21st century, debates between fundamentalism and universal tolerance have become more prominent. Within the digital era—characterized by the rapid flow of information and imagery—individuals continuously engage with others who hold different perspectives and lifestyles. While many communities accept diversity as a natural dynamic of social life, fundamentalists often view such developments as a threat to their values. Since ancient times, humans have grappled with hopes, anxieties, and uncertainties that influence their mindset, actions, and daily lives. These emotional upheavals have only intensified from the late 20th to the early 21st century. Nevertheless, despite numerous challenges in the domains of economics, politics, culture, and security, a vision for a more harmonious world continues to emerge as part of the evolution of human civilization (Madjid, 2003; Mulyana, 2016).

The complexity of humanist discourse today arises from divergent worldviews shaped by varying cultural, racial, and religious contexts. Additionally, the perception that religious teachings—particularly those of the Qur'an—are exclusive and rigid contributes to the belief that they are incompatible with universal human values. Yet, a deeper examination reveals that the Qur'an contains numerous teachings centered on justice, compassion, and solidarity (Aminullah, 2022; Kholiq, 2018; Oktavianti et al., 2023). The Qur'an is a dynamic scripture that intersects with a variety of disciplines, including humanism. While humanism is often perceived as a philosophical tradition that stands in opposition to religion due to its tendency to marginalize the role of God, such assumptions warrant critical re-evaluation.

This study holds particular urgency in bridging the perceived divide between the Qur'an and humanism, especially in response to assumptions that the two are mutually incompatible. Inadequate comprehension of Qur'anic teachings often leads to the misconception that Islam is misaligned with universal human values. Therefore, this research aims to explore how the Qur'an contributes to humanist thought by highlighting teachings that emphasize justice, compassion, and solidarity. It is hoped that this study will offer a new perspective—one that recognizes the Qur'an not merely as a religious text, but also as a relevant source of humanist ethics for contemporary life.

Several prior studies have addressed the intersection between the Qur'an and humanism from various methodological standpoints. For example, Aminullah (2022) discusses how the principles of religious humanism align with Qur'anic teachings on ethics and morality, including liberty, *ukhuwwah*, and justice, although the foundation

differs in that religious humanism, from the Qur'anic perspective, is based on divine principles and revelation. Another study by Oktavianti et al. (2023) emphasizes the humanistic and humanitarian dimensions of the Qur'an, as reflected in its discussions on human creation, potential, and existential role. Meanwhile, Kholiq (2018), drawing upon the interpretation of Murtada Mutahhari, argues that Islamic humanism cannot be separated from human nature (*fitrah*) and one's relationship with God. Mutahhari's ideas, inspired by Imam 'Ali's sermons, affirm the view that human thought is a potential that must be awakened. Based on these earlier discussions—which focus predominantly on the positioning of humanism within the Qur'an—this study seeks to complement existing research by further examining the relational dynamics between religion and humanity through Qur'anic verses that convey the spirit of justice, compassion, and solidarity among humankind.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach through library research. According to Rubani (2023), library research is a method of data collection conducted by examining various books, literature, notes, and reports that are relevant to the subject being studied. This method is applied to construct a conceptual framework regarding the relationship between religion and humanity as presented in the Qur'an. The stages of library research, as outlined by Kuhlthau and cited by Sari (2020), include topic selection, information exploration, determination of the research focus, data source collection, data presentation preparation, and report writing.

The data sources used in this study include books, academic journal articles, and other relevant references. The data collection technique applied is documentation, which involves searching for information related to relevant variables in the form of books, journals, or other credible sources. The data analysis procedure was carried out using descriptive techniques through a library-based research approach.

Results and Discussion

Definition of Humanism

Etymologically, the term *humanism* is derived from the Latin word *humanus*, which originates from *homo*, meaning “human.” The word *humanus* refers to characteristics that reflect humanity or are in accordance with the essence of being human. Conceptually, humanism is a school of thought that emphasizes the appreciation of humanitarian principles and the upholding of human dignity. Terminologically, it is understood as a philosophical current focused on achieving human well-being and perfection. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, humanism is an intellectual movement that aims to cultivate a sense of humanity and realize a more harmonious and dignified social life (Widagdho, 2001).

