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ISTIQOMAH IN AL-QUR'AN: THE CONCEPT, TERMINOLOGY, AND IT'S APPLICATION

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Keywords	Abstract
<p><i>Keywords: istiqomah, term, concept, terminology</i></p>	<p>This paper is aimed to describe the most spoken concept in al-Qur'an, namely <i>istiqomah</i> and its application. The description of this important concept covers some aspects: 1) the definition and meaning of <i>istiqomah</i> both etimologically and terminologically, 2) the interpretations of the Muslim scholars dealing with the concept, 3) the answer to the question if it is the strange term to Muslim, 4) the significance of the implementation of the term <i>istiqomah</i>, and 5) the ways to implement the concept of <i>istiqomah</i>. Based on the descriptions above, it can be concluded that the concept of <i>istiqomah</i> covers some aspects as follows: 1) <i>istiqomah</i> deals with tauhid purity and not false worship, 2) <i>istiqomah</i> deals with doing the duties, either compulsory or optional, physically or mentally, 2) <i>istiqomah</i> deals with leaving out all the prohibitions, 3) <i>istiqomah</i> deals with being a pious to worship Allah The Almighty, 4) <i>istiqomah</i> deals with the continuation of worshipping Allah The Almighty, and 5) <i>istiqomah</i> deals with the implementation of the rightness in social life.</p>

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INTRODUCTION

As Muslims, we really believe that the Sacred and Glorious Book of Islam, *al-Qur'an*, contains many bright concepts that are applicable and needed by humans to live their lives. The writer would like to discuss one of the most spoken concepts in *al-Qur'an*, namely *Istiqomah*. One of the Surahs talking about the term *Istiqomah* and directly commanding the Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH, SAW) to apply the concept mentioned in the Hud Surah : 112 as follows:

“Fastaqim Kama Umirta Wa Man Taba Ma’aka Wa La Tathghou Innahu Bima Ta’maluna Bashir”.¹

Meaning: *Therefore Stand Firm (In the Straight Path) as Thou Art Commanded, Thou and Those Who With Thee Turn (unto Allah); and Transgress not (From the Path): for He Seeth Well All That Ye Do.*

The verse above contains a verb of command, *Istaqim* (Stand Firm in the Straight Path). The commandment comes Allah The Almighty to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and all his followers to stand firmly in the belief in Allah The Almighty and avoiding the worship (others) with Allah The Almighty for the False Worship (Syirk) is indeed the highest wrong doing in Islam and as well as the implementation of the Islamic teachings in the universe. All those things should be implemented during the lives up to the term reaches the humans because to every man is a term appointed and when their term is reached, neither an hour can they cause delay nor can they advance it in anticipation.

Beside that according to the writer, the concept is easily spoken and the hardest to bring it to the reality. This idea comes not only from Muslims in general as the followers of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, but also from the Prophet Muhammad himself PBUH as the Messenger of God the Almighty (SWT). It could be proven from the words of Ibnu Abbas as follows:

Ma Nuzzila ‘Ala Rasulillah Shallallahu ‘Alaihi Wa Sallama Ayatun Hiya Asyaddu Wa La Asyaqqu Minal Ayat ‘Alaihi, Wa Lidzalika Qola Liashhabih Hina Qolu Lahu: Laqod Asro’a Ilaika al-Syaib. Faqola: Syayyabatni Hud Wa Akhwatuha.

Meaning: *There’s no verse of al-Qur’an sent to the Prophet PBUH has greater burden and harder implementation than this verse. Therefore, he said to his companions when they asked him: It’s very early for you to have*

¹ Mushaf Al-Madinah An-Nabawiyah, *The Holy Qur’an English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary*, Revised and Edited By The Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA, CALL AND GUIDANCE, King Fahd Holy Qur’an Printing Complex, 1411 H/ 1990 M.

your hair glistened with grey. The Prophet PBUH replied: Hud and the same contents of Qur'anic Surahs have glistened my hair of my head with grey. (by. Al-Tirmidzi)

Based on the words above, we know that it's easier to say the term *istiqomah* than to apply it, even the Prophet Muhammad PBUH correlated the hardness of the *istiqomah* to the growth of his grey hair. In other way, it may be from the psychological perspective, it's too interesting to have a study on the correlation between the hard psychological problems and the growth of the grey hair. Moreover it shows that the concept plays a very important role in the spiritual life.

