# The Meaning and Relevance of Social Piety in Muslim Socities

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#### **Abstrak**

Dapat diamati bahwa kemajuan pemahaman dalam komunitas tertentu sering kali berfungsi untuk menerangi keberadaan dan pentingnya sistem kepercayaan agama. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan adanya etalase-etalase formal dan ritualritual keagamaan. Sebaliknya, apresiasi terhadap penerapan ajaran agama yang bersifat universal dalam konteks sosial kehidupan masyarakat masih kurang. Hal ini mendorong peneliti untuk melakukan penelitian. Penelitian ini mengacu pada teks-teks kesalehan dalam Al-Qur'an yang disebutkan dalam berbagai bentuk. Dalam bentuk kata benda (isim), lafadz al-shālihāt, lafadz alshālihūn/al-shālihīn, dan lafadz shālihan. Selain itu, bentuk kata kerja (fi'l) berasal dari akar kata shaluha dan aslaha. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan analisis kualitatif, dengan analisis isi yang digunakan untuk memeriksa teks-teks tersebut. Teks-teks tersebut bersifat deskriptif dan verbalistik, yang diambil dari Al-Qur'an dan Hadits. Untuk menguraikan data, penulis menggunakan berbagai pendekatan, termasuk pendekatan filosofis, semantik, dan sosiologis. Temuan penelitian ini menyajikan eksplorasi makna matan, atau isi, dari ayat-ayat kesalehan sosial, yang menunjukkan keterpaduan konsep kesalehan sebagai ekspresi kesadaran sosial.

Kata kunci : Makna Kesalehan Sosial , Pendidikan Bermasyarakat,

### **Abstract**

It can be observed that the advancement of comprehension within specific communities often serves to illuminate the presence and significance of religious belief systems. This is evidenced by the presence of formal storefronts

and religious rituals. Conversely, there is less appreciation for the application of universal religious teachings in the social context of community life. This prompted researchers to embark on a study. This research draws upon the texts of piety in the Qur'an, which are mentioned in various forms. In the form of nouns (isim), lafadz al-shālihāt, lafadz al-shālihūn/al-shālihīn, and lafadz shālihan. In addition, the verb form (fi'l) is derived from the root words shaluha and aslaha. This study employs a qualitative analysis approach, with content analysis used to examine the texts. These are descriptive and verbalistic in nature, drawn from the Qur'an and Hadith. To elaborate on the data, the author employs a variety of approaches, including philosophical, semantic, and sociological. The research findings present an exploration of the meaning of the matan, or content, of the verses of social piety, demonstrating the cohesion of the concept of piety as an expression of social awareness.

Keywords: Meaning of Social Piety, Social education

#### Introduction

The Qur'an, as a holy book, is not only a guide for Muslims, but also a constitution for the life of mankind in all spheres. The Qur'an contains various elements of universal messages of piety and salvation in overcoming the problems of human life in the world to achieve happiness in the hereafter. One of the main purposes for which the Qur'an was revealed is to create a pious individual consciousness and to awaken the spirit of social piety, because the Qur'an contains various values of instilling divine faith and social laws that make the world protected from various deviations. There are 18 verses in the Qur'an that explain about piety and concretely through verbal descriptions explained in Q.S. Al-Baqarah verse 177 (Faruq, 2019). Therefore, Islam and the Qur'an have an important function in regulating three relationships for human beings, which include relationships with God, relationships with themselves, and relationships with society.

Piety must be possessed by religious people because piety is a result that shows that a person has truly learned, believed, and implemented religious teachings in his or her life. A person's piety can be seen in his or her behavior or conduct. Quraish Shihab has explained the definition of the word pious, the word pious means the end of harm or something useful and appropriate (Hadi, 2015). Therefore, the word good deeds can be interpreted as "all actions that are carried out with full awareness to achieve maslahat and prevent mafasid, namely things that are damaged and harmful". In other words, all work that is in accordance with one's function, nature, and ability.

As for Azzamakhshari (467 H- 528 H) defines the word pious specifically as someone who has good character that is pleasing to Allah SWT because of that, pious people are Muslims. In the Qur'an, which is a religious guide for Muslims, there are values of piety that Muslims must implement. The Qur'an, which is both a book and a guide, must be studied.