Definitions of humanism have also been put forward by notable scholars. Maslow (as cited in Aiman et al., 2022) defined humanism as a perspective that emphasizes the human capacity for growth and self-actualization, rather than viewing individuals as passive beings. He proposed that human needs are arranged hierarchically, progressing from basic physiological needs to higher-level psychological and self-fulfillment needs. Similarly, Madjid (2003) described humanism as a set of concepts, attitudes, and convictions grounded in the human ability to discover essential values that form the foundation of life.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that humanism is an idea that places the human being as the central focus of life, emphasizing respect for humanitarian values and the optimization of human potential to achieve a better quality of life. In general, humanism refers to the human understanding of their existence in social interaction with others in a community. In Classical Greek times, the concept of humanism was embedded in *paideia*, a system of education that emphasized character development and intellectual refinement (Al-Jabiri, 2003).

Ali Shariati proposed seven fundamental principles of humanism: (1) humans are authentic beings with inherent dignity; (2) they possess free will, enabling moral autonomy; (3) they are rational and conscious, distinguishing them from other creatures; (4) they are self-aware and capable of cultural and civilizational development; (5) they are creative beings striving for excellence; (6) they are aspirational, constantly seeking ideals; and (7) they are moral beings inherently bound to ethical principles (Assyaukanie, 2023).

Humanism upholds noble values as the foundation for treating others with dignity. These include justice, compassion, and solidarity. Justice is one of the core principles of humanism, where every individual deserves fair and equal treatment regardless of their background, religion, race, or social status. Ethically, justice is defined as giving each individual their due based on what is deserved and rightfully theirs (Dery, 2012). Upholding justice is considered part of *sunnat Allāh*, rooted in the human *fitrah* (innate disposition) as creations of God. As a divine norm, justice is objective and immutable, unaffected by individual preferences. Because of this intrinsic nature, enforcing justice consistently yields goodness for anyone who practices it. Violations of the principle of justice can result in negative consequences and destruction for both individuals and society.

Another central element of humanistic values is compassion. Compassion can be defined as a feeling of love, care, and affection toward others. In relationships grounded in compassion, both parties—consciously or unconsciously—are expected to fulfill essential components such as obligation, dedication, integrity, trust, understanding, and honesty. These elements are crucial in creating a balanced, holistic, and harmonious relationship. In the absence of even one of these elements, the relationship risks becoming unstable and fractured (Hadis, 2025). Compassion is not limited to marital relationships; it also extends to self-love, care for family, concern for others, and even a deep love for God.

Solidarity is equally important as the aforementioned values. It refers to the willingness to prioritize collective interests and to cooperate with others beyond personal gain. This value acts as a social glue for human beings who, despite their individual freedoms, remain mindful of their social responsibilities. Solidarity can be interpreted as an effort to meet communal needs, show empathy toward those in hardship, and commit to collective goals. Moreover, solidarity enhances the quality of life and facilitates services that benefit every member of society (Muhtadi, 2019).

The Qur'an as a Source of Humanism

The Qur'an contains numerous humanistic values such as justice (*ʿadl*), compassion (*raḥmah*), and solidarity (*taʾāwun*). Justice calls for fairness and impartiality, compassion encourages love and concern for others, and solidarity fosters mutual support within the community. These values are present across various Qur'anic

verses, covering both interpersonal relationships and devotion to God. Understanding and internalizing these values enables individuals to implement them in daily life and to contribute to a more harmonious society.

