



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i10/4732>

DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i10/4732

Received: 17 Sept 2018, Revised: 11 Oct 2018, Accepted: 16 Oct 2018

Published Online: 31 October 2018

In-Text Citation: (Shuhari et al., 2018)

To Cite this Article: Shuhari, M. H., Hamat, M. F., Ismail, M. S., Jaffar, Y., Mustafa, M. F., & Abdullah, M. S. (2018). Elements of Integrity within Muslim Individuals According to the Thought of al-Ghazali. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(10), 270–278.

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Vol. 8, No. 10, 2018, Pg. 270 - 278

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Elements of Integrity within Muslim Individuals According to the Thought of al-Ghazali

Mohd Hasrul Shuhari¹, Mohd Fauzi Hamat², Mohd Sani Ismail¹,
Yusrina Jaffar³, Mohd Fadzhil Mustafa¹ & Mohd Shaifulbahri
Abdullah¹

¹Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies (FKI), University of Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia, hasrulshuhari@unisza.edu.my

²Department of Aqidah and Islamic Thought, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya 50603, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

³Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan, Seri Pengkalan Alor Gajah Melaka, Malaysia

Abstract

Integrity is one of the moral qualities of human that need to be translated into everyday life particularly by Muslim individuals. This attribute will motivate a person to avoid something that could cause him to be considered as an individual without integrity. The characteristics of a person without integrity include deceptive, treacherous, deviant, corruption, money politics and the like. These characteristics could be avoided successfully if the individual tries to adorn himself with elements of integrity. Such elements to be considered are *al-Sidq* (truthfulness), *al-Amanah* (fulfilling trusts), and *al-Mas'uliyah* (responsible). These elements will be elaborated based on the thought of al-Ghazali (d. 505H) through a selection of his book. This article concludes that these elements are able to establish the quality of integrity within Muslim individuals.

Keywords: Integrity, Muslim Individuals, Al-Ghazali, Morals.

Introduction: Al-Ghazali

Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Tusi al-Shafi'i and was born on the 450H in Tus. Al-Ghazali, the son of Imam al-Haramayn al-Juwayni, mastered knowledge in various fields, thus called as an Islamic argumentist (*hujjat al-Islam*). He had written reports in various fields of study and his councils were attended by famous scholars. This famous scholar practiced al-Shafi'i in and stood with *al-Asha'irah*. According to Yusuf al-Qaradawi, his mastery in various fields of knowledge and honor given to him, *hujjah al-Islam*, encourages the historians (*muarrikhin*) and hadith scholars (*muhaddithin*) to agree without doubt that he is the *mujaddid* (reformer) in that century (fifth century). Al-Ghazali died at the age of 55 years on Monday, 14th Jamadil Akhir 505H

and was buried in Tus (IbnKathir, 1998; al-`Imad, 1989; al-Madkur, 2009; al-Qaradawi, 1994; Fauzi and Hasrul, 2017).

The Suitability Of Al-Ghazali's Thinking

The thought of al-Ghazali is appropriate to be learnt by Muslim individuals, especially the majority of the Muslim community in Malaysia. This is because the Muslim community in Malaysia has been exposed widely to the influence of al-Ghazali's thought through the seminars and scripture councils. Al-Ghazali's teachings have been commonly taught in *musolla*, mosques and *pondok-styled* institution by the speakers and teachers who teach his books. So, they are easy to accept and practice al-Ghazali's way of thinking. There is an educational-chain linking the ulama in the Malaya with al-Ghazali. Ahmad al-Qushashi and Ibrahim al-Kurani were among the scholars who linked al-Ghazali's thinking to the Malay scholars back at the days. For example, among the Malay scholars who studied with al-Kurani was Shaykh Abd al-Ra'uf Singkel. Shaykh Muhammad Yasin al-Fadani also lists the books of al-Ghazali such as *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, *Minhaj al-'Abidin*, *Bidayah al-Hidayah* and *al-Hikmah fi Makhluqat Allah* that were accepted through his teacher, Shaykh Muhammad Ali al-Maliki that is linked to Shaykh Ahmad al-Ramli based on *sanad al-Kurani* to al-Ghazali (Abdullah, 2004; Fauzi and Hasrul, 2017).

