

CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON THE POLITICAL ETHICS OF STATE OFFICIALS

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ABSTRACT

This article specifically discusses political ethics in the Islamic perspective. Observing the practices of state officials in Muslim countries in this contemporary period (i.e. as practiced by the President and Vice President, Prime Minister, governor or mayor, secretary of state, or by the members of the legislature), it is apparent that not much attention is being paid to political ethics as taught by Islam. Thus, for most Muslims, the political organization raises more disadvantages than benefits. This article is intended to discuss the norms of ethics and political morals taught by Islam that must be used as a reference or as guidelines of conduct by Muslim state officials. In so doing, politics can really bring justice, harmony, success, and happiness, not only for state officials, but also for their nation both in life on this mortal earth and in eternal life in the hereafter. This study is based on a research of the literature relating to this article with the following conclusion: According to the Islamic political perspective, there are at least nine kinds of ethics that state officials should adhere to in carrying out their political activities, namely, the pursuit of truth, trustworthiness, fairness, a sense of genuine concern for

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the fate of the people, a sense of shame, courage, acceptance of other people's opinions in a consultation, ability to fulfil political promises, and treat all people equally before the law.

Keywords: *political ethics, state officials, political activities, political consciences.*

INTRODUCTION

This article specifically discusses the ethics of politics in the Islamic political perspective. In empirical reality, political ethics or moral signposts in politics are often only a part of mere political rhetoric. Similar to traffic signs on the highway, signs of morals are also often ignored. As a result, there is frequently chaos that claims many victims.

Therefore, it is not surprising that, until recently, many people remain cynical about all the conversation on political ethics. Hence, the very popular adage used to describe the political ugliness, i.e., that politics is a dirty business.² This expression is only true if no ethics is practised in political activity.

This cynical attitude is dangerous because it shows a level of despair as though what happened has politics without ethics is applied, it undoubtedly will bring more disadvantages than benefits. happened and there really is nothing to do about it. We realize that ethics in politics is needed, so we are fully aware of what is expected to *occur ideally (das sein)*, not just stop at what *actually happens (das sollen)*.

It's hard to argue that there is often conflict between ethics and politics. Therefore, it is not surprising if one assumes that ethics and politics are in two different and irreconcilable worlds. Borrowing the framework of Christian, ethics is likened to a dove who is genuinely honest and sincere, and on the contrary, politics is often likened to a snake who is genuinely clever and cunning.

Nevertheless, Immanuel Kant was fully convinced that a pigeon and a snake can co-exist and, furthermore, that the pigeon will win. When politics saying: "Be sly as a snake", on contrary, moral, said Immanuel Kant, will say: "Be sincere as a dove". Unlike Immanuel Kant, Dennis F. Thompson argued that a philosopher who is more alert would say, "A snake and a pigeon will be able to lie down together, but definitely the pigeon will have trouble sleeping."³

² <http://www.cambridge.org/us/catalogue/catalogue.asp?isbn=9780521873550&ss=exc>, 5 May 2010.

³ Dennis F. Thompson, *Political Ethics and Public Office* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2000), xvii.

In the Islamic perspective, according to Ibn Khaldūn, politics must become a quest for ethics and both are interlinked. This is one of Islam's most valuable contribution to human society.⁴ Ibn Khaldūn's opinion contrasts with that of Machiavelli, the Italian philosopher who stated that good politics is the politics that can achieve its goals, in whatever way.⁵ This Machiavellian perspective is foreign to Islam.

From the above description, it is clear that ethics and politics have a very close relationship. Since it gives an ethical tone to politics, politics in Islam is not a value-free activity. The perfect interweaving of ethics and politics is exemplified by Prophet Muhammad when he led the country of Medina; described by the Koran as a good role model (al-Aḥzāb: 33 : 21). After the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, the political practice based on ethics and morals in Medina were followed by his four major friends, commonly known as the *al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*. Islamic government in the period of the Prophet and *al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*, according to many historians, both Muslim and non-Muslims, such as Robert N. Bellah and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, was the most ethical with high moral standards and democratic government.⁶

In contrast to the period of the Prophet and *al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidūn*, governments run by state officials in various Muslim countries in this contemporary period, cannot be disputed and many are tainted by immoral practices. Hence, Muslims in the contemporary period is still less get a good lesson in the implementation of political ethics as taught and exemplified by the Prophet. The question then is what are the political ethics that should be used as guidelines by state officials who play a role entrusted to him by the public? And what positive and negative implications would arise if state officials does not comply with the political ethics taught by Islam? This article is intended to answer these fundamental questions.

DEFINITION OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL ETHICS

Before elaborating on the definition of Islamic political ethics, we need to present a discussion on the definition of ethics and politics. Etymologically, ethics is derived from the Greek word, *ethikos* which can accommodate two

⁴ Abdul Rashid Moten, *Political Science: An Islamic Perspective* (Bandung: Pustaka, 2001), 54.

⁵ See Haryatmoko, 'Etika Politik: Keadilan Prosedural dan Prinsip Subsidiaritas', in Sadu Wasistiono & Ondo Riyani, *Etika Hubungan Legislatif- Eksekutif dalam Pelaksanaan Otonomi Daerah* (Bandung: Fokus Media, 2003), 44.

⁶ <http://www.scribd.com/doc/17235985/Etika-Berpolitik-DalamIslamBuletin,5> May 2010.

meanings, as follows: (1) the principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group, (2) a system of principles governing morality and acceptable conduct.⁷

Terminologically, according to Louis P. Pojman and James Fleser, ethics can be defined as follows:

*“Ethics is that branch of philosophy that deals with how we ought to live, with the idea of the good, and with such concepts as right and wrong”.*⁸

What is meant by “right act” and “wrong act” in the definition of ethics cited above, according to Louis P. Pojman and James Fleser, is as follows:

*“A right act is an act that is permissible for you to do. It may be either (a) obligatory or (b) optional. An obligatory act is one that morality requires you to do; it is not permissible for you to refrain from doing it. An optional act is one that is neither obligatory nor wrong to do. It is not your duty to do it, nor it your duty not to do it. Neither doing it nor not doing it would be wrong. A wrong act is one you have an obligation, or a duty, to refrain from doing: It is an act you ought not to do; it is not permissible to do it.”*⁹

Based on the opinion of Louis P. Pojman and James Fleser as cited above, we can conclude two things as follows:

1. Ethics is very closely related to the concept of right and wrong;
2. Ethics can also be referred to as morality. Therefore, someone who has ethics can also be referred to as one who has morals.

It is important to note that, although the discussion on ethics is focussed on right and wrong, in everyday life, the meaning of ethics is often narrowed only to mention something that has a good nuance. Therefore, to assess whether any action is done ethically or not, we need to see whether such an action has a good nuance or otherwise contains a bad nuance. If it contains a nuance of good, then such an action can be considered an ethical action. Conversely, if it contains a bad nuance, it can be categorized as a non-ethical action. Based on these perspectives, then the person whose words or actions always contain a bad nuance can be classified as one who has no ethics.

⁷ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/ethic>, 2 December 2010.

⁸ Louis P. Pojman & James Fleser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong* (USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 2.

⁹ Louis P. Pojman & James Fleser, *Ethics: Discovering Right and Wrong*, 9.

In Islamic literature, ethics is named *akhlāq*, the plural form of which is *khuluq*, defined lexically as character.¹⁰ As for the terminological meaning of *akhlāq*, there is a difference of opinion among scholars. According to Ibn Miskawayh, *akhlāq* means:

حال للنفس داعية لها إلى أفعالها من غير فكر ولا روية

*“Mental conditions that encourage (someone) to do something without requiring deep thought and contemplation”.*¹¹

It can be differentiated into two kinds. Firstly, the behaviours that humans have since birth, such as laughing or smiling when he or she gets something nice and crying when he or she feels sad. Secondly, the behaviours obtained by humans through the process of habituation and education, such as halting a vehicle when the traffic light is red, and other activities which can be easily done because they have become habits.