One of the most emphasized humanistic values in the Qur'an is justice (*'adl*). The word "justice" (*'adl*) originates from the Arabic root *'adala* (عَدَلَ – عَدَالَةٌ – اَلْعَدْلُ), which denotes balance and fairness in opposition to deviation or inequality. In Islamic thought, justice means equilibrium, impartiality, and giving others their rightful dues without deficiency. It also involves placing things in their proper place and speaking the truth with courage, fearing no one but God. Justice in conflict resolution should be based on religious and moral values. From a humanistic perspective, justice reinforces respect for human rights, equality, and individual dignity. It supports the creation of a fair society where all individuals are treated equally and given equal opportunities for growth. Thus, justice is not only about truthfulness, but also about moral commitment to universal ethical values (Anwar, 2002; Widyakso, 2019).

The term *'adl* appears in the Qur'an 28 times across 24 verses, in two main forms: *'adl* (عَدْلٌ) and *'adala* (عَدَلَ). Examples of verses containing *'adala* include:

1. Surah al-Nisā' (4:3, 129, 135)
2. Surah al-Mā'idah (5:82)
3. Surah al-An'ām (6:1, 70, 150, 152)
4. Surah al-A'rāf (7:159, 181)
5. Surah al-Naml (27:60)
6. Surah al-Shūrā (42:15)
7. Surah al-Infithār (82:7)

Verses with the form *'adl* include:

1. Surah al-Baqarah (2:48, 123, 282)
2. Surah al-Nisā' (4:58)
3. Surah al-Mā'idah (5:95, 106)
4. Surah al-An'ām (6:70, 115)
5. Surah al-Nahl (16:76, 90)
6. Surah al-Hujurat (49:9)
7. Surah al-Talāq (65:2)

The frequency with which the Qur'an emphasizes justice reflects its central importance. Although *al-'Adl* is not explicitly listed as one of the *asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* (Beautiful Names of God), many verses affirm that all of God's rulings and decisions are inherently just.

Justice in the Qur'an

One of the most powerful exhortations for justice is found in Surah al-Mā'idah (5:8):

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاَنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۚ أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

"O you who believe! Be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just: that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is well-acquainted with what you do." (Q.S. al-Mā'idah: 8)

According to Shihab (2012), this verse affirms the obligation of maintaining justice, even toward those we dislike. The phrase *lā yajrimannakum shanā'ānu qawmin* cautions believers not to allow hostility to lead to unfairness. Justice (‘*adl*’) is positioned as a moral imperative linked with *taqwā* (piety).

The Qur’an also emphasizes justice toward orphans as a form of objective justice to ensure the fulfillment of their rights. This includes legal protection, social welfare, and the guarantee of a dignified life. As stated in Surah al-Nisā’ (4:3):

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تُقْسِطُوا فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَن ثَلَاثٍ وَرُبْعٍ ۚ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةٌ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَذْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ۚ

“And if you fear that you will not deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry those that please you of [other] women—two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice].” (Q.S. al-Nisā’: 3)

According to Quraish Shihab (as cited in Nasution, 2018), this verse emphasizes the importance of upholding justice, particularly in familial and marital matters, and acts as a safeguard against the exploitation of vulnerable groups, such as orphans.

Compassion (*Raḥmah*) in the Qur’an

In the Qur’an, the root word *raḥima* and its various derivations appear 339 times across nine morphological forms:

أَرْحَمَ، أَرْحَمَ، رَاحِمَ، رَجِمَ، رَجِيمَ، رَحْمَةً، رَحْمَنَ، رُحْمَ، مَرْحَمَةً

These lexical forms convey meanings of tenderness, empathy, and mercy—both divine and human. According to al-Ghazālī (as cited in Hadis, 2025), *raḥmah* is not merely emotional sentiment but a moral responsibility deeply embedded in the framework of Qur’anic ethics.