In 1778M, Shaykh `Abd al-Samad al-Falimbani translated and described the book *Bidayah al-Hidayah* in his work entitled *Hidayah al-Salikin* (Ahmad Fathy al-Fatani, 2002). Raja Ali Haji also contributed in spreading al-Ghazali's thinking, especially those that contained in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, *Minhaj al-'Aididin* and *Bidayah al-Hidayah* into the Malay world as for example through his poetic masterpiece entitled *Gurindam Dua Belas* (Watson, 1979; Sham, 2004). The book *Bidayah al-Hidayah* was also lectured by a Malay scholar named Muhammad al-Nawawi al-Jawi al-Makki in his work, *Maraqi al-'Ubudiyah* (al-Ghazali, 1985). According to Hamka (1977), al-Ghazali's thought through his book, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* greatly influenced the Malay community. He acknowledged that his work entitled *Tasawwuf Moden* (1939M), the *Lembaga Hidup* (1940M) and the *Lembaga Budi* (1940M) was influenced by al-Ghazali's thinking through *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, *Minhaj al-'Abidin* and *Bidayah al-Hidayah* (Sham, 2004; Fauzi and Hasrul, 2017). After understanding the reality of the Malaysian society, especially the Muslims who are already familiar with al-Ghazali's thinking, it is important that al-Ghazali's ideas are to be spread among Malaysians more systematically (Fauzi and Hasrul, 2017).

Integrity from Islamic Perspective

The word 'integrity' was taken from a Latin word, *integer* which means entire or a whole or untouched. It also carries the meaning of intact, sound, true or reliable (Zaidi and Sani, 2011; Mustafar, 2009). Integrity means the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles or the quality of being honest and upright. In summary, integrity is translated as honesty (*New Oxford*, 2004; Kamus, 2002). According to *al-Mawrid* dictionary, translating the English word 'integrity' to the Arabic language would give the meaning of *salamah* (far from shame and disease), *kamal* (perfect), *istiqamah* (moral virtue), *amanah* (sincere; opposite to treacherous, one example is keeping promises) and *al-tamamiyyah* (the original word is *tamam* which means perfection) (Ba'albaki, 1991; Mujamma`, 2005; al-Munjid, 1988).

Integrity also means something against corruption. If corruption is defined as the misuse of entrusted power for personal and political purposes, then integrity means the use of public power for a purpose which is officially confirmed and justified by the public (Jeremy, 2007). In the Malay language, integrity refers to individual character. Based on *Kamus Dwibahasa* (2008), the word means honesty, uprightness, sincerity, perfection and completeness (Wan Mohamad, 2009). Integrity means honesty in the *Kamus Dewan* (2007). It also refers to a state of perfection and intact or completeness (Zulkifli, 2009; Zulkifli, 2008). From the Islamic perspective, integrity can be attributed directly and in parallel with the attributes of trust, honesty, faith, strong belief, powerful character and noble manners. For believers, integrity at a high degree in the sight of God is piety that is doing what he was told and stay away from things that are prohibited (Ali, 2009).

