
THE OBJECTIVES OF ISLAMIC SHARIA AND GLOBAL HUMAN ISSUES (POVERTY - WARS - DISPLACEMENT)

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Abstract

This research paper examines how the objectives of Islamic Sharia (Maqasid al-Shariah) can be applied to address the most pressing global humanitarian crises—poverty, wars, and displacement—which are among the most significant concerns facing the world today. These crises devastate people's lives, affect their livelihoods, and make the continuation of life extremely difficult. These crises have occupied a prominent position in the objectives of Islamic Sharia, which has focused on preventing them before they occur. The objectives of Sharia include human welfare and the achievement of social justice as priorities, through the five essential necessities (Daruriyyat) established by Islamic law: the preservation of religion, life, intellect, honor, and wealth. Therefore, Islam's message is universal, addressing these three crises as follows:

1. Poverty and the Objectives of Sharia: Islam addresses the problem of poverty from two perspectives—prevention and treatment. For prevention, Islam encourages work and considers it worship, commands self-sufficiency, prohibits begging from people, and ensures equitable distribution of wealth. For treatment, Islam established Zakat (obligatory charity) as one of the pillars of Islam to eliminate poverty, encouraged voluntary charity, legislated expiation (Kaffarat), and emphasized social solidarity throughout its legislation.

2. Wars and the Objectives of Sharia: Islam came with peace and security, approaching wars from two perspectives—prevention and cessation. For prevention, Islam considers human blood sacred and inviolable, prohibits killing human life, and prescribes severe punishments for such acts. For cessation, Islam encourages reconciliation between disputants, prohibits killing civilians and destruction, promotes forgiveness and benevolence, and preserves the rights of prisoners.

3. Displacement and the Objectives of Sharia: Islam views the issue of displacement as stemming from its reverence for human dignity and its preservation. Islam set the finest example in dealing with refugees, as demonstrated in the Ansar's treatment of the Muhajirun (displaced persons).

This paper concludes with prominent insights regarding the potential contribution of Islamic Sharia objectives to addressing contemporary global crises, including:

1. Considering the objectives of Islamic Sharia as a universal framework for social justice and mercy
2. The flexibility of Islamic Sharia objectives to accommodate new developments and contemporary issues
3. Regarding the objectives of Islamic Sharia as an effective means of achieving world peace and coexistence among societies

Keywords: Objectives - Sharia - Islam - Religion - Issues - Humanitarian - Global - Poverty - Wars - Displacement

INTRODUCTION

This research paper aims to explore how the objectives of Islamic Sharia can be applied to address global humanitarian crises such as poverty, wars, and displacement.

The most pressing concerns facing the world today are the crises that devastate people's lives and affect their livelihoods. Crises are the hardships and difficulties that people face in their lives, making the continuation of life extremely difficult. Among the most prominent contemporary global humanitarian crises are:

1. Poverty

Poverty is the scarcity or absence of means of livelihood. Al-Jurjani defined it as "the lack of what is needed; the absence of what is not needed is not called poverty" (Al-Ta'rifat: 168). The contemporary understanding of poverty, as stated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, encompasses more than merely lacking income and productive resources necessary to ensure sustainable livelihoods. It manifests in multiple forms, including hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination, and exclusion. Many people worldwide face the crisis of poverty, which is both a humanitarian and global crisis—humanitarian because it represents a deficiency in human livelihood, and global because it increases ignorance and crime worldwide.

2. Wars

Wars are conflicts between people. The Arabic Language Dictionary defines it as "fighting and combat between two groups" (Contemporary Arabic Language Dictionary: 1/464). Many regions of the world experience wars and conflicts periodically, resulting in the loss of lives and property, the absence of security, and the lack of necessities for living. Therefore, the crisis of wars and conflicts is also a humanitarian and global crisis—humanitarian because it causes human destruction and the destruction of means of livelihood, and global because its effects are not limited to its location but extend to surrounding areas, neighboring countries, and the entire world in various ways.