The truth of the Qur'an has also been proven through research by scientists. The miracles revealed by Allah to the prophets are a form of the truth of the Qur'an and all natural phenomena that occur are explained in the Qur'an as proven by the scientific research conducted (Athar, 2019). What needs to be emphasized is how to see the quality of Muslims' understanding of the content of the Qur'an.

This is certainly very important considering that the Qur'an is the life guide of Muslims, which, if properly implemented, will have a good impact on the lives of Muslims and will certainly affect the development of the world. The verses contained in the Qur'an become an implementation of education. Allah revealed the verses of the Qur'an as a true source of learning for mankind, and they can be used as the basis of education in the learning process. As is done by scientists who see the correspondence between the verse of the Qur'an and the existing scientific truth.

If you trace the substance of each context of the existing piety text, you will feel the social dimensions it contains. Understanding the text of the Qur'an by limiting it to the framework of ritualistic piety will feel far from the true purpose of the creation of the text itself. Therefore, it is important to translate and transform formal doctrines and religious rituals into the realm of social piety and real practice in order to provide help and defense of human values for the mustad'afin. This is what distinguishes this research from other studies that discuss the verse of piety in the Qur'an.

Most religious followers tend to display the formality of their worship rituals to show their identity in religion, they perform their worship obedience to Allah Swt by exerting all their abilities in carrying out the teachings of their religion. But at the same time they are ignorant, they actually leave the essence of worship that is very valuable in their daily lives, a worship that has a positive social value effect on the surrounding environment. If religion is involved or involved in a destructive context, then actually destructive movements in the name of religion are not exactly said to be acts of piety.

The ideal piety according to the Qur'an is a piety that synergistically combines ritual piety and social piety. The problem is that ritual piety cannot be measured if it remains in its framework. Ritual piety will be more measurable if it has been grounded in the realm of

social piety. Thus, it can be affirmed that ritual piety without social piety is meaningless piety for social life.

The scope of piety itself is not limited to individual worship activities, but also includes collective piety. Piety does not stop at ritual activities alone, such as midnight worship by multiplying rak'ahs, prostrations, multiplying prayers, and dhikr in solitude, but what is expected in piety is to perform worship by involving and praying for others, both close family, congregation, and surrounding community, such as praying in congregation, praying together, kubro istighotsah, jamiyah tahlil, nariyah, hadiyu, and others.

#### Research method

The type of research used is qualitative research, which is research that explores a person's or group's thoughts about something through representative literature data that is relevant to the subject of the research. This type of research is called literature or library research. Literature research is a research technique that collects data and information through books, journals, and various other writings related to the research.

This research is also included in the descriptive qualitative research. Furthermore, this research takes the form of describing the content of the Qur'anic verses about piety. This research aims to conduct a study of the Qur'anic verses with the method of analyzing the Qur'anic verses and describing the meaning of the content of the verses of the Qur'an.

The main subject of this research is the characteristics of the verses of the Qur'an that are conceptually and contextually related to verses of piety. This study elaborates on the Qur'anic verses of piety, which are mentioned hundreds of times in various forms. Both in the form of nouns (isim), such as in the form of lafadz al-shālihāt, in the form of lafadz al-shālihūn/al-shālihīn, and in the form of lafadz shālihan. In the form of verbs (fi'l), both from the root shaluha as much as and how much from the root aslaha. Qualitative analysis was used in the research to conduct the review process. The review is carried out using content analysis where the texts studied are descriptive and verbalistic.

Meanwhile, to elaborate the data, it uses several approaches, namely philosophical, semantic and sociological. In analyzing the Qur'anic verses, the method that will be used is the Qur'anic verse analysis method of study. This method seeks to explain several verses from different aspects in accordance with the views, tendencies, and explanations of piety. This method explains the verses of the Qur'an and elaborates the texts of piety in the Qur'an. In this study, we have chosen Qur'anic verses about piety and their meaning in relation to social life.