Unlike Ibn Miskawayh, al-Ghazālī defines *akhlāq* as follows:

هيئة راسخة في النفس تصدر عنها الأفعال بيسر وسهولة من غير حاجة إلى فكر ورؤية.

*“Existing capabilities in the soul (of someone) that enables him to easily perform various actions without requiring deep thinking and contemplation”.*¹²

With a different editorial, ‘Abd al-Karīm Zaydān defines *akhlāq* as follows:

أنها مجموعة من المعاني والصفات المستقرة في النفس وفي ضوئها وميزانها يحسن الفعل في نظر الإنسان أو يقبح ومن ثم يقدم عليه أو يجمع عنه.

*“Indeed, it is a collection of moral meaning and nature of existing in the psyche and the human soul or in the perception that allowed a judge of the good or bad deeds, so that he can then take the decision to do or leave it”.*¹³

With a different formulation, Khalīl ‘Abd Allah ‘Abd al-Hudrī defines *akhlāq* as follows:

فعل المليح والتخلي عن القبيح بحسب الشرع

¹⁰ Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *Kamus al-Munawwir* (Yogyakarta: Pondok Pesantren al-Munawwir, n.d.), 393.

¹¹ Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhib al-Akhlāq wa Tathīr al-A’raq* (Beirut: Dār Maktabah al-Hayah li al-Tibā’ah wa al-Nashr, n.d.), 71.

¹² ‘Abd al-Karīm Zaydān, *Uṣūl al-Da’wah* (n.p.: Dār al-‘Arfa’, 1988), 79.

¹³ ‘Abd al-Karīm Zaydān, *Uṣūl al-Da’wah*, 79.

“Doing good deeds and leaving bad deeds in accordance with the guidance of the sharia”.¹⁴

Combining the fourth definition above with the others, two things can be highlighted, as follows: Firstly, properties of morality which are inherent in the human psyche allow him to perform good deeds and leave bad deeds with great ease. Secondly, the benchmark used to judge whether an action is good or bad is based on religious instructions as well as reasonable considerations.

Theoretically, something considered good by religions, such as telling the truth, fulfilling mandates, keeping promises, and doing other noble deeds, will definitely be viewed as reasonable too. Conversely, something that is considered bad by religion such as lying, cheating, breaking promises, and other reprehensible acts, shall also be considered bad by the sense.

With regard to politics, etymologically, politics also comes from Greek, namely *politika*, which can accommodate three meanings, as follows: (1) the art or science of government, (2) the art or science concerned with influencing governmental policy, (3) the art or science concerned with winning and holding control over a government.¹⁵

In *Fiqh Siyāsah* literature, politics is a translation of the *siyāsah*. There are three opinions regarding the origin of the word among *Fiqh Siyāsah* experts. Firstly, according to al-Maqrīzī, *siyāsah* is derived from the Mongol language, i.e., from the word *yāsah* (ياسة) to which the prefix *sīn* is added, marked *kasrah*, thus it reads *siyāsah* (سياسة).

The opinion mentioned above was based on a book of laws associated with Genghis Khan, titled *ilyāsā* (إلياسا), which contains guidance and various forms of state management and severe punishment for perpetrators of certain crimes. After the death of Genghis Khan, his book of laws was passed on from generation to generation including the Mughals in India comprising the first generation of Muslims who inherited the Koran from the Prophet Muḥammad. After the Indian kings converted to Islam, the contents of the *ilyāsā* were then modified by Islamic teachings, such as the delivery of religious authority and legal cases related to Islamic sharia to the Supreme Court justices.¹⁶

Secondly, according to Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *siyāsah* was derived from a mixture of three languages, namely, Persian, Turkish, and Mongol. *Si* particles in Persian

¹⁴ <http://uqu.edu.sa/page/ar/59202>, 8 December 2010.

¹⁵ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/netdict/politics>, 8 December 2010.

¹⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'izwa al-I'tibār bi al-Dhikr al-Khitat wa al-'Atar Bulāq* (1854), vol. 3, 357, compare with Muṣṭaffā Ḥilmī, *Niḡām al-Khilāfah bain Ahl al-Sunnah wa-al-Shī'ah* (al-Iskandariyyah: Dār al-Da'wah, 1988), 245-246.

means 30 while *yasa* is part of Turkish and Mongol vocabulary, meaning the ban. Therefore, *yasa* can also be interpreted as laws or rules.¹⁷ Thirdly, according to Ibn Manẓūr, *siyāsah* was derived from Arabic, namely gerund form derived from the active participle of *sāsa-yasūsu-siyāsatan*¹⁸ (ساس - يسوس - سياسة), which was originally meant to regulate, maintain, or train animals, particularly horses. In line with this latter meaning, someone who is a keeper of horses by profession is called *sā'is* (سائس) in Arabic. *Sā'is* which means sice now has been entered into the vocabulary of the English language, written into *syce*. In Jewish literature, the term is also used with a meaning somewhat similar to the original meaning of *sāsa* as the term *sūs*, which means horses.¹⁹

In Arabic, the earliest phrase most commonly used with the word *siyāsah* is *siyāsah al-khayl* (سياسة الخيل), which means to train, maintain, or arrange for a horse. Incidentally, the English word, *manage*, was originally also meant to maintain or train horses. Similar terms contained in the French, *manège*, and Italian, *maneggio*, both have the similar meaning, namely horse riding school. It should be noted, after the expansion of the meaning, word “*management*” more often shows the administrative or commercial meaning, rather than political connotation. Especially for political meaning, the more commonly used is word “*government*”, which comes from Greek, “*kubernan*” which means controlling or “*kubernetes*” which means people who drive or control. In this regard, it is understandable that people from maritime areas in the West developed their imagery about politics from the act of controlling or running ships, as Arabs did from the act of training or riding horses.

Given that the initial meaning of *siyāsah* relates to the expertise of a person who handles animals, so ‘Abd al-Hamīd al-Kātib, an Arabian author who lived in the eighth century during the Umayyad dynasty, advice potential leaders to learn from animal tamers. The advice was contained in his writings as follows:

¹⁷ Ibn Taghrī al-Birdī, *al-Nujum al-Sahira* (al-Qāhirah: n.p., 1929), vol. 6, 268-269.

¹⁸ Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣadīr), vol. 6, 108.

¹⁹ There is several literatures explained, etymologically, in Jewish literature, *sūs* has the same meaning as the initial meaning of *siyāsah*, i.e., the expertise to take care of animals, especially horses. For more information, see Leonid Kogan, *Babel und Bibel 3, Annual of Ancient Near Eastern, Old Testament, and Semitic Studies* (n.p.p: Eishenbrauns, 2006), 270. In these book the author stated that, the main Hebrew term for horse is *sūs*, compare with Bernard Lewis, *Bahasa Politik Islam*, translated by Ihsan Ali Fauzi from *The Political Language of Islam* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1994), 177. In this book the author states, *siyāsah* which was derived from *sāsa-yasūsu*, synonymous with *sūs*, i.e., a noun mentioned in the Jewish scriptures, which means horse.