Elements of Integrity within Muslim Individuals

Al-Ghazali uses a number of terms that can be associated with the concept of integrity. The terms are *al-sidq*, *al-amanah* and *al-mas'uliyah*. These terms can also be defined as elements which are able to build integrity within Muslim individuals. The explanations are as follow:

Al-Sidq

Al-Sidq originally referred to the strength of something like words and so on. Strength here is meant to be the strength of reliability and truth of something. The opposite of *al-sidq* is *al-kidhb* as mentioned by Sayyidina Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, in which the essence of *sidq* is *amanah*, while the essence of *kidhb* is *khiyanah* (al-Hakim, 1981; Zaidi and Sani, 2011). *Al-Sidq* is also related to sincerity as explained by al-Jurjani (1985) that *al-sidq* is the origin and the beginning, while *al-ikhlas* is a branch of *al-sidq*. According to al-Kashani (2007), a person who has the perfect *al-sidq* is those who has perfect *tasdeeq* (acceptance) of all and everything brought by the prophet Muhammad S.A.W, be it his knowledge, word and deed.

Al-Ghazali describes *al-sidq* through the verses of the Quran and Hadith, which include (al-Ghazali, t.t.):

مَنْ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن قَضَىٰ نَحْبَهُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَنْتَظِرُ وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا ۚ ۲۳

Translation: "Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah: of them some have completed their vow through sacrificing their lives, and some others are waiting for it, and have not changed their determination in the least."

(al-Ahzab 33: 23)

Words of the Prophet S.A.W:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَلَيْنَاكَ بِالصِّدْقِ فَإِنَّ الصِّدْقَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْبِرِّ وَإِنَّ الْبِرَّ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَصْدُقُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الصِّدْقَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ صِدْقًا وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَالْكَذِبُ فَإِنَّ الْكَذِبَ يَهْدِي إِلَى الْفُجُورِ وَإِنَّ الْفُجُورَ يَهْدِي إِلَى النَّارِ وَمَا يَزَالُ الرَّجُلُ يَكْذِبُ وَيَتَحَرَّى الْكَذِبَ حَتَّى يُكْتَبَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَذَابًا

Translation: Abdullah reported: Rasulullah S.A.W said, "You must be truthful, for truthfulness leads to righteousness and righteousness leads to Paradise. A man will keep speaking the truth and striving to speak the truth until he will be recorded with Allah as a *siddiq* (speaker of the truth). Beware of telling lies, for lying leads to immorality and immorality leads to Hellfire. A man will keep telling lies and striving to tell lies until he is recorded with Allah as a liar." (Muslim, 2000)

According to al-Ghazali (t.t.), *al-sidq* utterance is employed in six different meanings, and whoever succeed to possess all of them deserve to be called *al-siddiq* i.e *al-sidq* which has the *mubalaghah* (hyperbole) meaning. The first meaning is *al-sidq fi al-qawl* (in words) referring to the news mentioned either in connection with past or future as well as keeping or betraying promises. Someone who confesses that he is the servant of Allah S.W.T but submits to his lust is hence a liar. The second meaning is *al-sidq fi al-niyyah wa al-iradah* (the intent and the will), which refers to the sincerity in which every motion and rest is driven by Allah S.W.T. If it is driven by selfish motive which is not for Allah's sake, then it is a lie. Even though his words are true but is still considered a lie because of the wrong intent of his heart which resembles a hypocrite.

The third meaning is *al-sidq fi al-`azm* (in determination) i.e. the strong determination of doing something good without any other tendency, doubts and weaknesses in doing it. It is a strong determination that was set before the practice. Even if he might get killed in a war, the determination remains firmly to sacrifice for war. The fourth meaning is *al-sidq fi al-wafa 'bi al-`azm* (in keeping promises with determination), in which Allah S.W.T takes a person determination as a promise. If he reach the determination then it is true and if otherwise then it is a lie. *Al-sidq* in this section is heavier than the third. This is because, sometimes human set their determination with nonchalance which lead them to be dominated by lust and thus weakened the determination (al-Ghazali, t.t.).