Classifications and Examples of *Raḥmah* in the Qur’an

1.) **أَرْحَمَ arḥām** : (Appears in Q.S. al-Baqarah 2:228; Āli ‘Imrān 3:6; al-Nisā’ 4:1; al-An‘ām 6:143–144; al-Anfāl 8:75; al-Ra‘d 13:8; al-Ḥajj 22:5; Luqmān 31:34; al-Aḥzāb 33:6; Muḥammad 47:22; al-Mumtaḥanah 60:3.
2.) **أَرْحَمَ arḥam** : (As found in Q.S. al-A‘rāf 7:151; Yūsuf 12:64, 92; al-Anbiyā’ 21:83.
3.) **رَاحِمَ rāḥim** (and) **رَجِمَ raḥima** : (Used to depict acts of mercy by both God and humans (e.g., Q.S. al-Baqarah 2:286; Āli ‘Imrān 3:132).
4.) **رَحْمَةً raḥmah** (and) **رَجِيمَ raḥim** : (Most frequent, especially in opening verses like Q.S. al-Fātiḥah 1:1–3.
5.) **رَحْمَنَ raḥmān** : (As in) **بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ** Q.S. al-Fātiḥah: 1.
6.) **مَرْحَمَةً marḥamah** : (Appears in Q.S. al-Balad 90:17 *تَمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ عَاقَبُوا* — *وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ*

These forms emphasize *raḥmah* as both divine grace and human obligation.

Divine and Human Dimensions of Compassion

Classical interpretations such as those from *tafsīr al-salaf* affirm that *raḥmah* is a central theme in divine action and human responsibility. For example, ‘Īsā ibn Maryam (Jesus, peace be upon him) is reported to have said:

“Ar-Raḥmān reflects Allah’s mercy encompassing both this world and the Hereafter, whereas Ar-Raḥīm refers specifically to His mercy in the Hereafter.”

In *al-Zāhir*, Ibn al-Anbārī posits that *ar-Raḥmān* may derive from non-Arabic roots, possibly Hebrew, underscoring its universal scope (Al-Jabiri, 2003).

Beyond divine mercy, the Qur'an also highlights compassion in interpersonal relationships. For instance, in the context of marriage, love (*mawaddah*) and mercy (*rahmah*) are foundational. This is beautifully stated in Q.S. al-Rūm (30:21):

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And among His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who reflect.” (Q.S. al-Rūm: 21)

Shihab (as cited in Fauzan, 2022) explains that this verse signifies not only romantic love but also the spiritual and emotional dimensions that strengthen the institution of marriage. He likens the union to the harmony between sky and earth: just as rain fertilizes the land, love and mercy nourish the soul of a marriage.

Al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, interprets this verse as highlighting the broader social and familial roles of spouses, suggesting that *rahmah* extends beyond romantic affection to include kinship bonds, empathy, and mutual protection (Dery, 2012).

Solidarity in the Qur'an: The Spirit of Ta'āwun

Another fundamental humanistic value emphasized in the Qur'an is *solidarity*, which in Islamic terminology is known as *ta'āwun* (تَعَاوُن). Derived from the Arabic root 'a-w-n (عَوْن), it conveys meanings of mutual assistance, support, and cooperation. Its derivatives include *āna* (to help), *mu'āwanah* (assistance), and *mu'āwin* (helper). As a social and religious ethic, *ta'āwun* plays a central role in building communal harmony and collective responsibility.

The Qur'an encourages believers to support each other in goodness and piety, and prohibits cooperation in wrongdoing and transgression. As stated in Surah al-Mā'idah (5:2):

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

“And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty.” (Q.S. al-Mā'idah: 2)

This verse serves as a clear injunction for Muslims to channel their collective efforts toward virtuous and constructive goals while avoiding complicity in injustice or immoral acts. The command to *ta'āwun 'alā al-birr wa al-taqwā* signifies the ideal of ethical collaboration for societal well-being.

The term *ta'āwun* and its variations appear in several forms in the Qur'an, including:

1.) اَعَانَ a'āna : (Q.S. al-Kahf 18:95; al-Furqān 25:4)
2.) اَسْتَعِين ista'in : (Q.S. al-Fātiḥah 1:5; al-Baqarah 2:45, 153; al-A'rāf 7:128)
3.) تَعَاوَن ta'āwan : (Q.S. al-Mā'idah 5:2, 22)
4.) مَاعُون mā'un : (Q.S. al-Mā'un 107:6)
5.) مُسْتَعَان musta'an : (Q.S. Yūsuf 12:18; al-Anbiyā' 21:112)

Each usage reflects a context-specific form of solidarity, ranging from social cooperation to spiritual reliance on God.