## **Ressearch Finding**

In the Qur'an, there are basically many verses that explain the meaning of piety, reaching hundreds of verses. The Qur'an, which contains verses or divine words, was revealed with the aim of giving an appeal and as a guide for Muslims in their daily life.

to live well in the world. The Qur'an tells people to be a people of tolerance and openness. The Qur'an instructs Muslims to invite non-Muslims to "kalimatun sawaa" (common ground). The lack of tolerance among followers of different religions, the lack of recognition of the right of every religion to live anywhere on this earth, and the sense of superiority of religion have been the causes of bloodshed and violence. Therefore, it is necessary to spread the values and thoughts of religious pluralism and tolerance through various dialogues. Although efforts have been made for dialog, the results of the dialog do not reach the lower levels of society. The Hadith narrated by the Prophet Muhammad is also said to be an explanation of the existing Qur'anic verse. Thus, the Qur'an and the Hadith are used as the main guidelines for all aspects of Muslim life, starting with the Sharia, Fiqh, and others. In this results chapter, several verses related to piety from the Qur'an and Hadith and their implementation in daily life will be explained.

## The Qur'anic Concept of the Meaning of Social Piety

Conceptually, to find out the verses that talk about social piety in the Qur'an, the characteristics include. Every verse that uses the plural form of mukhotob automatically indicates that the verse is talking about "social piety" as Allah SWT says:

"Establish prayer and pay Zakat."

In addition, to know the verses of piety can be seen from the words that have the meaning of piety among others: is the word صلح and its derivatives in the Qur'an mentioned 180 times. So also found the word that has the same meaning with the word piety such as the word (virtue) mentioned 20 times with 7 word forms, the word الحسن mentioned 194 times with 28 word forms, the word الخير is mentioned 186 times with 4 word forms, the word الطيب is mentioned 51 times with 12 word forms, the word الطيب is mentioned 39 times with 3 forms

Individual acts of good deeds that have a social impact can be categorized as social piety when they are performed in congregation, such as Friday prayers, Eid prayers, Istisqa' prayers, and others. Therefore, individual acts of good deeds that provide public benefits can be called social worship or social piety because the role of this worship such as Friday

prayers seems so clear in building a society that adheres to the commandments of Allah SWT when each member of the community performs it with full sincerity and commitment.. Likewise, they do amar ma'ruf and nahi munkar. There are some individual acts of piety that have a social impact, such as zakat, almsgiving, and hajj, which, if performed with sincerity and without selfishness, will have a social impact in building a strong society. The Qur'an has characterized social piety with the term "itsar", which means putting others before oneself.

# The Meaning of Social Piety in Context (Community Life)

Islam is not only a religion that takes care of the spiritual and aqidah, but it is also a guardian of the system and state, civilization, life order and social constitution. If the meaning of faith is embedded in the heart, the soul will radiate light through the rays of rabbani guidance, it will be a source of every good. If the worship of Allah SWT is performed correctly and earnestly, it will increase the sense of piety and clean character of a person. The person will then be able to prioritize social life because the purpose of worshiping Allah SWT sincerely and expecting His pleasure as part of tarbiyah (education), tahdzib (improvement), and taqwim (straightening up). Allah SWT is the richest of all worlds, therefore the testimony of the two phrases of the Shahada is evidence of glorification and pride for man. Therefore, he should not be subject to his fellow human beings. Prayers, which are a means of connecting a person with his Lord, serve to protect him from bad deeds and evil. Fasting aims at realizing its social fruits in the form of good fortune with piety and instilling the fear of Allah SWT in oneself either secretly or openly.

Hajj is a form of religious performance to achieve forgiveness and purification of the soul from sins. As for the worldly benefits, it is to unite the views of Muslims and strengthen the ranks of both those in the eastern and western hemispheres, in a sense of both joy and sorrow, as well as to introduce innovations and sources of wealth that help traders to transact with each other, exchange trade goods typical of the origin of each country, which ultimately can provide benefits for all (Al-Zuhayli, 1993).

In Islam, good deeds are honor and glory, the foundation of nobility of character and the path to success. Without them, a person cannot progress, cannot feel the passion of life. With good deeds, a person can live happily, can fill his emptiness, can even increase his wealth and property, and will certainly save him from God's punishment in the Hereafter, because God hates His unemployed servants. As psychologists say: "If you want to destroy someone, leave him without a job."