There will be some other emerging questions dealing with the term *istiqomah* that should be solved in this writing. Some of them are:

1. What does the term *istiqomah* really mean?
2. Why did the Prophet Muhammad PBUH say that the content of Hud Surah Had greater burdern and harder implementation than others?
3. Is it really a strange term to Muslim?
4. What's the significance of the implementation of the term *istiqomah*?
5. What are the ways to implement this concept?

Those questions above are discussed and will be solved in this writing starting from analyzing the definition and the meaning of the term etimologically and terminologically, and then introducing and analyzing some of the Muslim interpretations. Finally the writer will share the ideal application of the concept in human lives.

THE DEFINITION AND MEANING OF ISTIQOMAH

The term *Istiqomah* comes from Arabic language. It comes from the original word that consists of 3 (three) letters, namely *Qof – Waw – Mim*. It can be formed either as a Noun, *Qoum*², that means a variety of meanings such as ethnic, people, community, a group of people, or Verb, *Qowwama*³, that means many as well, such as to correct, to make straight, to make

² There are other forms, such as Qiyamah, Iqomah, Taqwim, Maqom, Muqim

³ According to the Arabic Structure that an addition of *tasydid* to the Infinitive Verb has 3 consequences, namely 1. *Li al-Ta'diyah* means to change the Intransitive Verb into the Transitive One, for example *Farraho*. 2. *Li Al-Dalalah 'Ala Al-Taktsir* means to show many consequences of the verb, for example *Qoththo'a*.. 3. *Li Nisbatil Maf'ul 'ala Ashlil Fi'il* means to claim someone with the Verb used, for example *Kaffaro*. In other case, the Infinitive Verb, *Qof*,

stand, to check, to manage, to stand⁴ In addition, according to the Arabic Structure the word with 3 letters can be added by *Alif*, *Sin* and *Ta*, so it becomes *Istiqomah*⁵.

From the description above, it can be concluded that the term *Istiqomah* comes from the infinitive form consisting of 3 letters, *Qof*, *Waw* and *Mim*. It means etimologically stand and straight. To understand the meaning of *Istiqomah*, it's better to attach it to something that never inclines either to the right or to the left, like a piece of iron. It is one of the creatures of God that is welknown with its strength and its duration when it stands. Whenever it stands it never falls. It remains on the floor or the earth firmly for a long time. This condition is hoped to be attached to someone in their social and spiritual lives. In other words that someone keeps their attention to the social problems and does their best for the community even they have got a heavy obstacle and threat in doing so. Dealing with their spiritual lives, they never forget their God The Almighty. They remain firmly on the *Zikrullah* (Rememberance of God The Almighty) by doing their obligation and going a way from the prohibitions of God The Almighty. Allah The Almighty said in the Holy Qur'an, Ali Imran : 114:

*Yu'minuna Billahi Wal Yaumil Akhir Wa Ya'muruna Bil Ma'ruf Wa Yanhauna
'Anil Munkar Wa Yusari'una Fil Khoirat Wa Ula'ika Minash Sholihin.*

Meaning: They Believe in Allah And the Last Day; They Enjoin What is Right, And Forbid What is Wrong; And They Hasten (in Emulation) In (all) Good Works; They are in the Ranks of the Righteous.

It seems the explanation about the *Istiqomah* above incomplete when the ideas of the Muslim experts or Ulama aren't shared here terminologically. To have a broad and deep description of the *Istiqomah*, the writer shares the some Muslim experts' points of view as follows:

Waw, *Mim* is added by *Alif*, so it becomes *Aqoma* means to make (something) stand. It has 2 consequences, namely 1. *Li al-Ta'diyah* means to change the Intransitive Verb into the Transitive One, for example *Akroma*. 2. *Li Al-Dukhuli fi Syai'* means to come into somewhere under special times of the day, for example *Ashbaha*. Please read, Dr. H. Imaduddin Sukamto, MA and Akhmad Munawari, S.Ag, *Tata Bahasa Arab Sistematis*, (Pendekatan Baru Mempelajari Tata Bahasa Arab), Edisi Revisi, Cetakan VI, Juni 2008, Nurma Media Idea, Pondok Pesantren Nurul Ummah Jl. Raden Ronggo 982 Prenggan Kotagede Yogyakarta 55172, P. 40.