The fifth meaning is *al-sidq fi al-`amal* (in practice) which refers to a person who strives earnestly to apparently not showing what is in his being which is not his attribute. Instead his practices conform outwardly as in his being. For example, a person performs a *khusyu'* (engrossed, humble) prayer and he does not do it to be seen by others. Although he is true for not being *riya'* (show off, seeking admiration) yet is still *not al-sidq* in practice because the inner is in fact does not as *khusyuk* as in appearance. The sixth meaning is *al-sidq tahqiq fi maqamat al-din* (the verification of religious station) where it is of the highest and most noble as *al-sidq on al-khawf* (fear), *al-raja'* (hope), *al-ta`zim* (honour), *al-zuhd* (ascetic), *al-rida* (contentment), *al-tawakkal* (confidence), *al-hubb* (love) and others. One should have these attributes in his whole being despite not meeting all those attributes. Someone who fears Allah S.W.T is not necessarily really scared of Him relative to his fear to face a cruel king or robber (al-Ghazali, t.t.).

The conclusion is that *al-sidq* refers to six definitions which include the word, intent and will, determination and its fulfillment, balance and preference between spiritual and physical practices, and religious *maqam* (station, rank). It emphasizes the separation of both internal and external self from the domination of lust, very committed to obey Allah S.W.T, parallel spiritual and physical

practices that completes each other according to the command of Allah S.W.T as well as striving to adorn themselves with admirable qualities in the real sense even if it is not possible to achieve all the qualities to reach the highest and perfect *maqam* (station or rank). These elements will help the Muslim individuals for example by not committing fraud. This is because, *al-sidq fi al-qawl* (truthful in words) encourage him to always speak the truth.

Al-Amanah and Al-Mas'uliyah

Al-Amanah and *al-mas'uliyah* intertwined because a given trust should be undertaken with full responsible. If a person fails to preserve the trust then he will be liable to be repaid in kind. According to al-Ghazali, the word *amanah* was derived from the word *al-amn* because it refers to a person who is free from the commission of breach of his own rights. While *khiyanah*, taken from the word *al-khawn*, which means reduce which refers to someone betraying the other, he has reduced or lessen the rights of others (al-Hakim, 1981; al-Ghazali, 1990). The Quranic verse that mentions about *al-amanah* is as Allah says:

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا
جَهُولًا ٧٢

Translation: "Indeed, we offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to] bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant."

(al-Ahzab 33: 72)

This verse explains the rejection of *al-amanah* given by Allah SWT by heavens, the earth and the mountains. They are all concerned with their inability to take on *al-amanah* or fear of causing *khianat* (treacherous) that cause them to be punished later. *Al-Amanah* in this verse refers to the practice of devotion and religious obligation which also have implications for reward and sin. Al-Ghazali (1990) quoted the opinion of al-Qurtubi which is also the opinion of *jumhur ulama* (majority of muslim scholars) that *al-amanah* covers all *wazaif al-din* (religious duty). Al-Ghazali (1990) also links *al-amanah* with *iman* (faith), which will not be perfect for those without *al-amanah*. This is because, *al-amanah* was also derived from the word *al-iman*. Hence, whoever preserves the trust granted by Allah, Allah will then preserve his *iman* (faith) (al-Hakim, 1981). The difference between human, the heaven, the earth and the mountains is that humans are willing to take *al-amanah* i.e. *al-ma`rifah* and *al-tawhid*, while the others are not able to do it (al-Ghazali, t.t.).

Defending and preserving *Al-Amanah* properly are the nature of the angels, the prophets and messengers a.s and the people of *taqwa* (piety, fearing Allah). *Al-Amanah* for leaders is to perform *da'wah* (educating and preaching of Islam) in order to chasten the unjust and protect the rights of Muslims and orphans. An ulama (muslim scholars) preserves *al-amanah* by teaching the knowledge of Islam to society. Parents are entrusted to keep their *al-amanah* by providing education for their children.²⁴ In fact, *al-amanah* for an *imam* who led a congregational prayer is someone who is spiritually free from *fasiq* (disobedient to Allah), major sin and does not sustaining the minor sins. This is because the *imam* is like delegate that helps others, thus surely he should be one of the best in the community (Al-Ghazali, 1990). Allah S.W.T says in al-Quran:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ٥٨﴾

Translation: Verily! Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice. Verily, how excellent is the teaching which He (Allah) gives you! Truly, Allah is Ever All-Hearer, All-Seer.

