

Development of Children's Moral Intelligence According to al-Ghozali

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ABSTRACT: *This research aims to explain the moral development of children according to al-Ghozali. Al-Ghozali as a Muslim philosopher has his views. This research is vital because child delinquency that is currently occurring, such as committing abuse and murder, can be categorized as a criminal act. One of the causes of delinquency is the weak distinction between goodness (al-khair) and evil (al-syar) as a fundamental moral principle. This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The data consists of the writings of al-Ghozali as the figure studied, books that study al-Ghozali's moral thinking, and scientific journals that discuss moral intelligence. The collected data was then analyzed using the content analysis method. The research results explain that motivation for intelligent morals is based on the spirit of religion, namely happiness in this world and the hereafter, and the measure of good and evil is not only the mind and heart but also the Shari'a. All children have the potential to be morally intelligent with the determining factors being education and family, not genetics. There are four virtues (fadhilah) which are the main aspects in developing children's intelligence through the concept of a "middle way" between excessive badness (al-ifrath) and negligence (tafrith), namely: al-hikmah (hikmah), as-syaja'ah (courage), al-iffah (self-preservation), and al-adl (justice). This research is limited to the moral aspects of child development. This research strengthens the concept of moral intelligence in children, which al-Ghozali has discussed, and provides differences in the idea put forward by al-Ghozali and Western thinkers.*

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan perkembangan moral anak menurut al-Ghozali. Al-Ghozali sebagai filosof muslim pada dasarnya mempunyai pandangan tersendiri. Penelitian ini penting dilakukan karena kenakalan anak yang terjadi saat ini seperti melakukan penganiayaan dan pembunuhan dapat dikategorikan sebagai tindak pidana. Salah satu penyebab terjadinya kenakalan adalah lemahnya pembedaan antara kebaikan (*al-khair*) dan keburukan (*al-syar*) sebagai prinsip dasar moral. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan. Data terdiri dari tulisan-tulisan kitab al-Ghozali sebagai tokoh yang diteliti,

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buku-buku yang mengkaji pemikiran moral al-Ghozali, serta jurnal ilmiah yang membahas tentang kecerdasan moral. Data yang terkumpul kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan metode analisis isi. Hasil penelitian menjelaskan motivasi cerdas akhlak dilandasi oleh ruh agama yaitu kebahagiaan dunia dan akhirat, dan ukuran baik buruknya tidak hanya pikiran dan hati saja melainkan juga syariat. Semua anak berpotensi cerdas secara moral dengan faktor penentunya adalah pendidikan dan keluarga bukan genetika. Terdapat empat keutamaan (*fadhilah*) yang menjadi aspek utama dalam pengembangan kecerdasan anak melalui konsep “jalan tengah” antara keburukan berlebihan (*al-ifrath*) dan kelalaian (*tafrith*), yaitu: *al-hikmah* (hikmah), *as-syaja'ah* (keberanian), *al-iffah* (menjaga diri), dan *al-adl* (keadilan). Penelitian ini terbatas pada aspek moral perkembangan anak. Penelitian ini menguatkan Konsep kecerdasan moral pada anak yang telah dibahas oleh al-Ghazali, dan penelitian ini memberikan perbedaan konsep yang dikemukakan al-Ghozali dengan pemikir Barat.

Keywords: *Moral Intelligence, Children's Morals, Al-Ghozali's Thoughts.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

All behaviours of children that deviate from legal norms are identified as juvenile delinquency. However, these delinquencies have recently been more accurately referred to as criminality. The public has been shocked by the criminality of a 15-year-old junior high school student in Mojokerto who killed his classmate because he was hurt by a debt (Yuwono, 2023). This case adds to the track record of criminality of children who are students with trivial motives. Previously, six junior high school students in Lampung killed a classmate because the victim complained to the teacher about being called asissy (Jaya & Purba, 2022).