⁴ Quran.bbim.go.id/?id=69465

⁵ According to the Arabic Structure that an addition of *Alif – Sin – Ta* to the Infinitive Verb has 3 consequences, namely 1. *Li Tholabil Fi'il* means to claim an action, for example *Istaghfaro*. 2. *Li Ma'na Fa'ala al-Mujarrad* means to mean the same action, for example *Istaqorro*. 3. *Li al-Tahawwul* means to change to become, for example *Istahmaro*. Ibid., P. 45 – 46.

1. Imam Mustapha al-Maraghi: *Istiqomah* means remain firm (on that straight path) and not to have false worship, and then not to run into the commandments of Allah The Almighty and to be a way from His prohibitions⁶.
2. The First Chaliph Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq r.a: *Istiqomah* means Tauhid Purity (It's forbidden to do False Worship (Syirk))⁷.
3. The Second Chaliph Umar bin Khattab r.a: *Istiqomah* means a commitment to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and no cheating⁸.
4. The Third Chaliph Ustman r.a: *Istiqomah* means to worship Allah The Almighty, Offering Him sincere devotion⁹.
5. The Fourth Chalip Ali bin Abi Thalib: *Istiqomah* means doing the religious duties¹⁰.
6. Mujahid: *Istiqomah* means a commitment to the witness of Allah The Almighty.
7. Ibnu Taimiah: *Istiqomah* means to love and to worship Allah The Almighty without any doubt¹¹.

Looking at those points of view of the Chalips and some Muslim Scholars above, they show the broad and deep definitions and meaning of *istiqomah*. Based on those points, it can be concluded in some aspects as follows:

1. *Istiqomah* deals with tauhid purity and not false worship
2. *Istiqomah* deals with doing the duties, either compulsory or optional, physically or mentally.
3. *Istiqomah* deals with leaving out all the prohibitions
4. *Istiqomah* deals with being a pious to worship Allah The Almighty
5. *Istiqomah* deals with the continuation of worshipping Allah The Almighty.
6. *Istiqomah* deals with the implementation of the rightness in social life.

⁶ Ahmad Mushtafa al-Maraghi, Tafsir Al-Maraghi, 25th Edition, Dar Ihya'I al-Turats al-'Arabiy, P. 16.

⁷⁷ Yusni Amru Ghazali, *Ensiklopedia al-Qur'an dan Hadits Per Tema*, Jakarta, PT. Niaga Swadaya, 2011. P. 998.

⁸ Ibid

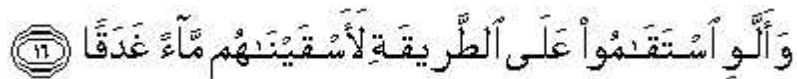
⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RESPONDS TO *ISTIQOMAH*

According to the Qur'anic verses that Allah The Almighty has introduced some guidances and instructions for human's sakes to be good either in the world or in the Hereafter. It can be proved from the following Qur'anic verse, al-Jin : 16:



Meaning: (And Allah's message is): "If they (the Pagans) Had (only) remained On the (Right) Way, We should certainly have Bestowed on them Rain In abundance¹².

The Qur'anic verse above becomes one example telling that Muslims will get benefit for their own when they remain on the right way. Allah The Almighty shows the rain literally water that can be interpreted as all kinds of blessings, material, moral and spiritual. All blessings come by way trial. The more humans have, the more is expected of them.

Ahmad Mushtafa Al-Maraghi interpreted the Qur'anic above that if Jinns and human beings stand firmly on Islam, Allah The Almighty will make their lives easy in the world. The water is mentioned here because water is primary need for human beings in their lives, and to mention water in abundance is interpreted as easy social life¹³.

Allah The Almighty has deliberately created human beings in the best of moulds as stated in the QS. Al-Tin : 4 – 5:

Laqod Kholaqnal Insana fi Ahsani al-Taqwim. Tsumma Rodadnahu Asfala Safilin.

Meaning: We have indeed created man in the best of moulds. Then do We abase him (To be) the lowest Of the low.