“For you know, someone who is responsible for maintaining a beast, if he is intelligent in carrying out its duties, will certainly try to understand the pet’s characters. If the animal kicked, he would caress its rear legs. If the animal jumped, he would rub its front legs. If the animal jumped up and down, he would not spur when riding on its back. If he feared the beast would bite, he will oversee its head. If the animal is stubborn, he will spur it gently. If he finds that the beast is still stubborn, he will bring it slowly to the curb so it can easily be arranged. In the exposure of how to treat a beast as above mentioned, there are guidelines for those whose job it is to manage people and those who care for and relate to them.”²⁰

In subsequent developments, the meaning of *siyāsah* expanded to five definitions, as follows. Firstly, in the period of Caliph ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and in the reign of the ‘Umayyad Dynasty and in the Bani ‘Abbas, *siyāsah* became synonymous with the word statecraft, which means how to run the government or the expertise and skills to rule. Secondly, during the ‘Umayyad dynasty, according to Ibn Qutaybah, it was not uncommon for *siyāsah* to be used in connotation with military matters, i.e., proficiency in managing the army (*siyāsah al-jund*).

Further information comes from Ibn al-Muqaffa’ who stated that during the ‘Umayyad Dynasty, *siyāsah* accommodated a new notion, namely, how the implementation of power which is not commendable, i.e. the power tends to do the ugliness or leave the goodness. Since then, the term apparently started a negative imaging and the dirty impression of *siyāsah*.

Thirdly, in the reign of the Bani Abbas dynasty, al-Fārābī interpreted *siyāsah* as a political philosophy. This interpretation continued to be used by several authors after al-Fārābī, especially those influenced by Hellenic (Greek) thinking. In addition to these meanings, at the time of al-Fārābī, *siyāsah* also subsumed a technical definition, similar to politics as defined by Greek philosophers. Fourthly, in the mid-10th century, a writer named Tanukhi interpreted *siyāsah* as physical punishments which are heavy and harsh, including the death penalty. These were not derived from the sharia, but solely sourced from the, then, Sultan, or even other authorities, who imposed such punishments on certain criminals and/or prisoners of war. This type of punishment in the Turkish

²⁰ ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Khāṭib, *Risālah ilā al-Kuttāb* (n.p.p: n.p, 1937) within A.Z. Safwat ed., *Jamharat Rasā’il al-‘Arab* (al-Qāhirah: n.p, n.d.), ii, compare with Bernard Lewis, *Bahasa Politik Islam* translated by Ihsan Ali Fauzi from *The Political Language of Islam* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1994), 178.

Ottoman dynasty's reign is called the *siyasaten*. In the 13th century, Abu Shama, a chronicler from Damascus, interpreted *siyāsah* as the crucifixion of the conspirators who supported the power of the Fathimiyyah dynasty.

The definition of *siyāsah* as a severe punishment which was not derived from the Sharia later became commonly used in Persia and Turkey. Thus, *siyasatgah* in Persian and Turkish, for example, is not the place of politics or government, but rather a place where torture or executions were carried out. Following the emergence of that meaning, especially in the *Mamlūk* dynasty, a dichotomy prevailed between severe penalties derived from Sharia, commonly called *hudūd*, and severe penalties established by the authorities without reference to levels and types of penalties stipulated in the Sharia. The impact of this segregation was that the authorities in Egypt and Turkey began to recognize the existence of two types of court decisions – *siyāsah* and Sharia, each of which was decided in a separate court by different judges, and under two separate legal systems.

Given that the severe penalties of *siyasaten* or the government's version had the potential to safeguard practices contradictory to Islamic teaching, and therefore totally unacceptable, Ibn Taymiyyah tried to remind the rulers of his day to establish the rule of law in accordance with Islam by writing a book entitled *al-siyāsah al-shar'īyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā'iy wa al-Ra'īyah* in which, among others, he explained the various types of severe punishment for perpetrators of certain crimes as taught by Islam. The effort of Ibn Taymiyyah was later continued and developed mainly by his disciple Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah who wrote a book entitled *al-Ṭurūq al-Ḥukmiyyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyah*.²¹

Fifthly, in modern Arabic, i.e., the Arabic language spoken from the late 19th and early 20th centuries AD until today, *siyāsah* obtained another new meaning, which is specifically used in the political sense. This narrower definition more closely resembled the meaning (of politics or *siyāsah*) commonly used in Europe. After that, the older meanings of the *siyāsah* soon disappeared.²²

From the above description, it can be understood that, etymologically, *siyāsah* can accommodate several meanings. To be able to determine precisely which one of several meanings, the context of the sentence needs to be noted. For example, the phrase *siyāsah al-dābbah* (سياسة الدابة) must be construed “to train, maintain, or regulate the animals”, because the context of the sentence defines this particular meaning, so it cannot be interpreted in any other way.

²¹ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *al-Ṭurūq al-Ḥukmiyyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyah*, al-Riyādh: Dār al-Waṭan, 1953)

²² Bernard Lewis, *Bahasa Politik Islam*, 183.

While the terminological many definitions of *siyāsah* proposed by the Islamic jurist. According to Abu al-Wafa' Ibn 'Aqil, *siyāsah* means:

*“Siyāsah means an act that can bring people closer to benefits and further from disadvantage, even though the Prophet, pbuh, did not declare it, and Allah Almighty did not provide a revelation to regulate it.”*²³

In a different editorial, Ḥussayn Fawzī al-Najjār defined *siyāsah* as follows:

*“Siyāsah means setting the interest and welfare of the people and the maintenance of the right policy making to ensure the realization of benefit and goodness to them.”*²⁴

In a more simple editorial, Ibn Manzūr defined *siyāsah* as follows:

*“Organize things in a way that leads to benefit”.*²⁵

In editorial, the *siyāsah* definitions quoted above differ from each other. However, the essence of them is the same in that all of them states that *siyāsah* is a terminology applied to the concepts of public affairs and governance of human life in society, nation and the state aimed at realizing benefits and preventing harm.

In modern Arabic, which is Arabic from the late 19th and early 20th century AD until today, the word *siyāsah* is specifically used in the political sense which can, at least, accommodate three meanings, namely: (1) knowledge about the constitution or the state as against the system of government, the basis of government, etc., (2) all matters, actions, or policies concerning governance of the country or relating to other countries, (3) how to act for handling or solving problems.

Based on the explanations of ethics and politics, as described above, then political ethics can be defined as a code of ethics, rules or moral guidelines that must be used as a reference or guidelines for behavior (code of conduct) by

²³ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *al-Ṭurūq al-Ḥukmiyyah fī al-Siyāsah al-Shar‘iyyah*, 13.

²⁴ Ḥusayn Fawzī al-Najjār, *al-Islām wa al-Siyāsah* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma‘arif, 1969), 55.

²⁵ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 108.

a state official, so he can play politics in a humane and civilized²⁶ manner in accordance with the guidance of the Sharia.

STUDY OBJECT AND PURPOSE OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL ETHICS

The study object of Islamic political ethics are all sorts of actions taken consciously and deliberately by a politician in carrying out political activities. These can be mapped into two categories. Firstly, the good political action. Secondly, the bad or dirty political actions. This means that all kinds of action taken by a politician outside of his consciousness, or unintentionally, cannot be included as the object of study of political ethics. In other words, his unintentional actions cannot be judged good or poor based on the parameters of political ethics. Therefore, it cannot be subjected to sanctions for political acts if committed outside of his awareness or without his intention.

Studies of Islamic political ethics aim to encourage or to direct state officials in order to undertake a variety of good political actions and avoid various bad political behaviour, so that all political actions taken really bring benefit for the nation and country. This is important because according to the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā* (holy brotherhood), group of philosophers who emerged around the 10th century AD, politics should be conducted and determined by ethics.