This world, with its lands and seas, its inhabitants, both men and women, is filled with various works and various occupations. Those who do such work think that they have done good deeds and that their deeds are accepted in the sight of Allah SWT. They are fulfilling their duty in this world in the best possible way. In reality, they do not realize the nature of the problem that among the works there are good and bad, there are pious and corrupt deeds, some are beneficial and some are harmful, some are in accordance with the commandments of Allah SWT and His guidance, some violate the commandments of Allah SWT and become misguided. (Al-Qardhawi, 1997) Among the habitual phenomena of civilized behavior is what Islam requires of a Muslim: to do good every day, to render voluntary services to the community, to help the weak become strong, to teach people who know nothing, to guide people who are lost, to help the weak and the needy. As Allah SWT says.

"And do good that you may prosper." (QS. Al-Hajj [22]: 77)

Islam makes a Muslim like a spring full of goodness and benefit for the community around him. He does not count his wealth or his time. He is always grateful for the blessings of Allah SWT bestowed upon him and performs the rights of brotherhood that bind him to the community. Allah SWT has made it a sign of faith and has reconciled the bonds of brotherhood as He said:

"Verily, the believers are brothers, so reconcile between your two brothers and fear Allah that you may find Mercy." (Q.S. Al-Hujurat [49]: 10).

One of the fruits of brotherhood is that a believer considers his brother as a part of himself. He feels happy when his brother is happy and sad when his brother is sad. This is mentioned in a Sahih Hadith:

"The faith of one of you cannot be complete until he loves his brother as he loves himself.

There are many verses in the Qur'an that speak about this since the beginning of its revelation in Makkah, which contain threats and warnings for those who ignore the feeding and drinking of the poor and do not encourage people to feed and drink the poor. (Alaih, 1949) The following is a Makkiyah letter, namely the Word of Allah SWT QS. Al-Mudatstsir [74]: 28-44;

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِيْنَةٌ إِلَّا اَصَعْحَبَ الْيَمِيْنِ ﴿ فِيْ جَنِّتٍ ۗ يَتَسَأَلُوْنُ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنُ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرَ 'قَالُوْا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّيْنُ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِيْنُ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمُ الْمِسْكِيْنُ

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"Each one is responsible for what he has done, except the righteous who are in Paradise: they ask each other about the sinners, "What caused you to enter Saqar (Hell)?" They replied: "We were not of those who prayed, nor did we feed the poor.."

In the Sunnah, there are many hadiths of the Prophet (SAW) that tell us to do good deeds, such as feeding the poor. It was narrated from Abdullah bin Umar that the Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "Worship Allah, the Most Merciful, feed the poor, spread greetings, and you will certainly enter heaven in peace". (Al-Qardhawi, 1997) It was also narrated by Abdullah bin Umar that someone asked the Prophet Muhammad SAW, "What is good Islam?" The Prophet replied, "You feed and greet people you know and people you don't know.

The Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW has made social service as obligatory as Zakat or Sadaqah. But it is not only in the form of wealth, which only the rich can do, or in the form of work, which only the strong can do, or in the form of knowledge, which scholars have, or in the form of the political policies of those in office and those around them. What is meant is Zakat or social almsgiving that can be done by anyone based on his ability and potential that he can do, because Allah SWT never burdens His servants except according to what is given by Allah SWT.

Righteous deeds are not limited to worship and dhikr, such as reciting tasbih, tahmid, tahlil, and others, but include everything that is good for a person, his family, and his nation. The Qur'an encourages doing good deeds because they are accepted by Allah SWT. Allah SWT says:

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اللَّهِ يَصِنْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَالْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهُ
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"It is to Him that good words will ascend, and good deeds He will exalt." (QS. Al-Fathir [35]: 10).

Also, the word of Allah in Surah Al-Anbiya [21]: 105 states.

"And indeed, we have written in the Zabur, after it was written in the Az-Zikr, that this earth shall be inherited by My righteous servants.