(al-Nisa' 4: 58)

The grantor of *al-amanah* will also be held responsible, in which al-Ghazali (t.t.) tells us the story of a Bedouin man who rebuked a sultan. He informed the sultan that there are those people around the sultan who are more concerned about the world. So, he advised the sultan to be careful when granting *al-amanah* to them in doing something because the sultan will be held responsible for his nonchalant nature in granting *al-amanah*. Al-Ghazali (t.t.) also presents a hadith which shows that every man is responsible for *al-amanah* executed by them:

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَمَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ فَالْإِمَامُ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ وَالرَّجُلُ فِي أَهْلِهِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ وَالْمَرْأَةُ فِي بَيْتِ رَوْحِهَا رَاعِيَةٌ وَهِيَ مَسْئُولَةٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهَا وَالْخَادِمُ فِي مَالِ سَيِّدِهِ رَاعٍ وَهُوَ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ.

Ibn 'Umar said, I heard the Messenger of Allah S.A.W says: "All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock. An Imam is a shepherd and he is responsible for those in his care. A man is a shepherd in respect of his family and is responsible for those in his care. The woman is a shepherd in respect of her husband's house and is responsible for those in her care. The servant is a shepherd in respect of his master's property and is responsible for what is in his care. All of you are shepherds and each of you is responsible for his flock." (Al-Bukhari, 2000).

The conclusion is that *al-amanah* and *al-mas'uliyah* refers to something that is granted to a person to be performed or preserved and that person will be held responsible for errors or treacherous. In the event of such, then a person entrusted with *al-amanah* will be held accountable and must face the punishment of his guilt accordingly. *Al-amanah* here is meant to be all duties assigned by Allah S.W.T to mankind, and they will be tortured for failure to obey. Those who succeed will receive the reward, not to mention that *al-amanah* is highly correlated with *al-iman* in which if taken care, then their *al-iman* will be taken care of. Both of these elements will motivate a person not to commit treachery and the like. Eventually, he deserves to be a Muslim individual of integrity.

Conclusion

The thought of al-Ghazali is appropriate to be learnt by Muslim individuals in Malaysia because they has been exposed widely to the influence of al-Ghazali's thought. Muslim individuals with integrity are individuals who possess the elements of integrity within themselves. Those elements are *al-sidq* (truthfulness), *al-amanah* (fulfilling trusts), and *al-mas'uliyah* (responsible). The element of *al-sidq* covers the word, intent, will, determination and its realisation, balance or priority between the

spiritual and physical practices, and noble qualities. The elements of *al-amanah* and *al-mas'uliyah* refer to something that are granted to a person to be performed or properly cared for and he will be held responsible for errors or treacherous. These elements will help individuals by preventing them from doing something against the attributes of integrity such as treacherous and the like. Eventually, that person deserves to be a Muslim individual of integrity.

Acknowledgement

This paper is founded on the research project of the Fundamental Research Grant Scheme – FRGS/1/2017/SSI03/UNISZA/03/1 (RR233). Rekabentuk Model Pembinaan Karakter 'Ibad al-Rahman Berdasarkan Pengalaman Pendidikan al-Ghazali, al-Shafie, Ibn Sina dan Muhammad al-Fatih. Special appreciation is owed to Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) and Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) for sponsoring and supporting this research.

Corresponding Author

Mohd Hasrul bin Shuhari

Centre for Usuluddin Studies, Faculty of Islamic Contemporary Studies (FKI), University of Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA), Gong Badak Campus, 21300 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu, Malaysia.

Tel: 09-6688163. E-mail: hasrulshuhari@unisza.edu.my

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