Psychologists, sociologists, and educators are trying to explain the causes behind the various criminal acts of children. Arie Sujito, a Sociologist from UGM, said that the loss of human values causes criminality among teenagers. According to him, current education is still dominant in producing "machines" rather than building moral and human values (Ashri, 2023; Mozin et al., 2021).

Various arguments have been put forward by experts to unravel the causes of children's anarchic actions. But in general, children's lack of self-control is closely related to their weak ability to distinguish between good (*al-khair*, a term referring to beneficial or virtuous actions in Islamic teachings) and wrong (*as-syar*, a term referring to harmful or sinful actions in Islamic teachings) and the basic principles of goodness that are not firmly embedded in their souls.

Several studies have also been conducted related to the development of moral intelligence as done by Tafsil Saifudin Ahmad who examines the relevance of spiritual intelligence and moral intelligence in general. Tafsil does not explore the concept of moral intelligence according to Islamic figures. His presentation only places the urgency of moral and spiritual intelligence in the modern era (Ahmad, 2018; Fauziatun & Misbah, 2020). Meanwhile, Ari Sofia et al. researched the teacher's understanding of the development of children's intelligence and what factors support and hinder children

aged 5-6 from developing their moral intelligence. This quantitative and descriptive research approach focuses on teachers as respondents, not exploring moral intelligence development (Ikhwan et al., 2020).

Apart from the above research, scientific writings specifically discuss moral intelligence according to al-Ghozali's perspective, which was written by Syahrus Sela Kamalaul Hayati. In his writing, Syahrus explained the meaning and nature of moral education, as well as goals, sources, materials, and methods of moral education according to al-Ghozali. From his description, he concluded that ethical education is essential for students in the era of moral decline (Fatimah et al., 2023; Romdaniah, 2023).

Syahrus' research does not discuss al-Ghozali's views with contemporary moral intelligence theories such as those put forward by Borba. He did not focus on the elements that need to be developed in intelligence according to al-Ghozali. Therefore, presumably, the study of the development of moral intelligence in children, according to al-Ghozali, has differences in studies and results from previous studies.

II. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. The data consists of al-Ghozali's writings as the figure studied, books that study al-Ghozali's moral thinking, and scientific journals that discuss moral intelligence. The collected data was then analyzed using the content analysis method. The research results explain that morally intelligent motivation is based on the spirit of religion, namely happiness in this world and the hereafter, and the measure of good and evil is not only the mind and heart but also the Shari'a. All children have the potential to become morally intelligent, the determining factors are education and family, not genetics. There are four virtues (*fadhilah*) which are the main aspects in developing children's intelligence through the concept of a "middle way" between excessive evil (*al-ifrath*) and negligence (*tafrith*), namely: *al-hikmah* (hikmah), *as-syaja'ah* (courage), *al-iffah* (self-preservation), and *al-adl* (justice). This research is limited to the moral aspects of child development. This research strengthens the concept of ethical intelligence in children discussed by al-Ghozali, and provides differences in thoughts put forward by al-Ghozali and Western thinkers (Setyosari, 2016).

The data sources are divided into two, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data comes from the written works of the figures studied, including the books *Ihya Ulumidin*, *Mizanul Amal*, and *Ma'arijul Quds fii Madarij Ma'rifati an-Nafs*. Meanwhile, secondary data comes from books and scientific journals written by scholars such as *al-Akhlak inda al-Ghozali* written by Zaki Mubarak, *al-Haqiqah fi Nadzri al-Ghozali* by Sulaiman Dunya, and others. The collected data was analyzed using the content analysis method because the data analyzed was in the form of documented materials. Apart from that, the content analysis method is a scientific analysis of the content of the message. However, to maximize the results, an interpretation method using Dilthey's hermeneutical approach was also used. The aim is to capture and reveal the meaning and essence intended by the figure or thinker being studied (Hashemnezhad, 2015; Ikhwan, 2021).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Moral Intelligence According to Al-Ghozali

Al-Ghozali was born in 450 H in the city of Tus, one of the cities in Khurasan. He studied fiqh at a young age from Ahmad bin Muhammad ar-Radzakani in Tus. His first teacher was a Sufi named Yusuf an-Nassaj who became a student of Imam al-Haramian al-Juwaini. Al-Ghozali's love for knowledge can be seen from his journey to study, moving from one center of knowledge to another until he arrived in the city of Jurjan before he was even 20 years old (Dunya, 1994).

