

The Human Dimension in the Noble Quran: A Thematic Analysis of Verses on Rights and Responsibilities

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Abstract

The research problem focuses on addressing issues of human rights and duties, which represent the essence of human life and concern societies across diverse cultures and religions. The Qur'ān has given these issues special attention, linking the fulfillment of rights to the pleasure of Allah and the path to His paradise. This research aimed to provide a comprehensive perspective that highlights the precision and comprehensiveness of the divine methodology in addressing human rights and duties, emphasizing the humanistic dimension that balances divine legislation with human nature. The study employed an inductive-analytical approach, followed by a deductive method, and concluded that the Qur'ān addresses rights in a manner that respects human nature. It emphasized rights such as self-preservation, family rights like those of wives, mothers, and daughters, the rights of vulnerable groups like orphans, and the right to livelihood security as a fundamental necessity of life. Regarding duties, the Qur'ān considered gradual legislation based on individuals' circumstances, affirming the principle of ease and removing hardship, linking duties to human happiness in this life and the hereafter. The research also highlighted the divine mercy in accepting repentance and atoning for sins, reflecting the humanity of divine legislation. It concluded with recommendations to promote values of justice and tolerance, reject hate speech, focus on scientific responses to doubts about religious obligations, and translate these responses globally to showcase the humanistic dimension of Islamic law. Furthermore, it called for in-depth studies to highlight the compassion of Islam and refute misconceptions objectively and scientifically.

Keywords: Human Dimension, Human Rights, Human Responsibilities, Islamic Values, Noble Qur'ān.

Introduction

Islam is a religion of mercy and justice, with equality and peace among its foremost objectives. Its noble legislation encompasses all humanity with rights and duties, without being limited to Muslims alone. The Qur'ān addresses humanity as the central focus of the divine message, elevating human concerns to one of its primary pillars. It highlights humanity's status as a vicegerent on earth, as Allah states: "And [mention] when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority' (Qur'ān 2: 30). The Qur'ān approaches human issues with a comprehensive reformatory methodology, guiding individuals toward sound reasoning and offering wise solutions to their challenges. It emphasizes human rights and duties with sublime purposes that aim for guidance and justice.

Among the most prominent rights established by the Qur'ān are the right to live in security, the humane treatment of war prisoners, the rights of parents, orphans, and women, as well as property rights, protection, and financial rights. Moreover, it establishes precise regulations governing human interactions to ensure the uprightness of relationships. Islamic legislation considers human nature and circumstances in its legal obligations, as stated in Allah's words: "Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear" (Qur'ān 2: 286). This principle is evident in the rulings on spending, fasting, pilgrimage, jihad, and distinguishing between the conditions of individuals, such as the sick and the healthy, and travelers versus residents.

In light of this, the research problem lies in addressing the issues of human rights and duties, which are at the heart of human existence and concern people across cultures and religions. The Qur'ān pays special attention to these issues, linking the fulfillment of rights to Allah's pleasure and the path to His paradise. This study necessitates analysis and clarification due to its strong connection to Islamic belief, human relations, and the resulting divine reward or punishment. To achieve this, the study focuses on a thematic interpretation of verses addressing rights and duties, showcasing the precision and comprehensiveness of the divine methodology.

The significance of this research emerges when compared to previous studies, such as Dr. Yahya Zamzami's classification of rights-related verses, Abbas Al-Aqqad's work on humanity's status in the Qur'ān versus philosophical doctrines, Osama Al-Alfi's comparison of human rights and duties in Islam and other civilizations, and Heba Allah Hussein's exploration of the diversity of Qur'ānic expressions about women's rights. However, these studies lack direct focus on the thematic interpretation of verses on rights and duties from the human dimension.

This research aims to provide a new approach that highlights the divine methodology in organizing relationships between individuals and their Creator and between humans themselves, achieving balanced and fair justice in human life. It employs an inductive-analytical method to trace and analyze Qur'ānic texts related to rights and duties from a humanistic perspective in an integrated framework, in addition to a deductive approach to derive conclusions using logic and scientific principles.

The Human Dimension in the Qur'ānic Verses of Rights

The Qur'ān addresses human rights in many of its noble verses, considering the human dimension and the nature of humanity, as discussed in the previous section. It highlights various aspects of human rights, emphasizing their importance and the necessity of upholding them. Among the rights discussed in the Qur'ān, which must be observed, are the following:

The Right of the Self

The Qur'ān forbids all forms of injustice, extending its meaning to include fairness to oneself by avoiding harm or self-destruction. Allah says:

"And spend in the way of Allah and do not throw [yourselves] with your own hands into destruction. And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good." (Qur'ān 2: 195).