There is a tendency in the attitude of some religious believers to show their existence and glory in religion through official religious activities and rituals. They do this to show them.

Taqarrub to Allah SWT is not limited to doing good deeds in the five pillars of Islam alone. This shows that one's piety is not enough to do good deeds that only benefit oneself, but it will be more perfect if doing good deeds can benefit oneself and the social environment

around him. If this is not the case, then religion has not played its role in establishing good social relations among members of the community. Therefore, in this state, religion is used only to improve the process of activities related to piety in individuals and has no connection with humanitarian matters.

From here, based on the above description, there are two kinds of piety, namely individual piety and social piety. The connection between the words "صلاح" (piety) and "فساد" (corruption) with development and justice is not clearly mentioned in the Qur'anic texts mentioned above, but it becomes clear when it is mentioned together with the word الأرض (earth), such as المفسدون في الأرض (they are the ones who cause corruption on earth).

Social phenomena that undermine social edifices such as injustice, murder, adultery, excess, extravagance, waste in the management of nature. Basically, piety in the Qur'an, even if civil values are not the basis, it cannot be marginalized from the record of faith, especially when it comes to earth piety, justice and development, which are the basis for the sustainability of a nation, and it also becomes earth piety. (Al-Hamid)

Therefore, it is necessary to instill in everyone's mind the correct understanding of good deeds, that good deeds are not limited to individual acts of worship, but also include collective good deeds, because they are part of a noble character. The perfection of his morals and piety has been made the purpose for which the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent and the purpose of his message. Therefore, it is sufficient to prove the respect for moral values in the da'wah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. (Al-Qardhawi, p. 257).

## Relevance of Piety to Faith in the Lives of Muslim

The perfection of one's faith is realized through the perfection of one's deeds. The act of good deeds becomes worthless if it is not accompanied by faith. It becomes a necessity for faith to give quality to good deeds. In fact, it is necessary for the existence of good deeds to be solid and strong. Likewise, good deeds are necessary for faith to have its fruits. In fact, it is necessary for faith to have its essence. The Prophet Muhammad said, "There is no faith without good deeds, no good deeds without faith. Faith is the basis of life. Because faith is the essential link between man and his existence, a binder that strengthens the existence of everything in this world with the One Creator. The binder leads him to a single rule that is approved by Allah SWT. Therefore, a foundation is needed to make the building stable.

The essence of faith belongs to all religions and faiths. The essence of faith is more open than Islam. Faith does not belong only to Muslims. Jews or Christians or Buddhists are believers as long as they believe in Allah SWT and there is recognition of faith in Allah

SWT in their hearts. The final attitude of religion and performance of religious duties is the presence of commitment and confidence in oneself as a servant of Allah SWT. Every act of worship should be only for Allah SWT. How many people act in the name of religion?

Discussions about faith are more important than matters of religious formality. This is because many people come from the same religion, but they are not the same in faith. Conversely, there are many people who belong to different religions but are united in faith. Faith is not limited to words that come out of the mouth, but must be embedded in a deep heart that will radiate light that plays a role in building a perfect human being. These principles draw attention to issues related to interaction between followers of different religions, especially between Muslims and Christians, in building tolerance.

Insan kamil (perfect human being) described by Imam Al-Ghozali is the perfect form of piety of mind and soul. In other words, a pious person is a believer who has spiritual awareness. He is known as a creature who always maintains a relationship with the Supreme Creator. A pious person does not forget his Lord. Allah SWT has forbidden to resemble people who do not observe the rights of Allah SWT. As Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Hasr: 19.

Sayyid Husein Nasr believes in this meaning of piety as mentioned above, where he sees that human beings are of two kinds, namely, the first is the holy man (pontifiex), and the second is the earthly man (Promethean). The first is called traditional man, and the second is called modern man. Each has a different outlook on life.

The holy man knows himself and always tries to purify himself to the highest level and thinks in his work because he sees himself as a caliph in this life and is responsible for its prosperity because he realizes that he was created from the spirit of Allah's love.