When he was 34 years old, al-Ghozali moved to Baghdad as a teacher at the School of An-Ndhomiyah at the request of Minister as-Saljuqi Nidham al-Mulk during the Abbasid. It was in this phase that al-Ghozali gained widespread popularity. His students came from various countries, no less than 400 scholars and great people listened to his lectures and took knowledge from him (Qajjah, 2023).

Al-Ghozali decided to return to the Tus city, focusing more on worship, isolating himself and introspecting himself after approximately 11 years as a wanderer of knowledge. He moved to various countries from Damascus, Al-Quds, Makkah al-Mukarramah and al-Madinah al-Munawwarah. During this journey, he produce a book that is known to the public, namely *Ihya Ulumudin* (Al-Ghazali, 1988a; al-Razzaq Al-Jiburi, 2018).

The term moral intelligence also known as Moral Intelligence was introduced by Michele Borba in 2001. According to him, moral intelligence is the ability to understand right and wrong, have a solid stance to think and behave in accordance with ethical values. So that someone who is morally intelligent, can control himself from evil deeds (Borba et al., 2008; Pauketat & Anthis, 2022; Rohmawati & Suryani, 2023).

Doug Lennick & Fried Kiel explain that moral intelligence is the mental capacity to determine human principles that should be applied to the values of individual behavioural goals. Moral intelligence is more fundamental than emotional intelligence. Moral intelligence is defined as the ability to distinguish between right and wrong in accordance with the principles of human life (Anthis & Paez, 2021; Lennick & Kiel, 2005; Tanner et al., 2022).

Howard Gardner argues that moral intelligence is human respect for oneself and others. It has the ability to feel pain in others and is able to control oneself not to carry out bad intentions (Gardner, 2003; Rahmadhany & Syaliman, 2021). Gardner in this case does not separate moral intelligence from social intelligence that connects individuals and society (Hamimah et al., 2022; Jumiati, 2023).

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that moral intelligence does not only rely on the ability of reason (brain) in distinguishing between good and bad, but strong will or mental strength (heart) plays a strong role in individual behavior towards others. Because the principles of human life. Is the dominance of the role of the heart.

Imam al-Ghozali in *Ihya'* formulates the elements that exist in morals. These elements can parse moral intelligence according to al-Ghozali. First, the trait is genuinely embedded in the soul. A person cannot be called generous if the generosity is only temporal. Second, if doing it does not feel heavy. Because if it feels heavy, it gives an indication that these morals are not firmly embedded in the self. Al-Ghozali requires that morals lead to actions that are done quickly. Third, the natural form of an action. It

is called good (*khuluqun hasanun*) and bad (*khuluqun sayyi 'un*) if it is in accordance with the scales of reason and religious law (Al-Ghazali, 2009).

Thus, what is a fundamental difference between the understanding of moral intelligence according to contemporary Western experts above and al-Ghozali is that the scales of goodness and badness according to al-Ghozali not only rely on reason and conscience, but also the guidance of shariat (Ghozali & Zamroni, 2022; Kuswandi, 2019). Because according to al-Ghozali and other Islamic thinkers, morals are supported by the spirit of religion, the purpose of its implementation is not just worldly happiness, but more important than that is happiness in the afterlife (Zain & Manik, 2023).

Safrihsyah et al's research strengthens the difference between the Western concept of morals - as initiated by Kohlberg and Rest in terms of moral reasoning - where the epistemological basis is positivistic-logical-humanist. So according to him, it is necessary to distinguish between the word morals and morals. Because morals are based on belief in God, and return also to God as the highest authority (Safrihsyah et al., 2017).