Al-Tabari explains: "Allah forbids us from engaging in acts that lead to our destruction or surrendering ourselves to punishment by neglecting the obligatory duties. Thus, it is impermissible for anyone to involve themselves in anything that displeases Allah, as it may bring about His wrath" (At-Ṭabariyy, 2000: 3/ 593).

The Right of the Wife

Allah says: "And due to them [the wives] is similar to what is expected of them, according to what is reasonable. But the men have a degree over them [in responsibility and authority]." (Qur'ān 2: 228). This verse emphasizes that "Women have rights upon men equivalent to their obligations toward them, as ordained by Allah, such as the man's duty to the woman, including the dowry and provision" (Al-Wāḥidī, 2000: 1/169). The wife is a partner to her husband, possessing equal rights and obligations suited to her nature and structure. Men, endowed with the qualities of leadership, resilience, and responsibility, are tasked with caring for and protecting their wives. This responsibility is not a means for oppression but rather one of care, provision, and defence, as Allah granted men a degree of responsibility encompassing financial support and guardianship, which should not be exceeded to infringe upon her dignity or rights (Ghādah, 2021: 1331).

The Right of the Mother

Islam sternly warns against disobedience to mothers, categorizing it among the gravest sins. The Qur'ān emphasizes the mother's significant sacrifices for her children, granting her a greater share of kindness and devotion. Allah says: "And We have enjoined upon man to [be good to] his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination." (Qur'ān 46: 15). This verse highlights Allah's mercy toward His servants and His acknowledgment of the sacrifices of parents, particularly the mother. It commands children to show excellence to their parents through kind words, gentle speech, financial support, and other forms of goodness. The verse also underscores the reasons for this command: the mother's suffering during pregnancy, enduring great hardship, followed by the difficulties of childbirth and then nursing and nurturing. These responsibilities are not momentary but extend over a long duration, estimated at thirty months approximately nine months of pregnancy and the remainder for breastfeeding, which is the prevalent norm (Al-Sa'dī, 2000: 1/781).

The Right of the Daughter

Islam places great importance on the rights of daughters, acknowledging their role as future mothers. It emphasizes their entitlement to care, affection, and connection at all stages of life. Guardians are obligated to protect and nurture daughters with compassion and love. The Qur'ān strongly condemns the pre-Islamic practice of despising daughters and the associated attitudes of shame. Allah says: "And when one of them is given good tidings of a female, his face becomes dark, and he suppresses grief. He hides himself from the people because of the ill of that of which he has been informed. Should he keep it in humiliation or bury it in the ground? Unquestionably, evil is what they decide." (Qur'ān 16: 57–59). This verse reproaches those who attributed daughters to Allah while feeling disgraced at the birth of their own. It describes their reaction, where they are overwhelmed by sorrow and disgrace, resorting to hiding from society due to perceived dishonor. Such judgments are unequivocally condemned in Islam (At-Ṭabariyy, 2000: 17/ 227).

The Right of the Orphan

The Qur'ān emphasizes the care and protection of orphans, addressing their emotional and financial well-being. Allah says: "And they ask you about orphans. Say, 'Improvement for them is best. And if you mix your affairs with theirs they are your brothers. And Allah knows the corrupter from the amender. And if Allah had willed, He could have put you in difficulty. Indeed, Allah is Exalted in Might and Wise.'" (Qur'ān 2: 220). This verse highlights the importance of fostering the welfare of orphans without seeking personal gain. If their wealth is managed alongside one's own, it should be done with integrity, treating them as brothers who deserve care and support (al-Wāḥidī, 1994: 1/325). The Qur'ān also addresses the psychological needs of orphans, recognizing the profound impact of their experiences on their behaviour and character. Guardians and caretakers are urged to treat orphans with compassion, kindness, and guidance (Al-Harawī, 2001: 5/263). Allah commands: "So as for the orphan, do not oppress [him]." (Qur'ān 93: 9). This prohibits any form of injustice, mistreatment, or exploitation of orphans. Furthermore, Allah underscores the obligation to deal justly with their property: "And do not approach the property of the orphan except in a way that is best until he reaches maturity." (Qur'ān 4: 6). This mandate safeguarding and growing their wealth responsibly, avoiding mismanagement or misuse (At-Ṭabariyy, 2000: 12/ 221). The severity of exploiting orphans is clear in: "Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze." (Qur'ān 4: 10). This warning was revealed in response to individuals, such as Marthad ibn Zayd of Banu Ghatafan, who unlawfully consumed the wealth of orphans (Al-Baghawī, 1997: 2/171). Lastly, Allah prohibits substituting orphans' valuable assets with lesser-quality ones or merging their wealth into one's own for selfish purposes: "And give the orphans their properties and do not substitute the defective [of your own] for the good [of theirs]. And do not consume their properties into your own. Indeed, that is ever a great sin." (Qur'ān 4: 2). These teachings emphasize the sacred responsibility of safeguarding orphans' rights, advocating for their protection and welfare as an act of faith and justice.