Political ethics is viewed by the Ikhwan al-Safa group as politics of the soul (*siyāsah al-naḥs*), which is the foundation of all politics while Dhiya al-Dīn al-Rayis mentioned political ethics as political consciousness (*al-ḥamīr al-siyāsī*). According to al-Fārābī, political ethics is very important, i.e. to reach the happiness in this world and in the hereafter, which is the ultimate goal of political society.²⁷

²⁶ See Y.Sudarminta, 'Kata Pengantar', in Dennis F. Thompson, *Etika Politik Pejabat Negara*, translated by Benyamin Molan from *Political Ethics and Public Office* (Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia, 2000), viii-ix. See also Sadu Wasistiono, 'Membangun Hubungan Kerja antara Badan Eksekutif Daerah dengan Badan Legislatif Daerah', in Sadu Wasistiono dan Ondo Riyani ed., *Etika Hubungan Legislatif-Eksekutif dalam Pelaksanaan Otonomi Daerah* (Bandung: Fokus Media, 2003), 26-27.

²⁷ Muḥammad Diyā' al-Dīn al-Rāyis, *al-Nazariyyat al-Siyāsīyyah al-Islāmiyyah* (Miṣr: Dār al-Ma'arif, 1996), 263.

BENEFITS DERIVED FROM OBEYING POLITICAL ETHICS

There are at least three benefits that can be achieved by a state official who can show himself as exemplary in the matter of compliance with political ethics. These benefits are as follows:

1. He will be loved and honoured by his people, and will be victorious in carrying out the tasks of the state entrusted to him by the public.
2. His vision, mission, and all his programs can be more easily realized because of the support from all the people who love him.
3. After his term of office ends, or even after his death, his service to his people will always be remembered and he will be recorded in history as a good and honorable leader. An example of a leader figure who has a respectable position of this kind is the Prophet Muhammad. It is well recognised that although he died thousands of years ago, he will always be remembered as the most special leader in the history of mankind, and it would be very difficult to find his equal.

It is important to add here that, to be a good politician, it is not enough for a person to only uphold and follow all the rules of political ethics, as will be explained later. Ideally, a good politician is someone who has the following three traits, namely:

1. Faith and piety to God Almighty;
2. Adherence to all political ethics;
3. High intelligence.

A politician who is faithful and obedient to Allah Almighty will undoubtedly have a theological vision that makes up the entire construct of morality and consciousness as a leadership mandate to the people and his God. In addition, he also will be able to fully realize how limited his power as an ordinary human being is compared with the omnipotence of Allah, the bearer of unlimited power.

Therefore, he will not try to proclaim himself as a God nor abuse his power without limit. Without faith and piety to Allah Almighty, not impossible, a politician will present himself similar with the Pharaoh who ever abused his power without limit and also ever proclaim himself as a God. Pharaoh proclamation as God is clearly mentioned in the words of Allah Almighty, which reads as follows:

فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَى ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٢٤﴾

“Then he collected (his men) and made a proclamation, saying, I am your Lord, Most High”.

(Surah al-Nāzi’āt, 79:23-24)

A politician who complies with good political ethics, of course, will try with all his ability to lead his people with justice so that the people led by him will feel safe and have a hope to live happy and prosperous lives under his leadership. Once again, it is important to note that although it is necessary, as will be described later, it is not sufficient for a politician only to be faithful and totally compliant with political ethics.

A state official who believes in and fears Allah and His Messenger, and fully practises political ethics, but is stupid, may be accepted as a leader but his leadership may cause more, rather than resolve, problems. Therefore, what is needed is a politician who has the three personal qualities stated above, such as Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him had, namely, faith and devotion to Allah, compliance with good political ethics, and intelligence sufficient to lead and guide people to attain success and happiness in this world and in the hereafter.

LOSSES FROM IGNORING POLITICAL ETHICS

In contrast to those who adhere to political ethics, on the contrary, state official who does not obey the political ethics will suffer three losses, as follows. Firstly, he will be very unpopular. As a result, his leadership will face many obstacles because of his unpopularity among the people. In addition, also possible, the people who not comfortable being under his leadership will always try to overthrow him.

Secondly, a state official who refuses to comply with political ethics will encounter many obstacles in realizing his vision and mission, and all the programs developed under his leadership because he would not have the support of the majority to implement these successfully. Thirdly, a state official who refuses to comply with political ethics, such as one who runs a despotic style of government, will be many people who against him and praying or plotting to end his power or even end his life. In addition, after ending his term or after his death, he will always be condemned for the injustices done and will be recorded in history as an evil state official.

TYPES OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL ETHICS

Among Islamic political experts, there is no uniform opinion about the types of political ethics to be followed. Based on researching several books on *Fiqh Siyāsah* which contain a discussion of political ethics, nine types have emerged, as follows:

1. Love of truth

A politician who loves righteousness, according to al-Ghazālī, is the politician who is true in every business, and can govern his people, including subordinates and family members, and always be true in word, deed, intention, and way of thinking. Before truth in words and deeds, a politician who loves the truth will start assuming his post with a sincere intention, namely, to guide the people to achieve spiritual and physical happiness or joy of living in this world and happiness in the hereafter. He will not compel others to respect him/her, will not seek popularity, and also will not enrich himself and his family.

In contrast, a politician whose intentions and way of thinking is wrong, will exploit the wealth of the country only for his benefit and personal pleasure, his family, and his own group. A politician with the wrong desire and way of thinking, of course, will not be able to apply a political principle, as stated by John F. Kennedy, “Do not ask what your country can do for you, but ask what you can do for your country”. For him, it was precisely the opposite, namely, “Do not ask what you can do for your country, but ask what your country can do for you”. Therefore, as long as he is still performing his duties as a state official, he would often perform various actions more favourable for himself, family, cronies, and his own party rather than his nation.²⁸

When a political leader conducts right acts, perhaps inevitably, all members of his family, his subordinates, and his people will try to emulate him and do the right things as well. Such a politician can be named as an authentic politician, i.e., a politician who can align his words with his actions. Therefore, the term “tempeh in the morning and soybean in the afternoon”, or “tempeh in the morning and cheese in the afternoon”, commonly used to describe someone who is not consistent between his words and his deeds, cannot be applied to an authentic politician.

When an authentic politician states, “Do not corrupt”, then surely he is not only smart to say such a prohibition, but he also would have to prove it in real actions, namely, by avoiding acts of corruption despite the opportunities

²⁸ *Media Indonesia*, 18 February 2003.

in his position of power. Conversely, non-authentic politicians may include those who campaign very loudly against corruption, while being very corrupt themselves. God hates a politician who is not consistent between his words and deeds. This is clear in the words of Allah Almighty, which reads as follows:

كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

“Great is hatred in the sight of Allah that you say what you do not do”.

(Surah al-Şaff, 61: 3)

Based on the word of God, Ibn Kathir suggests that the *Mu'min* should also hate politicians who do not match their words with their deeds. In connection with this case, Ibn Kathir states:

والمؤمنون أيضا يبغضون من تكون هذه صفته فإن من كانت هذه صفته يطبع الله على قلبه فلا يعرف بعد ذلك معروفا ولا ينكر منكرا

“The *Mu'min* should also contribute to hate someone who has character like that (cannot align between words and deeds). Surely someone who has such properties is a person whose heart is locked to death by Allah, so that he can no longer distinguish between the good things and the bad one”.²⁹

2. Trustworthiness

A trustworthy politician is one who can be trusted in all things. Therefore, when he promises, for example, he will not deny it. If, before assuming office, he promised to govern with justice, then surely he would uphold that oath or promise. A trustworthy politician would also give priority to evidence rather than sell false promises.

An honest politician will never practice nepotism or corruption even at the smallest levels. An example of one of the most honest and trustworthy politicians ever known in Islamic history was the Caliph ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-Azīz. The legend says that on one night, while ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-Azīz was checking reports of people by the light of an oil lamp, he was visited by aides who wanted to discuss household affairs. ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abd al-Azīz then said to them, “Turn off the lights, then talk. Indeed, this oil lamp was taken from the State Treasury (*Bayt al-Māl*), thus, may not be used except when discussing the affairs of state”.