Interpretation and Application

Sayyid Qutb, in his commentary on Q.S. al-Mā'idah:2, underscores that this command represents the ethical pinnacle of Islamic society. He contrasts it with the

pre-Islamic tribal ethos (*Jāhiliyyah*) that glorified factionalism and revenge. According to Qutb, divine command transcends such tendencies, calling instead for a community bound by shared moral purpose (Iv, n.d.).

This principle is especially relevant in the modern context, where fragmentation, sectarianism, and egocentric values often erode communal bonds. *Ta'āwun* thus becomes not only a spiritual imperative but also a civic responsibility, fostering mutual respect and inclusive development.

As noted by Saputra (2022), solidarity (*ta'āwun*) in the Qur'an is inseparable from the concept of *tawhīd* (divine unity), emphasizing that social cooperation must be rooted in consciousness of divine accountability. It extends to acts such as helping the poor, standing against injustice, participating in communal service, and supporting initiatives for public welfare.

Furthermore, Hijrati (2020) elaborates that Qur'anic solidarity is not merely reactive or occasional but embedded in the structural obligations of a believer's life. It creates a moral framework that guides how individuals relate to society—not out of compulsion, but from internalized ethical convictions.

Humanism in Islam: A Historical Perspective

Unlike the trajectory of humanism in Europe—which involved a break from religious dogma—Islamic civilization developed its own model of humanism without experiencing a metaphysical rupture. For Muslim humanists, belief in God and the metaphysical order remained foundational, coexisting with scientific inquiry and rational thought. Intellectual figures in the Islamic tradition did not marginalize the human subject in favor of divine authority but sought harmony between the two (Madjid, 2003; Mulyana, 2016).

During the classical Islamic period, prominent thinkers such as **Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī** and **Ibn Rushd** (Averroes) exemplified this synthesis. Al-Shāfi'ī was a religious scholar known for his jurisprudential rigor and intellectual integrity, while Ibn Rushd engaged deeply with Greek philosophy without compromising his Islamic beliefs. Their work laid the groundwork for integrating revelation (*wahy*) with reason (*'aql*)—a hallmark of Islamic humanism.

The emergence of theological debates around *jabr* (predeterminism) in early Islamic thought gave rise to major schools like the **Jabariyyah**, **Qadariyyah**, and **Ash'ariyyah**. While these schools differed in interpreting divine will and human agency, they all contributed to rich philosophical discourse that explored the dignity and responsibility of human beings (Assyaukanie, 2023).

In contrast to European secular humanism, Muslim intellectuals did not see the need to separate religion from public life or political authority. Divine sovereignty and political governance were seen as intertwined. Atheism remained a foreign concept, and criticism of rulers was often discouraged, particularly among scholars affiliated with the state (Al-Jabiri, 2003).

One of the earliest and most notable figures in Islamic humanism was **'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muqaffa'** (d. 759 CE), a Persian intellectual and translator. His translation of *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, a collection of moral fables, introduced ethical education and literary elegance to the Islamic world. The narratives conveyed messages about justice, loyalty, and responsibility—values central to humanist ethics. Ibn al-Muqaffa' also developed a dual framework of morality: *al-Adab al-Kabīr* (for rulers) and *al-Adab al-*

Ṣaghīr (for the general public), illustrating layered ethical structures in society (Muḥammad ‘Ābid al-Jābirī, 2003).

Another significant contributor was **al-Fārābī**, who explored humanism through linguistic philosophy and political theory. He emphasized *fiṭrah* (natural disposition) as the divine endowment that enables humans to attain knowledge and moral excellence. In *al-Siyāsah al-Madaniyyah* and *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, he elaborated on the relationship between language, intellect, and society (Vallat, as cited in Fauzan, 2022).