The Right to Livelihood Security

The feeling of security is one of life's fundamental necessities, serving as a motivator for work, production, creativity, prosperity, and societal progress. Islamic law has emphasized safeguarding the five essential elements: intellect, life, faith, honor, and wealth. It has asserted that neither worldly prosperity nor spiritual fulfillment can be achieved without

security and safety among all segments of society. Allah created everything to ensure human comfort and provide for their livelihood security. He designed the earth as a suitable habitat for humanity, facilitating stability and productivity. Allah says: "And the earth He laid [out] for the creatures." (Qur'ān 55: 10). This signifies that the earth was prepared as a stable resting place for humans, enabling them to build, cultivate, plant, dig, and traverse its paths while utilizing its resources for their needs and sustenance (Al-Sa'dī, 2000: 1/828). Allah further states: "And We have spread out the earth and placed therein firmly set mountains and caused to grow therein [something] of every well-balanced thing. And We have made for you therein means of living and [for] those for whom you are not providers." (Qur'ān 15: 19-20). This verse highlights how the earth is filled with precisely balanced resources essential for life, such as crops, fruits, trees, and other vegetation. These provide means of livelihood through farming, herding, and various trades and crafts (Al-Sa'dī, 2000: 1/430). From these verses, it is evident that one of Allah's greatest blessings is allowing humans to live in peace and security regarding their faith, property, lives, honor, and wealth. Life cannot thrive without a sense of safety. The Qur'ān also addresses the spiritual causes underlying the human right to livelihood security, emphasizing that these are rooted in the heart and spirit rather than material wealth alone. Spiritual and psychological security, coupled with an appreciation for Allah's immense blessings, guide individuals toward belief in Allah, sincere worship, gratitude, repentance, and seeking forgiveness for their shortcomings. Thus, Islam links material security with spiritual well-being, ensuring a holistic sense of safety that encompasses the mind, body, and soul.

The Human Dimension in the Qur'ānic Verses of Responsibilities

One of the most important characteristics of Islamic law is the gradual approach in legislation, with the revelation of binding rulings occurring in stages. This is done in consideration of the nature of the human soul and the realities of life. Therefore, the Qur'ān relies on a method of gradual legislation of rulings, so that they suit the souls, circumstances, and conditions; alleviating hardship and difficulty in their obligations. Then, it moves on to eternal rulings that remain valid for all times and places. Examples of the human dimension in legislating duties include:

Gradualness in Legislation

The Islamic Sharia considered the condition of people at the time when the Islamic message was revealed. For example, wine (alcohol) was a deeply rooted custom during the pre-Islamic era (Jahiliyyah) and could not easily be abandoned. Therefore, the rulings related to it were revealed gradually, considering the nature of the human soul.

The prohibition came in four stages:

At first, wine was mentioned as a good provision: "And from the fruits of the palm trees and grapevines you take intoxicants and good provision." (Qur'ān 16: 67). Then it was established that its sin outweighs its benefit: "They ask you about wine and gambling. Say, 'In them is great sin and [some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit.'" (Qur'ān 2: 219). After that, it was forbidden before prayer: "O you who have believed, do not approach prayer while you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying." (Qur'ān 4: 43). Finally, the full prohibition was revealed: "O you who have believed, indeed, intoxicants, gambling, [sacrificing on] stone alters [to other than Allah], and divining arrows are but defilement from the work of Satan, so avoid it that you may be successful." (Qur'ān 5: 90).

Similarly, prayer was imposed in three stages:

First stage: Prayer was initially two rak'ahs at dawn and two at evening, as God mentioned: "And keep yourself patient [by being] with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance." (Qur'ān 18: 28).

Second stage: Prayer was then prescribed three times a day—at dawn, afternoon (Asr), and night prayer—adding Asr to what was previously prescribed, as in: "And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds erase bad deeds." (Qur'ān 11: 114). Third stage: The legislation was completed by prescribing five daily prayers, as in: "Establish prayer at the decline of the sun until the darkness of the night and [also] the Quran of dawn." (Qur'ān 17: 78). This gradualness also applied to the number of rak'ahs in the prayer. At first, prayer consisted of two rak'ahs, then it was completed with the full number by the Prophet ﷺ after migration (Hijrah). 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said: "Allah initially prescribed the prayer as two rak'ahs, then completed it in the city (Medina). The travel prayer was confirmed to be the original obligation two rak'ahs (Muslim, n.d: 5/119)" (Al-Zubayr, 2000: 1/123).