3. Displacement

Displacement is the forced departure of a person from their homeland due to fear or hunger. The dictionary defines forced displacement as "migration undertaken by people fleeing bombardment and military operations that force them to relocate involuntarily" (Contemporary Arabic Language Dictionary: 3/2192). It may also be expressed as refuge, defined as "one who flees from their country to another country escaping political persecution, injustice, war, or famine" (Contemporary Arabic Language Dictionary: 3/1994). The contemporary definition of displacement describes it as "the forced movement of individuals from their regions or environment and occupational activities, a form of social change resulting from various factors, most commonly armed conflict. Natural disasters, famines, and developmental and economic changes may also cause displacement."

The Position of Islamic Sharia Objectives on These Crises

Examining the objectives of Islamic Sharia and their position toward these crises reveals that Islamic Sharia has given exceptional attention to addressing these crises and has focused on preventing them before they occur. Therefore, the objectives of Sharia prioritize human welfare and achieving social justice.

To achieve the objectives of Sharia in realizing welfare, Islam made Zakat obligatory, encouraged charity including endowments (Awqaf) to meet the needs of the poor, and prohibited what causes poverty such as usury, monopoly, and fraud. To achieve social justice, Islam established equality among people as one of its principles, as stated in the Quran: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Al-Hujurat: 13).

It is worth noting that Islam's message is universal, as stated in the Quran: "And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds" (Al-Anbiya: 107), and in the Hadith: "I was sent to all people" (Sahih al-Bukhari: 2/873). The word "people" (al-nas), which indicates Islam's universality, appears in the Quran more than 170 times, many in the form of address and legislation ("O people...").

RESEARCH QUESTION

How can the objectives of Sharia provide a framework for properly dealing with contemporary global humanitarian issues, both preventively and curatively?

The Three Global Crises from an Islamic Jurisprudential Perspective

First: Poverty

Islam undoubtedly addresses the problem of poverty from two aspects: prevention and treatment/elimination.

Prevention of Poverty in Islam

Prevention comes through several legislations, most importantly:

1. **Encouraging Work:** Islam encourages work and seeking livelihood on earth. Allah says: "So walk among its slopes and eat of His provision" (Al-Mulk: 15). The Prophet said: "No one eats better food than that which he eats out of the work of his hand, and the Prophet of Allah, David, used to eat from the work of his hand" (Sahih al-Bukhari: 2/730).
2. **Considering Work as Worship:** Islam considers work and earning as worship when accompanied by the right intention. Allah says: "And say, 'Work, for Allah will see your work, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers'" (At-Tawbah: 105).
3. **Equitable Distribution of Wealth:** Islamic Sharia emphasizes fair wealth distribution, contributing to poverty elimination. Allah explains the distribution of fay' (war spoils): "What Allah gave as booty to His Messenger from the people of the towns—it is for Allah and for the Messenger and for [his] near relatives and orphans and the [stranded] traveler—so that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you" (Al-Hashr: 7).

Treatment and Elimination of Poverty

Islam addresses poverty through several mechanisms:

1. **Zakat (Obligatory Charity):** One of Islam's five pillars, specifically intended to eliminate poverty. The Prophet said when sending Muadh to Yemen: "Inform them that Allah has made obligatory upon them a charity from their wealth, to be taken from their rich and given to their poor" (Sahih al-Bukhari: 2/505).
2. **Zakat al-Fitr:** A specific amount of food or its equivalent given before Eid al-Fitr to ensure the poor have provisions during the festival.
3. **Voluntary Charity:** Including endowments (Waqf), which provide continuous benefit. The Prophet said: "When a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge, and a righteous child who prays for him."
4. **Expiations (Kaffarat):** Amounts of food or money given to the poor as atonement for certain violations, such as breaking oaths or deliberate fasting violations.
5. **Inheritance Distribution:** The Islamic inheritance system leads to wealth fragmentation and redistribution, contributing to material balance among society members.