Moral according to al-Ghozali and Islamic thinkers in general have a theological dimension. This means that the impetus for ethical action is not merely humanitarian, but also the most basic is the command of sharia (God) with various worldly and ukhrawi consequences that will be obtained by the perpetrator.

The Potential of Moral Intelligence in Children

Children have the same moral intelligence potential. Because children are born with a cleanmind, they take their first experiences from their parents. Subsequent experiences are drawn from the influence of friends, teachers, books read or studied and the society around him. All these personal experiences determine a child's character (Irwan et al., 2023). If the experience taken from his parents has a strong foundation, it will play a vital role as a fortress against bad influences coming from his friends. A child will use his intelligence to choose between good (*al-khair*) and bad (*al-syar*) (Hamidah, 2015).

Imam al-Ghozali once said, *"A child is a trust for both parents. His pure heart is a very precious and pure jewel, clean from carvings and images. However, it accepts all engravings and can deviate at any deviation directed at it. If this child is habituated and brought up in goodness, it will undoubtedly be happy in this world and the next. His parents will also be rewarded, as will his teachers and educators. But if it is habituated to evil, neglected like an animal, it will certainly be miserable and perish. This sin also falls on the shoulders of those who are responsible for the child's affairs and his guardians."* (Al-Ghazali, 2009).

The words of al-Ghozali above emphasize the potential of moral intelligence, a term we define as the capacity to understand and apply moral principles, owned by everyone. This potential is believed to be inherent in all individuals, including children, who are born with a pure essence. Environmental factors, while significant in shaping a child's character, do not negate the influence of innate factors, such as genetics. Al-Ghozali's perspective aligns more with the empirical approach, which emphasizes the role of experience, than with the convergence approach (Ridwan & Ikhwan, 2021).

The school of empiricism with its figure John Locke views that experience is the basis of knowledge. Humans are born like white paper. Factors that influence the development of children to adulthood are the environment and education (Hafiz et al., 2023; Yahya et al., 2023).

The convergence school with its German figure, William Stren, argues that a child is born in the world already accompanied by excellent and bad innings, while the child's further development will be influenced by the environment (Karim & Rambe, 2022; Muzammil & Rismawati, 2022). This was also agreed with Zakiah Daradjat who said that character and environment are equally important (Huda et al., 2020; Shahtalebi et al., 2011).

If examined, al-Ghozali distinguishes between moral intelligence and the concept of other intelligence such as mathematical logic intelligence (logic smart), Linguistic intelligence (word smart), intrapersonal intelligence (self smart) and others. The potential of these intelligences is known as multiple intelligence. Intelligence is more dominated by genetic factors or innate (nativism). Meanwhile, moral intelligence in children is more caused by environmental and educational factors. This is in line with the Prophet's Hadith which explains that every child is born in a state of fitrah, depending on his parents, whether he will be made a Jew, Christian or Magi.

Aspects of Moral Intelligence Development

To unleash the potential of moral intelligence, Borba provides levels of formation in seven virtues: conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and justice. This concept has been widely used in several states in the United States to help parents develop their children's moral intelligence. Furthermore, Borba explains moral intelligence as follows:

1. Empathy is having the ability to understand and feel what others are experiencing, being sensitive to the needs of others, and wanting to help others' difficulties.
2. Conscience can judge, choose, and then determine the right action.
3. Self-control is the ability to control oneself so as not to rush into doing something that could harm others, accompanied by self-confidence.
4. Respect is being able to show self-respect and respect for others, as well as being able to ask permission and say thank you.
5. Kindness, i.e. not being selfish or self-centred and showing compassion, having a comforting attitude, and being willing to help people in trouble.
6. Tolerance is being able to accept other people's differences in various matters, including appreciating other people's traits and characters.
7. Fairness means winning and losing is expected, following the rules, and listening to other people's opinions (Borba et al., 2008).