Consideration of Human Feelings in the Qur'ānic Commands and Prohibitions

God Almighty has commanded us to uphold justice and kindness, which includes exercising justice and kindness both toward Him and toward His servants. This means fulfilling all rights financial and physical that God has obligated upon the servant, both in His right and in the rights of others. A person must not oppress, deceive, or unjustly deprive their brother of any right. Allah forbids indecency and major sins, including associating partners with Him, killing, violating the rights of others, arrogance, and belittling people. Every sin related to the rights of Allah falls under indecency, and every aggression against people in their lives or honor is considered oppression. Allah says: "Indeed, Allah commands justice and kindness and giving to relatives, and forbids immorality, and bad conduct, and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded." (Qur'ān 16: 90). This verse combines many duties and prohibitions, demonstrating the profound eloquence of the Quran.

Consideration of Human Weakness

Islamic law considers the human dimension in its commands and the imposition of religious duties, aiming to make them easier and to remove hardship. Allah says:

"Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship." (Qur'ān 2: 185). Out of mercy for His creation and to alleviate burdens while considering human weakness, Allah also says: "Allah wants to lighten for you [your difficulties]; and mankind was created weak." (Qur'ān 4: 28). He further emphasizes this mercy and limitation of duty by stating: "Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear." [Al-Baqarah: 286] and: "Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity." (Qur'ān 65: 7).

Linking Duty and Obligations to Happiness in Both Worlds

Allah Almighty knows what the human soul desires, and since humans deeply love goodness, the Creator has considered this nature and has promised abundant and multiplied rewards for every act of obedience in this life and the Hereafter. The Qur'ān affirms this in verses such as: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer. We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do." (Qur'ān 16: 97). And: "Indeed,

those who have believed and done righteous deeds for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow. That is the great attainment.” (Qur’ān 85: 11).

Consideration of the Feelings of the Sinner

Allah Almighty considers the weakness of the human soul when faced with desires and temptations, and He informs us of His acceptance of the repentance of the sinful, repentant servant, promising forgiveness and a good reward. He pardons and forgives all sins except associating partners with Him. Allah says: “Except for those who repent, believe, and do righteousness; for those, He will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful.” (Qur’ān 19: 60). And He says: “Say, ‘O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.’” (Qur’ān 39: 53). From these verses, it becomes clear that Islam’s approach is characterized by justice, preserving both the moral and material rights of the person. It aligns with human nature and the diverse temperaments of people’s souls, relieving them of hardship and difficulty, and facilitating obedience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has examined the human dimension inherent in the Qur’ānic discourse on rights and duties, revealing a comprehensive framework that intricately balances divine commands with the nature and needs of human beings. The Quran addresses fundamental rights such as the protection of the self, the equitable treatment of spouses, the special status of mothers, the safeguarding of orphans, and the assurance of livelihood security, thereby ensuring social justice and individual dignity. In parallel, the legislative approach demonstrates remarkable flexibility and sensitivity through gradual enactment and consideration of psychological and spiritual well-being. Moreover, the Quran’s emphasis on mercy and forgiveness towards sinners further illustrates the compassionate nature of Islamic law, reflecting a holistic understanding of human weakness and the potential for reform. These findings highlight the Quran’s role as a balanced and humane legal and moral guide, integrating justice, compassion, and practical facilitation to foster both individual and societal welfare. By implementing these recommendations, societies can better appreciate the tolerant and inclusive spirit of Islamic teachings and effectively address contemporary challenges related to misinterpretations and extremism.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Rejecting Extremism:** Efforts should be made to counter any narratives that incite hatred, violence, or social exclusion, promoting instead the Qur’ānic principles of justice, tolerance, and inclusivity.
2. **Addressing Misconceptions:** Scholars and institutions must actively engage in identifying and scientifically addressing misconceptions and doubts related to Islamic legal obligations, providing clear and accessible explanations.
3. **Translation and Dissemination:** It is essential to translate scholarly works on the human dimension of Sharia into multiple languages to facilitate broader understanding and appreciation across diverse cultures.
4. **Further Research:** Encouragement and support for comprehensive and interdisciplinary studies on the humane aspects of Islamic jurisprudence are necessary to deepen the understanding of Islam’s tolerant and balanced nature and to effectively counter misinformation.

By implementing these recommendations, the broader public discourse around Islamic law can be enriched with balanced knowledge, fostering social harmony and mutual respect.

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