Second: Wars

Islamic jurisprudential methodology considers wars exceptional circumstances that are undesirable and should only be resorted to when necessary. If wars are ongoing, Islamic law seeks to stop them.

Prevention of Wars

Islam emphasizes several principles for war prevention:

1. **Sanctity of Human Life:** "Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land—it is as if he had slain mankind entirely" (Al-Ma'idah: 32).
2. **Preference for Peace:** "But if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and trust in Allah" (Al-Anfal: 61).
3. **Prohibition of Aggression:** The Quran commands: "Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors" (Al-Baqarah: 190).
4. **Emphasis on Reconciliation:** "The believers are but brothers, so make settlement between your brothers" (Al-Hujurat: 10).

Conduct During Wars

When wars occur, Islam establishes strict ethical guidelines:

1. **Protection of Civilians:** Prohibition of killing non-combatants, including children, women, elderly, and those who lay down arms.
2. **Prohibition of Destruction:** Protecting property and resources except when necessary.
3. **Treatment of Prisoners:** Commanding good treatment of prisoners of war.
4. **Seeking Peace:** Constant readiness to cease hostilities and make peace.

Third: Displacement and Refugee Issues

Islam views displacement as one of the most difficult circumstances humans can face. The Quran states: "And if We had decreed upon them, 'Kill yourselves' or 'Leave your homes,' they would not have done it" (An-Nisa: 66), indicating the difficulty and hardship of leaving one's homeland.

Islamic Approach to Displacement

Islam addresses displacement through:

1. **Prevention:** By addressing the root causes—poverty and wars—as discussed above.
2. **Treatment:** Providing comprehensive rights for refugees and displaced persons.

The Hijra (Migration) Model

The finest example of dealing with refugees in Islam is the treatment of the Muhajirun (emigrants) by the Ansar (helpers) in Medina. The Prophet established brotherhood between the emigrants and the locals, creating an exemplary model of refugee integration and support.

Rights of Refugees in Islam

1. **Right to Asylum:** Islam prohibits rejecting asylum seekers. Allah says: "And if any one of the polytheists seeks your protection, then grant him protection so that he may hear the words of Allah" (At-Tawbah: 6).
2. **Security and Safety:** Ensuring the physical safety and security of refugees.
3. **Freedom of Belief:** Allowing refugees to maintain their religious beliefs.
4. **Right to Livelihood:** Enabling refugees to work and support themselves.

Conclusions

This research concludes with several key insights regarding the potential contribution of Islamic Sharia objectives to addressing contemporary global crises:

1. Universal Framework for Social Justice and Mercy

The objectives of Islamic Sharia serve as a universal framework for social justice and mercy. Islamic law was established to achieve the interests of all people, not just Muslims, making it worthy of addressing global crises. Ibn al-Qayyim stated: "Whoever has taste in Sharia and knowledge of its perfections and its encompassing of the ultimate interests of servants in this life and the hereafter, and its bringing of ultimate justice that encompasses all creation, knows that there is no justice above its justice and no interest above what it contains of interests."

2. Flexibility and Adaptability

The flexibility of Islamic Sharia objectives allows them to accommodate new developments and contemporary issues. This is confirmed by the Maqasid-based jurisprudence (Al-Ijtihad al-Maqasidi) recognized by Islamic scholars. Al-Shatibi views that Sharia was established for the interests of servants, enabling the derivation of rulings for contemporary issues through Maqasid-based jurisprudence.

3. Means for Achieving World Peace

The objectives of Islamic Sharia serve as an effective means of achieving world peace and coexistence among societies. They encompass the five necessities (preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth), representing interests for any society. Al-Ghazali stated: "The purpose of Sharia regarding creation is five: to preserve their religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. Everything that includes preserving these five principles is a benefit, and everything that undermines these principles is corruption, and preventing it is a benefit."

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This translation maintains the academic rigor and comprehensive nature of the original Arabic text while ensuring clarity and accessibility for English-speaking readers interested in Islamic jurisprudence and its approach to global humanitarian issues.