²⁹ Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā‘īl Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Kathir al-Qurashi al-Dimashqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Abn* (n.p.p.: Dār Tayyibah li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī’, 1999), vol. 7, 144.

In addition to prohibiting himself from corruption, collusion and nepotism, an honest and trustworthy politician is also not likely to tolerate his servants or his subordinates to do similar acts. An honest and trustworthy politician, said al-Ghazālī, will impose appropriate sanctions for political crimes carried out by the subordinates. Furthermore, al-Ghazālī suggested that an honest and trustworthy politician would not appoint incompetent or unprofessional people to ministerial or authoritative positions. If he does, he would disgrace himself and diminish his own power.

Political ethics emphasizes the importance of a political actor in the form of a politician who can be trusted, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, based on verses 58 surah al-Nisā', which reads as follows:

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﴾

“Indeed, Allah commands you to render trust to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing”.

(Surah al-Nisā', 4: 58)

Verses 58 surah al-Nisā', according to Ibn Taymiyyah, gives guidance to politicians in order to deliver the mandate entrusted to a Trustee or to one entitled to receive it. This has two kinds of manifestations. Firstly, the appointment of state officials. Secondly, in the management of state assets and the management and protection of property and ownership rights of the people.

Asbāb al-nuzūl, or events that cause decline, in verses 58 surah al-Nisā' is related to the word of God to the Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him to deliver the key to the Kaaba to the appropriate authority as a key task temple. As noted in history, in the era before Islam, the honor of managing the Kaaba was divided among three groups of aristocratic Quraysh families. The first group was honored as the holder of the keys of the Kaaba while the second group was responsible for the supply of drinking water for the guests or visitors of the Kaaba, and the third group was responsible for maintaining security and stability around the Kaaba.

As verse 58 surah al-Nisā' reveals, the Children (child-grandchild) of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib were assigned the honourable position as Holder of the keys of the Kaaba. After successfully conquering Mecca without any bloodshed, the Prophet Muḥammad took delivery of the keys of the Kaaba from the Banī

Muṭṭalib, specifically from Uthman Ibn Ṭalḥah.³⁰ At that time, as subsection verses 58 surah al-Nisā' reveals, Abbās who was in control of the drinking water for pilgrims or visitors to the Kaaba suddenly asked the Prophet Muḥammad to appoint him as the Kaaba key holder as well as the supplier of drinking water for pilgrims. In response to this request from Abbas, an instruction was given to the Prophet Muḥammad, via verse 58 surah al-Nisā', to restore the task as gate keeper of the Kaaba to Uthman Ibn Ṭalḥah, not to Abbās, the person responsible for providing drinking water for visitors to the Kaaba.

From these historical episodes, it can be concluded that, in order to fulfil the mandate of appointing state officials, the leader of a political institution is encouraged to entrust all matters relating to public interests to those most professional and capable in the best interests of the people. A politician who has the privilege to manage the interests of Muslims, then entrusts those interests to someone when in fact there is someone more capable and better for the task, then that person, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, has betrayed Allah, His messenger, and all Muslims.³¹ This opinion according to Ibn Taymiyyah was relevant to the traditions of the Prophet Muḥammad which reads as follows:

عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم:
من قلد إنسانا عملا وفي رعيته من هو أولى منه فقد خان الله ورسوله
وجماعة المسلمين.

*From Ibn 'Abbas r.a. said, the Messenger of Allah Peace be Upon Him said, "Anyone who entrusted the job to someone when there are people among others who were better than him, it means that he has betrayed Allah, His messenger, and all of Muslims".*³²

In line with the *ḥadīth*, Ibn Taymiyyah stated that the appointment or removal of someone in political office, whether they are on duty at the central government level, such as the vizier, the clerks, judges, army commanders, or at regional level, should be really to search objectively for the people who have the skills and ability to occupy these positions.

In other words, a political leader should not be influenced by subjective factors, such as family relationships, and so forth. The necessity to conduct an objective selection, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, is not just limited to top level officials, but also at lower levels, such as the priests of mosques, muezzin, teachers, principals, market and village heads.

³⁰ Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl Ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr al-Qurashī al-Dimashqī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Abn*, vol. 2, 340.

³¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Ḥisbah* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), vol. 1, 12.

³² Al-Imām al-Ḥākīm, *al-Mustadrak 'alā al-Sahīḥayn* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), vol. 16, 345.

A political leader is not justified in deviating from the above provisions. Therefore, he should not remove from office someone who has the best ability for the job, to replace him with someone less qualified, just based on personal issues, such as hatred for or enmity with him, or family or personal relationships with the less qualified replacement. In addition, a particular position should not also be given to a person for reward money, which is commonly known as money politics.

At the same time, it is important to note that if no one stands out among the candidates a state official is justified to appoint one of them, with attention to two factors. Firstly, the strength and the secondly, integrity. Strength does not always mean the same for different positions. For the position of commander of the armed forces, for example, courage, determination and proficiency in establishing an army and preparing a war strategy are key strengths. As for the magistracy, strengths would be an adequate knowledge in the field of law and the ability to be fair in deciding and executing the decisions taken. The definition of integrity is devotion to Allah and His apostles that manifests in the form of adherence to Islamic teachings.

At the empirical level, Ibn Taymiyyah was fully aware that not many people have both these requirements at once: strength and integrity. So, in this situation where there are two candidates for one position, and the first candidate has strength, but a low level of integrity, while the second candidate has a high degree of integrity, but inadequate strength, Ibn Taymiyyah advocated defining a scale of priorities between these two qualities, strength and integrity, to determine which is more necessary for the job. If more strength is required, then the first candidate has the advantage. Conversely, if integrity is more appropriate, then the second candidate should be selected. Thus, in the matter of who should be selected to occupy a certain position, Ibn Taymiyyah further recommended that consideration be adjusted to the demands of pragmatism.

In addition to be manifested in the appointment of public officials, as mentioned above, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, a commendable policy of a trustworthy politician must also be manifested in the management of state property and the maintenance and protection of property owned by the people. In a country, people and state officials, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, both have duties. Among their duties is pay the taxes set by the state such as property tax or a tax on the ownership of vehicles. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, people are not allowed to refuse to pay a nominal amount of taxes has been determined by the state. While among his duties, a public official has the task of spending funds received from the people or from other sources as well, according to the instructions of al-Quran and al-Sunnah. Therefore, he should not be corrupt to enrich himself, family, or his cronies. He should be fully aware that the

funds do not belong to him personally, but is nothing more than just a public mandate entrusted to him. When a state official abuses his power or authority over state assets for which he was given the mandate to manage properly, then such a public official, according to Ibn Taymiyyah, is the most immoral of state officials. Therefore, there is no obligation for the people to obey him. In addition to keeping the mandate in the two forms as described above, Ibn Taymiyyah also stressed that a state official should be able to act fairly in making decisions on disputes that occur among members of society. Thus, there is a harmonious blend between political policy and a fair and good government.

When public officials can show themselves as good role models, undoubtedly, other people will also try to emulate their leader's behavior. Conversely, when public officials present themselves as immoral, then the people likewise may also become immoral. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, the downfall of a community or nation due to damage done by its leaders can only be controlled if state officials are upstanding. Therefore, a good politician must also be able to present himself as a role model in terms of compliance with all political ethics.

In this regard, leadership expert John C. Maxwell in *The Power of Leadership* stated, "The most effective leadership is by example, not edict". According to Maxwell, ninety percent of people learn visually, nine percent verbally, and one percent of the rest learn with other senses.³³ Therefore, a leader's credibility will only be recognized, earning him the right to be obeyed in everyday life, if he has been able to demonstrate exemplary behaviour which deserves to be imitated by his people.