Al-Fārābī’s notion of *fiṭrah* draws from both Stoic naturalism and Neoplatonic metaphysics. According to Vallat, *fiṭrah* is the human capacity to receive *al-ma‘qūlāt al-ūlā* (first intelligibles) from the *‘Aql al-Fā’il* (Active Intellect), forming the foundation of innate moral knowledge. This conceptualization aligns closely with the idea that all humans are born with the potential for rational and ethical development (Fani, 2024).

In the modern Indonesian context, **Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur)** emerges as a key proponent of *Tauḥidic Humanism*. His approach rooted human dignity in Islamic theology, particularly in the Qur’anic designation of humans as *khalīfatullāh* (vicegerents of God on earth). Gus Dur argued that the goals of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*)—such as protecting life, religion, property, intellect, and lineage—are intrinsically humanistic. For him, Islamic teachings are designed not to limit humanity, but to elevate it (Nurjanah, 2016; Husna, 2019). Gus Dur’s humanism thus merges religious law with universal values, offering a model of Islamic engagement that is inclusive, democratic, and socially responsible.

Interaction Between Religion and Humanity

The humanistic values embedded in the Qur’an—namely justice (‘adl), compassion (raḥmah), and solidarity (ta‘āwun)—are profoundly aligned with contemporary humanist principles, particularly in the spheres of politics, economics, and social life. These values not only have theological significance but also serve as ethical foundations that guide the structure of just and inclusive societies.

In the political domain, the principle of justice is emphasized in Q.S. al-Mā’idah (5:8), where believers are commanded to uphold fairness, even toward those they may dislike:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاَنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۚ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

This directive reflects the Islamic imperative for impartial governance and social equality, which resonates with modern humanist advocacy for equity and justice in political systems. According to Husna (2019), political education based on Islamic humanist values fosters awareness of equality and civic responsibility while grounding political ethics in moral and spiritual accountability.

In the economic domain, compassion as depicted in Q.S. al-Rūm (30:21) has implications for inclusive development and wealth distribution. Compassion in this context is not limited to personal relationships but extends to economic justice, such as caring for the poor, ensuring fair wages, and promoting collective welfare (Fani, 2024). An economy guided by raḥmah promotes balance between profit-seeking and social responsibility—challenging the exploitative tendencies of neoliberal capitalism.

The principle of solidarity, as mandated in Q.S. al-Mā’idah (5:2)—“وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَىٰ” —“الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ”—serves as a moral compass for building harmonious communities. Within the framework of Islamic humanism, this verse guides believers to collaborate in virtue

and moral integrity, while avoiding complicity in harm or injustice. As Hijrati (2020) emphasizes, such solidarity is crucial in countering individualism, sectarianism, and social fragmentation that often threaten pluralistic societies.

Integrating Qur'anic humanist values into modern life can create a synergy between faith and reason, religion and ethics, and tradition and progress. This interaction underscores the Qur'an's relevance in addressing contemporary global challenges—not as a relic of the past, but as an active source of ethical vision for the present and future.

According to Nurjanah (2016), the convergence between religion and humanism becomes especially significant in multicultural contexts where religious values can either promote peace or incite division. When Qur'anic teachings are understood through a humanistic lens, they offer powerful tools for interreligious dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence.

Thus, the interaction between religion and humanity in the Islamic tradition is not antagonistic, but complementary. The Qur'an's emphasis on dignity, justice, and compassion reflects a divine affirmation of human value, and provides a framework for living ethically in a diverse and globalized world.

Challenges to Humanism in the Modern Era

One of the principal challenges to implementing Qur'anic humanistic values in the modern world is the rise of **hedonism**—a lifestyle centered on the pursuit of pleasure and personal gratification. This orientation stands in contrast to Qur'anic ethics, which emphasize responsibility, self-restraint, and concern for others. As Agassi (n.d.) notes, the core dilemma of contemporary humanism lies in how individuals choose to live rationally in a world increasingly shaped by consumerism and instant gratification.