The worldly man (Prometheus) forgets to meet his Lord in heaven. He always tries to defy the rules of Allah SWT and feels happy and at ease with the life of the world. He thinks that this world is heaven. His only goal in this life is to have as much fun as he wants, which makes him forget his Lord. He sees this life as a free market. Everyone can enter it freely and choose what he wants. Divine values, which are clean and pure, are lost on him, because purity is just an intoxicating dream in his eyes..

The above explanation explains that a pure and clean person is a pious person. His piety appears in his consciousness, in his thoughts, in his actions, and in his soul. Therefore, according to Sufism, this piety is not enough with good deeds alone, but requires more than that, namely the cultivation of ruhiyah consciousness, which can produce people in the image of divinity who have noble values.

To achieve this kind of piety, various efforts are required through the performance of all the duties and worship that are required along with contemplation. From this it follows that actions related to social affairs are not necessary, because all the worship and obligations performed are fulfilled by the spiritual values of righteous deeds that benefit the individual and those around him. If we pay attention to the activities of the Sufis and their books, we will find them full of information about the rules and instructions of worship that help to understand and translate the acts and words of worship into daily life, and the procedures for instilling values that come from within. For example, as Imam Al-Ghazali has explained, the types of worship that have high values, ranging from how to purify and maintain cleanliness to the movements in prayer and its secrets. When Imam Al-Ghazali talks about purification, his understanding of wudlu is different from that of other figh scholars.

Imam Al-Ghazali divided purification into four levels:

- a. Purification of body and soul.
- b. Purification of the limbs from bad deeds and sins.
- c. Purification of the heart from vile morals.
- d. Uprooting the values of shirk that exist in the heart.

From the above explanation, it is clear that pious deeds cannot be measured by dhohir deeds, but above all by the essence of worship. Therefore, when Ali Yafie talks about piety in general, he sees that it is not wrong to see a person's piety from his prayers, fasting, and Hajj. However, it would be better to see piety from various aspects, namely everything that a believer does, from purification to simplicity and sincerity, expecting only the pleasure of Allah SWT. Ali Yafie added that the piety mentioned is a concept developed in the world of Sufism that focuses on individual understanding, known as individual piety, not social piety.

The concept of cleanliness proposed by Ali Yafie and Imam Al-Ghozali will lead to a deep and comprehensive understanding. More than that, cleanliness has the same meaning as purification as understood by Sayyid Husein Nasr, which gives birth to simplicity and tawadlu and others that meet in the circle of devotion to worship Allah SWT.

Generosity and stinginess are divided into several levels. The highest level of generosity is itsar, which is doing good to others with one's wealth when one is in need. As for generosity, it is giving unneeded wealth to others who may or may not need it. Giving what one needs to others is more difficult. For generosity ends when one gives to others in the midst of one's own need. Unkindness leads to selfishness. Even in need. How many miserly people withhold their wealth even when they are sick. He does not want to seek medical

treatment. He follows his desires and cannot restrain his lust because he sees things in material terms.

Generosity is one of the morals of Allah SWT. Itsar is the highest level of generosity. One day, Aisha gave a hundred thousand dirhams in charity while fasting. She was wearing only wet clothes. Her maid said to her after she had given the money. I wish you had kept some for breaking the fast. Aisha said: I forgot and remembered my mother; if you had reminded me earlier, I would have done it. This is the example of a noble woman..

With this morality and social nobility, mosques were built in the early days of Islam. Schools were established. Waqf income was abundant. Foster homes were built to care for abandoned orphans. Therefore, our history is distinguished by waqf in the form of social good that we know is unparalleled in the history of civilization of nations. We have various waqf scattered throughout the Islamic world in the form of mosques, schools and hospitals.

## Conclusion

This study states that there is a strong relationship between faith and good deeds because it is found that the phrase الذين آمنوا followed by the word عملوا الصالحات. shows that piety has a strong relationship with the perfection of one's faith where both are inseparable parts of each other. Therefore, the perfection of one's faith is realized through the perfection of one's deeds. Deeds of righteousness become worthless if they are not accompanied by faith.

Piety encourages people to be a people of tolerance and openness and orders the mulimin to invite non-Muslims to the "sawaa set" (the same word), namely, there is a common point of convergence in studying the issue of social piety between the heavenly religions that distinguish their Sharia.

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