3. Fairness

A fair politician is one who does not favor one of two parties that come to him seeking justice. Whoever is guilty of the two parties in dispute must be given sanction in accordance with the fault, regardless of social status, rank or position, and so forth.

Even if the wrongdoing is committed by his own biological child, a fair politician would carry on administering the punishment befitting the crime. An example of this model politician, among others, is 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭab, who sentenced to death his own biological child without hesitation because of his crime. In connection with this case, Imam al-Ghazālī declared as follows:

³³ <http://chitoryu.com/leadership.htm>, 2 December 2010.

كان لأمير المؤمنين عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه من العدل والسياسة إلى حد أقام فيه الحد والعقاب على ولده حتى مات

“Umar Ibn Khattab administered justice and political policies that allowed the death sentence on his own biological child”.³⁴

According to al-Ghazālī, a politician can only be called fair if he is able to do the following ten things:

1. Be grateful for the blessing of power mandated to him by the people by showing fair leadership, loving the people, not add to or reduce the penalty to be imposed on someone who makes mistakes, and always be close to scholars so that he can always be guided towards the path of justice;
2. Be willing to listen to suggestions or good advice from well-known scholars for their piety and asceticism and be careful of the scholars of evil (*‘ulamā sū’*), so that he can always be on the path of truth, distinguish between right and falsehood, have a sense of shame and grace, and always be able to do justice;
3. Not be satisfied with himself for always acting fairly or not doing any wrong, but more than that, he also has to educate his family, his subordinates, and all of his people, so that justice can also be emulated and executed by them. If he knows there are subordinates who do wrong, he should not stay silent. However, he must act immediately to make it right. If this is not done, then as stated in the Torah, said al-Ghazālī, injustice done by his subordinates would be attributed to him, and on the Judgement Day he will be tortured in Hell for the tyranny that was done by his subordinates;
4. Be humble and cheerful, not arrogant and not grumpy. If he feels anger, he should be able to control his emotions, so he will still be able to do justice even if his heart burns with the fire of his anger.
5. Love his people as he has always wanted to be dear to his people. In other words, a fair state official will not want to live happily while his people generally live in misery.
6. Make it his priority to meet and help someone who has been waiting in front of the door of his palace for any purpose rather than perform the sunnah devotions;
7. Demonstrate living a simple lifestyle and not show off luxury;

³⁴ Al-Imām al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī Naṣīḥah al-Mulūk* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), 21.

8. Treat his people with great tenderness and affection and not treat them in a cruel and harsh manner;
9. Always try to draw his people's sympathy in ways that fit with the norms of religion;
10. Abstain from attracting popularity in a manner contrary to religious teachings thus inviting the wrath of Allah Almighty, for example, by not imposing penalties on those who do wrong. In other words, a fair state officer should take firm action against any community members who act contrary to syariah law even though, in doing so, he will be hated by certain parties who disagree with the action taken. A politician who attracts popularity by using ways that can bring the wrath of God Almighty, according to al-Ghazālī, will get the wrath of God and all of His creatures. This opinion, according to al-Ghazālī, is relevant to the *ḥadīth* that came from Aisha as follows:

عن عائشة قالت: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: من التمس رضا الله بسخط الناس رضي الله عنه وأرضى عنه الناس ومن التمس رضا الناس بسخط الله سخط الله عليه وأسخط عليه الناس.

From 'Aisha said, the Messenger of Allah Peace be Upon Him said, "Anyone who seeks the good pleasure of God even though people get mad to him, then God and all of human beings will be pleased with him. (Conversely) who seeks the good pleasure of human beings in a manner that may invite the wrath of God, then God and all human beings will anger him".³⁵

4. Sense of Love and Concern for The Fate of People

Politicians who uphold ethics of this kind, according to al-Ghazālī, will always look for information about the fate of the people who are under his administration. When people experience difficulties, misfortune or adversities, such as experiencing famine, drought, or overwhelming natural disasters, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flash floods, etc., he would soon appear in their midst to offer comfort and aid in cash or kind from his own treasure stash. He would also find the best solution for solving the difficulties that have consumed the people, not merely come to review or observe up close their suffering.

As an example of a politician who was so loved, and was so concerned for the fate of his people, among others, was the second Caliph, 'Umar Ibn al-

³⁵ Al-Imām al-Ṭabrānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), vol. 9, 466.

Khattāb. According to information from Zayd Ibn Aslam, one night, he saw ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb traveling with the patrolling night officers. Then he met ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb and asked him, “May I join you?”. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb said, “Yes, of course allowed”. When they got outside the city, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb and his entourage saw the light of a fire. They strongly suspected that the person who lit the fire was a wanderer but needed to investigate their allegation properly.

Their allegation was proved. When he approached the wanderer, it turned out to be a widow with her three crying children. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb then realized that the pot which the woman had put on the fire had ignited into flames. She then prayed, “Oh, God, grant me the justice of ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb. Take my rights from him properly. This night of course ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb was in a state of satiety, while we were very hungry”.

‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb heard her prayers as soon as he walked over to greet her. When he asked her, “Can I approach you?”, the woman replied, “If you approach me to do a good thing, then in the name of Allah, please do”. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb then approached and asked her about her origins and the circumstances of her self and her children. The woman then told to him, “I and my children come from distant places. I was afraid and my children were very tired and hungry, so they could not sleep”. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb asked, “Then what is in the pot?”. The woman replied, “I put water into that pot to distract my children, so they would think that the pot contained food I was cooking for them and be patient.”

‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb’s then bought a sack full of flour, carrying the sack himself on his shoulders to take to the woman and her children. Zayd Ibn Aslam said, “O, amīr al-Mu’minīn, let me carry the sack”. But ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb replied, “If you carry the sacks for me, then who will bear my sin, and who can protect me from the prayers of the woman and her children?”.

So ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb continued carrying the sack himself, crying all the way, until he reached the woman and her three children. She told him, “Thank you, may Allah repay you with a better reward”. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb did not stop there but began to cook a meal with a few spoonfuls of flour and other foods, which he put into a pot and lit the fire. Every time the fire was extinguished, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb would blow on it to relight it, until so much dust fell on his face and clothes. ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb kept doing this until the food was cooked, after which he served it in a large bowl, and said to the woman, “Please, eat this food”. She and her three children ate until they were satiated. Finally, ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb said, “O, woman, do not pray for an accident to ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb, because he did not know the news about your circumstances and your children.”

‘Umar’s willingness to expend his personal efforts to give aid to those in need, as narrated above, illustrates that he has sense of love and so concerned about the fate of his people.

5. Sense of Shame

Politicians who have a sense of shame are those who would feel embarrassed violating religious taboos, shame and never deliberately doing wrong, and shame violating the agreed norms. When a politician has violated one of the religious prohibitions, such as alcohol consumption, it would mean he no longer has a sense of shame. A drunken politician, according to al-Ghazālī, will suffer losses and also probably will lose his power. A drunken politician, according to al-Ghazālī, not only will lose the sense of shame, but may also will lose his power.

Citing a poem, al-Ghazālī stated as follows:

من أسكرته الخمر في عقله * ليس عليه إن صحا من خجل ومن يكن
بالمملك ذا سكرة * يصح إذا ما المملك عنه انتقل

*“Anyone whose mind is made drunk with liquor, then he will not have a sense of shame when it has been realized. If a holder of political power is like the drunk, a natural thing, if he loses his power”.*³⁶

A state official who has a sense of shame, will be careful and vigilant, and will never do anything that could embarrass himself. The main political ethics to be practised by a politician is honesty, and avoidance of corruption, collusion and nepotism. Therefore, if he has been found guilty of corruption, for example, a politician who has a sense of shame, would quickly resign from office. At this time, it seems that politicians in many Muslim countries have lost their sense of shame. Therefore, despite committing corrupt and other political crimes, many of them continue in office undaunted retaining their post without any shame whatsoever.