Hedonistic tendencies are particularly prevalent among younger generations, especially university students, where materialism and the desire for immediate satisfaction dominate. Yulianto (2024) observes that such lifestyles often lead to financial instability, emotional detachment, and erosion of moral consciousness. This shift in values is not merely cultural, but also existential—undermining the Qur'anic emphasis on *tazkiyat al-nafs* (self-purification) and the collective good.

Moreover, the modern world is witnessing the **questioning and erosion of human values** themselves. In many societies, increasing fragmentation—whether due to technological advancement, ideological extremism, or socioeconomic disparity—has weakened the communal bonds necessary to sustain humanism. In such environments, values like *'adl*, *rahmah*, and *ta'awun* are often replaced by competition, exploitation, and division.

The problem is further exacerbated by the inability of some individuals and communities to navigate the rapid pace of scientific and technological change. While modernity has brought about unprecedented progress, it has also intensified the alienation of individuals from ethical and spiritual frameworks. This disconnection impairs their ability to apply Qur'anic principles to contemporary issues in meaningful ways (Saputra, 2022; Muhtadi, 2019).

Nevertheless, the Qur'an positions **reason** (*'aql*) as one of humanity's greatest divine gifts. It is through the exercise of intellect that humans can discern between right and wrong, pursue truth, and promote justice. Thus, the problem is not with

technological advancement itself, but with its misuse or separation from spiritual and ethical grounding.

Agassi (n.d.) emphasizes the importance of strengthening **liberal democracy** as a framework to resist extremism and uphold human dignity. In line with this, the Qur'an underlines the values of justice, mercy, and solidarity—not only as divine attributes but as moral imperatives for human action. The real challenge lies in **translating these ideals into lived realities**, especially in societies increasingly dominated by individualism and materialism.

To overcome these challenges, there is a pressing need for **education that centers on Qur'anic humanism**. This includes curriculum development that promotes empathy, critical thinking, and social engagement rooted in *taqwā* and *akhlaq*. Furthermore, intercultural and interfaith dialogue must be cultivated to build shared understanding and reinforce collective responsibility (Madihah, 2020; Fauzan, 2020).

In conclusion, the challenges posed by hedonism and ethical disintegration in modern life can be effectively addressed through renewed engagement with Qur'anic humanistic values. By fostering environments that promote awareness, cooperation, and ethical reflection, societies can empower individuals to lead balanced lives—anchored not in indulgence, but in dignity, justice, and compassion.

Conclusion

This study affirms the relevance and significance of the Qur'an in shaping a framework of ethical humanism through its emphasis on *'adl* (justice), *rahmah* (compassion), and *ta'āwun* (solidarity). Contrary to the perception that the Qur'an is rigid or incompatible with universal human values, this research demonstrates that the Qur'an offers profound ethical guidance applicable to contemporary human life.

By exploring Qur'anic verses and interpretations through a humanistic lens, the study reveals that Islamic teachings are not only spiritually transformative but also socially constructive. These values—rooted in divine principles—establish the Qur'an as a moral compass capable of bridging the gap between religion and modern humanist discourse.

In the context of **globalization, technological advancement, and moral relativism**, Qur'anic humanism offers a counterbalance to the forces of **hedonism, individualism, and extremism**. Its teachings encourage believers to embrace their roles not just as spiritual beings, but as ethical actors within society. This makes the Qur'an not merely a religious scripture but a living source of humanitarian ethics, capable of guiding political justice, economic equity, and social cohesion.

The integration of Islamic and humanist thought provides a powerful tool for addressing the complexities of contemporary life. As shown throughout this paper, values like justice, compassion, and solidarity are not only compatible with humanism—they are essential to it. Therefore, it is vital for educators, policymakers, and religious scholars to promote these values through education, intercultural dialogue, and community development.

Ultimately, this study contributes to a growing discourse that views the Qur'an as a **source of universal human values**, essential for fostering inclusive, just, and harmonious societies in the 21st century and beyond.

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