From the Qur'anic verse above, al-Tin : 4 – 5, Allah The Almighty uses the term, *al-Taqwim* to describe His creation of human beings. The term comes from the same derivations of *Istiqomah*. It shows that from His creation, there is no fault in it. To man Allah The Almighty gave the purest and best nature, and man's duty is to preserve the pattern on which Allah The Almighty has made him. On the other Qur'anic verse Allah The Almighty said that He had appointed some noble positions and grants:

1. Being a Khalifah (vicegerent)¹⁴;
2. The Best Physical and Psychological Form¹⁵;

¹² Op.cit. P. 1833.

¹³ Ahmad Mushtapha Al-Maraghi, Op.cit, 28th – 30th Edition. P. 101

¹⁴ Please read QS. Al-Baqoroh : 30.

3. The special favours of many kinds of drinks and meals¹⁶;
4. The provisions of transport on land sea¹⁷;
5. The grant of the distinction and Honour¹⁸

All the highest rank and positions and the noble grants are bestowed by Allah The Almighty to man in order to enforce the corresponding duties and responsibilities of human beings. The human beings have been raised to a position of honour above the brute creations. They have been granted as well talents¹⁹ by which they can transport themselves from place to place by land, sea and air²⁰.

From this description, it can be concluded that all the means for the sustenance and growth of every part of the human's nature are provided by Allah The Almighty. Besides, the human's spiritual faculties (the greatest gift of Allah The Almighty) raise them above the greater part of Allah's creation. Should the human beings not then realize those the highest rank and positions and noble destiny? Should they respond to the commands and instructions of Allah The Almighty, especially the call to stand firmly on the straight path sincerely? Or is it proper and fair for human beings not to pay attention to the commands and instructions of Allah The Almighty or not to respond them at all?

The answers for some emerging questions above can be taken from the lessons implied in QS. Al-A'raf : 10 as follows:

*Wa Laqod Makkannakum fil Ardli Wa Ja'alna Lakum Fiha Ma'ayisya Qolilan
Ma Tasykurun.*

Meaning: It is We Who have Placed you with authority On earth, and provided You therein with means For the fulfillment of your life: Small are the thanks That ye give!

QS. Al-A'raf : 10 above describes that Allah The Almighty has provided human beings with all material things which are necessary to sustain, beautify, and refine life, as well as all

¹⁵ Please read QS. Al-Tin : 4

¹⁶ Please read QS. Bani Isra'il : 70.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Allah The Almighty says in QS. Al-Nahl : 78: *Wallahu Akhrojukum Min Buthuni Ummahatikum La Ta'lamula Syai'an Wa Ja'ala Lakumus Sam'a wal Abshoro wal Af'idata La'allakum Tasykurun.*

Meaning: It is He Who brought you Forth from the wombs of your mothers when Ye knew nothing; and He Gave you hearing and sight And Intelligence and affections That ye many give thanks (To Allah The Almighty).

²⁰ Ibid. QS. Bani Isra'il : 70

those powers, faculties and opportunities which are instrumental in bringing up life to a higher plane and preparing man for his high destiny. However, just a few number of human beings who have got the nice things wants to thank Allah The Almighty for those favors. One of the indicators showing thanks deals with the righteous deed and a way from the prohibitions. On other words that they don't do the righteous deeds, they don't obey the commands of Allah, and they don't leave out all the prohibitions. It can be concluded that it is very hard for human beings to stand firm in the straight path (*istiqomah*) eventhough Allah The Almighty has given them the potentials to develop themselves on earth related to their roles as vicegerents (Chalifah)²¹ as stated in QS. Al-Nahl : 78 as follows:

Wallahu Akhrojukum Min Buthuni Ummahatikum La Ta'lamuna Syai'an Wa Ja'ala Lakumus Sam'a Wal Abshoro Wal Af'idata La'allakum Tasykurun.

Meaning: It is He Who brought you Forth from the wombs Of your mothers when Ye knew nothing; and He Gave you hearing and sight And intelligence and affections. That ye may give thanks (To Allah The Almighty)²².