A politicians who has a sense of shame is one who knows himself. An example of such a politician, among others, was Caliph ‘Umar who chose to decline the chance of his family member, even when he had no significant competitors, to succeed him in leading the Muslim community in Medina. Instead, he preferred the greater interest, namely, the democratization of Medina.

³⁶ Al-Imām al-Ghazālī, *al-Tibr al-Masbūk fī naṣīḥah al-Mulūk*, 28.

To elaborate, when his senior companions saw signs that Caliph ‘Umar was at risk of being assassinated, they began discussions regarding his successor. Next, they met ‘Umar to advise him to immediately appoint a candidate because they were worried that there would be friction among Muslims if there was no successor upon his death. However, ‘Umar rejected the advice and even got angry when someone suggested that he appoint his son, Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar, as his successor. Responding to the suggestion, he stated, “By Allah , I do not agree with your suggestion, although it is a very good suggestion. Suffice that only one person from the ‘Umar family had the honor to be the Caliph.³⁷ Soon after, the Caliph died from being stabbed six times by Abu Lu’luah.

6. Courage

A brave politician is a fearless one who never retreats when confronted with the enemy and difficult situations which threaten him, his family, and his country. According to al-Ghazālī, a brave politician is one who can control his temper when angry. In the context of combating corruption, the brave politician is one who dares to act firmly and punish the corruptors. In this regard, if you want to uphold the rule of law and combat corruption, collusion and nepotism, which have become entrenched like an institutionalized disease, or even perceived as a normal way of life for state officials at all levels, from the highest level to the lowest, it should start with the politicians, primarily the President or Head of the nation. When corruption has become a chronic disease in any country, then anyone trusted by the people to be the President should have the vision, commitment and courage enough to crack down on corruption and dare to face all forms of resistance from corruptors who disagree with the punitive actions against them.

In other words, to repair the damage from widespread corruption by state officials change must begin from the top of the pyramid. The rationale for beginning at the top of the power structure is simple-in general, people still have a feudalistic mentality. The English proverb which reads «the fish rots from the head» is still very relevant. If the President at the top of the leadership structure in one country can provide a consistent example then the state officials beneath him will tend to follow suit. However, if politicians who are at the of the pyramid are still doubtful about their commitment to reconstruct the defective practices of the state officials, then the eradication of corruption, collusion and nepotism, would certainly be a highly challenging battle.

³⁷ Al-Ṭabari, *Tārikh al-Umām wa al-Mulūk* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), vol. 5, 34.

If we want to eradicate corruption, one mechanism of corruption eradication is taught by the Prophet Muḥammad. According to Prophet Muḥammad's perspective, the enforcement of political ethics should start from the top of the pyramid, viz from the head of state. If the head of state can come up as an exemplary figure in the enforcement of political ethics, undoubtedly, his subordinates can also comply with political ethics. Recognizing the importance of political ethics enforcement by the head of state, when he became the head of state of Medina, Prophet Muḥammad peace be upon him, appeared as a model in the enforcement of political ethics. Proof of this was when Usāmah Ibn Zaīd, who was mandated by the leaders of Quraysh to lobby the Prophet to repeal the punishment to cut off the hand of Fatima bint al-Aswad, a noble lady from the al-Mahzūmiyyah Quraysh tribe, who had committed theft. In response to this request, the Prophet had stated explicitly:

فإنما أهلك الناس قبلكم أنهم كانوا إذا سرق فيهم الشريف تركوه وإذا سرق فيهم الضعيف أقاموا عليه الحد والذي نفس محمد بيده لو أن فاطمة بنت محمد سرقت لقطعت يدها

*“Indeed, the destruction of the people before you is because if there is one of them who comes from a respectable family commits theft, they do not give punishment to him. But if there is one of those who does not come from a respectable family, they immediately give him punishment. By God that the soul of Muhammad is in the grip of His hands, if Fatima, the daughter of Muḥammad committed theft, then surely I will cut off her hand”.*³⁸

It is important to note that a brave politician is one who would be willing and able to be assertive, rather than authoritarian, and dares to take a stand or make even unpopular decisions if it is in the interest of the majority. Moreover, politicians who are not cowards would not hesitate to leave his power in his party. Therefore, a politician who holds the post of political party chairman would not be afraid to let go of his position as party chairman after being elected a public official. In this connection, a very famous speech made by Manuel Quezon (1878-1944), first president of the Philippines should be borne in mind. It reads as follows: “My loyalty to my party ends when my loyalty to my country begins”. Through his speech, Manuel Quezon wanted to remind people that when a person occupies political office, then he must relinquish his position in his party so that he can devote himself fully to the nation.

In addition, it is important to emphasize that a brave politician would also be willing to see his own shortcomings. Therefore, when he fails or is

³⁸ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, hadith no. 3965 (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), vol 13, 201.

less successful in leading his people, he would not seek to blame others but honestly admit his own weaknesses while trying to redress them.

7. Open-minded to Other Opinions

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, political ethics that emphasizes the importance of an official of the state to hear and accept other people's opinions in discussions on political issues based on the word of God is illustrated in verse 159 Āli 'Imrān, which reads as follows:

وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ

"And consult them in the matter".

(Surah Āli 'Imrān, 3: 159).

Based on the verse, Ibn Taymiyyah stated that a good politician must not omit deliberation. The Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him who delivered from sin and error (*ma'sūm*) who was commanded by God Almighty to deliberate is recorded in history as the head of state who was very fond of deliberation. That being the case, without a doubt, politicians who in fact are not prophets need the deliberations even more in carrying out state assignments entrusted by the people to them.

8. Honoring Political Promises

What is meant by honoring political promises is for a politician to always try as far as possible to fulfil all the promises he declared to the public. Primarily, those he delivered while campaigning for his election as a public official, such as for President, Prime Minister or other high-ranking political positions. This is important to emphasize because, according to Susan C. C. Stokes, professor of Political Science, University of Chicago and Director of the Chicago Center on Democracy, there is a strong tendency for a politician who has succeeded in reaching the desired position to deny his words and implement policies contrary to his agenda during his campaign for office.³⁹

Therefore, after selecting a person for a particular political position, such as president and vice president, people should always be aware and never tire of demanding that promises made so ardently whilst campaigning be fulfilled. In other words, what is indispensable are honesty and integrity before and during the election, as well as while holding office.

³⁹ Eef Saefullah Fatah, 'Pemilu Pemula dan Masa Depan Demokrasi', in *Gatra*, 2 August 2003, 97.

9. Treating All People Equally Before the Law

This means that a state official who has ethics should try wherever possible to enforce the law to everyone without bias. Therefore, anyone who commits a wrong-doing, including one's own biological child, must be justly punished in accordance with the crime. This is related to the words of the Prophet Muḥammad, as cited previously which reads as follows:

فإنما أهلك الناس قبلكم أنهم كانوا إذا سرق فيهم الشريف تركوه وإذا سرق فيهم الضعيف أقاموا عليه الحد والذي نفس محمد بيده لو أن فاطمة بنت محمد سرقت لقطعت يدها

*“From ‘Aisha r.a., Messenger of Allah Peace be Upon Him said, “Surely the destruction of the people before you just because if a respectable man steals, they let him, but if a weak man steal they dropped penalty to him. By God’s Essence which controls the soul of Muhammad, if Fatimah, the daughter of Muḥammad stole, certainly I will cut off her hand”.*⁴⁰

Discriminatory law enforcement can be likened with a knife that is sharp at its lower end and blunt at the top. That is, the law only applies to those who do not have power. Meanwhile, those who have power or a high political position, are capable of avoiding punishment, although they have committed serious crimes. A state officer who has political ethics, with all the resources and efforts, will try to end any type of discrimination in law enforcement practices.

EXAMPLES OF IMMORAL PRACTICES BY STATE OFFICERS AND ISLAMIC POLITICAL ETHICS TO ADDRESS THESE BAD PRACTICES

In Islamic political history, we can find at least three kinds of sanctions which are often imposed on a state official in violation of political ethics. **Firstly**, being dismissed from his post. Secondly, being fired from his position coupled with some form and measure of punishment determined definitively by Islamic law (*ḥadd*), such as caning for wine drinkers, cutting off hands for theft, stoning for adulterers. The additional penalty may also be of some form and measure that have not been determined definitively by Islamic law (*ta’zīr*), but are set by the government in accordance with requirements, e.g., verbally denounced,

⁴⁰ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 12, 201.

imprisoned, deported, or beaten.⁴¹ Adding to these opinions, al-Māwardī stated that specifically for state officials who take assets belonging to the state, then in addition to being fired from his post, he also could be forced to return the state assets.⁴²

For example, the sanction of removal from office was imposed by the caliph ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb on the very famous warlord in the history of Islam, Khālīd Ibn al-Wālīd, known by the nickname of ‘sword of Allah’. Caliph ‘Umar had several reasons for dismissing Khālīd Ibn al-Wālīd. Three of the most frequently cited are, first, because as a state official, the Caliph ‘Umar considered Khālīd Ibn al-Wālīd’s act as unethical, namely, killing a Muslim, Mālīk Ibn Nuwairah and later in the evening marrying his pretty wife, Laylā bint al-Minhal.

In contrast to Caliph ‘Umar, who believed Mālīk was a Muslim, Khālīd Ibn al-Wālīd expressed the opposite opinion, with reference to Caliph Abū Bakr, i.e., that Mālīk had renounced Islam and organized an army to revolt against Caliph Abū Bakr. Based on this, he had ordered his men to execute Mālīk. Abū Qatadah al-Anṣārī, a companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, who was accompanying Khālīd, was very shocked by Khālīd’s actions to execute Mālīk and marry his wife. In anger, he immediately returned to Medina to report Khālīd’s actions to Caliph Abū Bakr. He also vowed that he did not want to serve under command of Khālīd who had killed a Muslim. As it happened, Abū Bakr praised Khālīd and his victories and was not happy with the attitude of Abū Qatadah. Disappointed with Abū Bakr’s reaction, Abū Qatadah then complained to ‘Umar who agreed with Abū Qatadah that Khālīd had violated God’s law. ‘Umar then went to Abū Bakr and suggested that Khālīd be dismissed immediately but Abū Bakr rejected the suggestion. When Khālīd arrived from the battlefield, ‘Umar met and reprimanded him. ‘Umar told Khālīd, “You killed a Muslim and later married his wife. For the sake of Allah, I will stone you.”

Secondly, during his stay in Armenia, Khālīd was found taking a bath using a kind of soap that contains elements of *khamr*. By a letter sent to Khālīd ‘Umar then asked for the truth of the information and stated that Khālīd should not caress his skin with *khamr* because Allah has forbidden it. Replying to the letter from Caliph Umar, Khālīd verified the information. **Thirdly**, Khālīd also allegedly paid Ash’ath bin Qays, a poet and war hero of Persia, 10,000 *dirhams* to compose a poem containing praise for Khālīd. The money was

⁴¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Ḥisbah*, 70.

⁴² Al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), 141.

allegedly from the state treasury. Thus, ‘Umar accused him of abusing state finances.⁴³

Dismissal coupled with caning as punishment was imposed by the Caliph Uthman to the governor of Kufa, al-Wālid Ibn ‘Uqbah for consuming alcoholic beverages. According to Abū al-Fidā’, al-Wālid’s wrong doing was proven when he became the leader of the ṣalāt at dawn (ṣalāt al-subh) while drunk and did four raka‘at,⁴⁴ and not two raka‘at as taught by the Prophet Muḥammad.

The penalty of cutting off the hand for theft was imposed by the Caliph al-Ḥajaj Ibn Yūsuf on the father of Ibn al-Muqaffa’, Dazwih, known by the nickname al-Mubarak. In the reign of Caliph al-Ḥajaj Ibn Yūsuf, Ibn al-Muqaffa’s father was bold enough to levy taxes in the territories of Iraq and Iran for his own profit. As he was embezzling the tax revenue, he received the punishment of hand amputation. Consequently, the name al-Muqaffa’ which means the person whose hand has been amputated, was added on to his last name. This nickname was unfortunately used as the last name of his son, Abū Muḥammad Ibn al-Muqaffa’.⁴⁵

In the context of contemporary Indonesian politics, state officials who violate political ethics, such as committing corruption, receive four types of sanctions imposed simultaneously, namely: being fired from his post, put in jail, his assets derived from corruption seized by the state plus the obligation to pay compensation to the state of a certain amount in cash. This latter sanction was imposed on Angelina Sondakh, a former deputy secretary-general of the Democratic party, the party founded and led by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In addition to being fired from her position as a member of the House of Representatives (DPR), Angelina Sondakh also had to give up money amounting to IDR 41 billion, believed to be from the proceeds of corruption seized by the state. In addition, the Indonesian Supreme Court also imposed a prison term of 12 years and a criminal fine of IDR 500 million subsidiary to eight months in prison for Angelina.⁴⁶

⁴³ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah al-Arb fī Funūn al-Adab* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), vol. 5, 198.

⁴⁴ Abū al-Fidā’, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar* (n.p.p.: n.p., n.d), 115.

⁴⁵ Mujar Ibnu Syarif, ‘Ide Taqnīn Ibn al-Muqaffa’ dan Relevansinya dengan Konteks Penerapan Syari’at Islam di Indonesia’, *Jurnal Ahkam* 11/V (2011), 112 .

⁴⁶ <http://politik.kompasiana.com>, 23 Januari 2014.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions described in this article, we can conclude several things as follows:

1. Political ethics can be defined as a code of ethics, rules or moral guidelines that must be used as a reference or guidelines by a political actor so that he will run his political activities in a humane and civilized manner in accordance with the guidance of the Sharia.
2. Political ethics aim to influence and encourage politicians to do political actions that are good and avoid those that are bad so that all their actions have beneficial outcomes for the nation.
3. There are at least 9 (nine) types of political ethics that should be practised by a state officer in carrying out political activities, i.e., love of truth, trustworthiness, fairness, a sense of love and concern for the fate of people, a sense of shame, courage, ability to accept other people's opinions in a deliberation, ability to fulfil political promises, and treat all people equally before the law.
4. In the Islamic political perspective, we can find three kinds of sanctions for violations of political ethics. Firstly, dismissal from office, secondly, dismissal from his position coupled with certain penalties or punishments, the type and measure of which will be determined definitively by Islamic law (*ḥadd*), such as caning for wine drinkers, cutting off hands for theft, stoning for adulterers. Besides Islamic laws, the specific type and measure of these penalties may also be determined by the Government (*ta'zīr*) in accordance with the requirements, e.g., verbal denouncements, imprisonment, deportation, or corporal punishment. Thirdly, perpetrators could be forced to return the state assets they acquired unethically.

In conclusion, it is recommended that all politicians comply with political ethics in carrying out their political activities so that they can undertake a variety of good political actions and avoid the bad political games. In so doing, their actions can actually bring about well-being, success, and happiness both for himself, and for the nation in this mortal life as well as in eternal life in the hereafter.

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