THE ADVANTAGE OF ISTIQOMAH AND ITS APPLICATION

The writer has developed the clear explanation of definition and meaning of the *istiqomah* concept broadly above. In addition, the possibility of human beings and their positions before the eyes of Allah The Almighty with much bounty from Him have been elaborated clearly. Based on this elaboration, human beings may be motivated to stand firmly in the straight path dealing with both spiritual and social lives.

In order to be more motivated, the writer will describe the advantage of the *istiqomah* according to the Holy Book, Qur'an. The advantage can be traced from the Qur'anic verses. One of them is stated in QS. Al- Fushshilat : 30 – 33:

Innallazhina Qolu Robbunallah Tsumma Istaqomu Tatanazzalu 'Alaihimul Mala'ikatu Alla Takhofu Wa La Tahzanu Wa Absyiru Bil Jannah Allati Kuntum Tu'adun. Nahnu Auliya'ukum fil Hayatid Dunya Wa Fil Akhiroti Wa

²¹ Allah The Almighty says in QS. Al-Baqoroh : 30: *Wa Idz Qola Robbuka Lil Malaikati Inni Ja'ilun fil Ardli Khalifatan Qolu A Taj'alu Fiha Man Yufsidu Fiha Wa Yasfikud Dima'a Wa Nahnu Nusabbihu Bihamdika Wa Nuqoddisu Laka Qola Inni A'lamu Ma La Ta'lamun.*

Meaning: Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: I will create A vicegerent on earth. "They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make Mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises And glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not.

Quoted from Mushaf Al-Madinah An-Nabawiyah, Op.cit. P. 15

²² Ibid. Pages. 755 - 756

Lakum Fiha Ma Tasytahi Anfusukum Wa Lakum Fiha Ma Tadda'una. Nuzulan Min Ghofurin Rohimin.

Meaning: In the case of those Who say, "Our Lord Is Allah", and, further, Stand straight and steadfast, The angels descend on them (From time to time): "Fear ye not!" (they suggest), "Nor grieve! But receive The Glad Tidings Of the Garden (of Bliss), The which ye were promised! We are your protectors In this life and In te ask forhe Hereafter: Therein shall ye have All that you Shall desire; therein Shall ye have all That ye ask for! "A hospitable gift from One Oft-Forgiving. Most Merciful!"

The important point could be concluded from the verses above that the conduct of *istiqomah* will create some benefits for the doers in both the world and the Hereafter. The benefits could be elaborated in details as follows:

1. The angels guard them in the world and the Hereafter from time to time
2. The doers will come to paradise
3. The doers have a convenient location both in the world and the Hereafter
4. The doers won't grieve and do not have any fright both in the world and Hereafter
5. Allah The Almighty likes the conduct of *istiqomah* so much that He The Almighty commanded the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and those who turn unto Allah The Almighty to have.

The conduct of *istiqomah* is not only practiced during the religious or spiritual life, but also the social one. In other words or in a broad expression that to have the conduct of *istiqomah* is not tied to some things, such as: the situation; the location, the time, the status, the profession, the field of study, the field of work.

Some important suggestions to practice the conduct of *istiqomah* in daily life as follows:

1. Always to do the commands of Allah The Almighty, and then to be a way from His prohibitions wherever, whenever, and however someone is.
2. To establish five time prayer on time
3. Never stop to study Islam under the right guidance and person
4. To think that to do all the commands of Allah The Almighty and to be a way from His prohibitions is not a burden but a kind of obedience of God The Almighty Who has a superiority of every field of life of human beings.

5. The establishment of communication to Allah The Almighty is not only applied through the appointed religious deeds, but all social activities as well.

CLOSING

After doing some scientific steps dealing with the Concept of Istiqomah in Al-Qur'an and Its Application, the writer comes to the end of his writing with some important points as follows:

1. A Muslim should know and have a clear term of *istiqomah* well
2. To apply the concept of *istiqomah* does not imply to have an additional religious duty.
3. In principle, a Muslim is not strange to the concept of *istiqomah* because he or she pray to Allah The Almighty regularly from time to time at least five times a day to show them the straight path.

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

4. The creation of human beings has guided them to have the conduct of *istiqomah*. It can be understood from the Qur'anic word used.

خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ
لَقَدْ

5. Belief in Allah The Almighty and not to do the False Worship (Syirk) are the keys

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