Of these seven aspects, there are three main aspects of moral intelligence: empathy, conscience and self-control. If observed, empathy is an emotional intelligence that is the foundation of social intelligence.

Imam al-Ghozali divided intelligence into four main aspects, the rest are only branches of these four things. First, *al-Hikmah* (wisdom), second, *as-syaja'ah* (courage), third, *al-iffah* (self-preservation), and fourth *al-adl* (justice). These four aspects of moral intelligence stem from the power of lust (*al-quwwah as-syahwiyah*) which has benefits and dangers simultaneously (Al-Ghazali, 2009).

The existence of the power of lust or desire is allegedly the longest in humans. Animals also possess this power of lust. Humans can get out of the category of animal groups if they can reduce these desires (Dunya, 1994). The four main morals above are based on

the "middle way" or "midpoint" between excessive (*al-ifrath*) and negligence (*al-tafrith*). The detailed explanation is as follows:

First, al-hikmah (wisdom). It is the condition of the soul to understand right from wrong in all behaviour that is *ikhtiar* (choice) (Al-Ghazali, 2009). This virtue comes from the power of reason. This word *al-hikmah* comes from the word of Allah SWT: "And whoever is given wisdom has indeed been given much good. And none can take lessons except those who are reasonable. (QS. Al-Baqarah 269). In other terms, *al-hikmah* is the science of knowing the truth, consisting of "theoretical reason" (*al-a'qlu an-nadzry*) and "practical reason" (*al-'aqlu al-'amaly*).

The theoretical reason gets general knowledge (*kulliyat*) from the angels. The practical reason gets branch knowledge (*juz'iyat*) from the theoretical reason, and then the body will adjust to the order of the religious law (Dunya, 1994). From this, good morals will emerge.

This concept of al-Ghozali is indeed philosophical. In simple terms, *al-hikmah* is a "middle way" or "midpoint" of excessive love (*hubbun*) that exists in humans and weak reason (*balahun*). Excessive love accompanied by anger and lust moves beyond the mandatory level so that it can give rise to treason and deceit. Weakness of mind, on the other hand, reduces the obligatory level of anger and lust resulting in a lack of knowledge of right action.

Second, *as-syaja'ah* (courage) is the virtue of *matah* power *as-syaja'ah* is the middle way of the two vices of recklessness (*at-tahawwur*) and cowardice (*al-jubn*). Recklessness is excessive courage in dangerous matters which reason should be able to control. On the other hand, Cowardice is the loss or lack of compulsory anger to escape from doing what should be done.

Thus, *as-syaja'ah* gives birth to an attitude of courage and self-control in the situation and conditions (Dunya, 1994). This is by the words of Allah SWT: "*Muhammad is the messenger of Allah and those who are with him are harsh towards the disbelievers but compassionate among themselves...*" (QS.al-Fath [48]: 29).

Third, al-iffah (self-preservation) is the virtue of the power of lust that submits quickly to the power of reason to control it according to guidance. *Al-iffah* is the middle of the two vices, *as-syarrah* and *al-khumud*. *As-Syarrah* is the excess of desire to the point of overindulgence in pleasure, where the power of reason condemns it as immoral and forbids it. At the same time, *al-khumud* is the lack of *shüwat* to the point of no power to move.

The criteria for a just scale are reason and *Shari'ah*. It should be noted that appetite, for example, was created so humans can eat and stay fit. This fitness is intended so that worship is well maintained. Similarly, the lust for intercourse must be seen from the purpose of the urge for lust, which is to perpetuate the human species and protect themselves and their actions, not just for fun and pleasure.

Fourth, al-adalah (justice) is a condition of the previous three powers, the power of reason, the power of anger, and the power of lust. These three forces synergize under the order between exaggeration and diminishment. Justice in morals underlies all types of fairness in *muamalah* (interactions between people), politics and so on. This justice is not a description of virtue but a collection of justice (Dunya, 1994).

According to Borba, the main aspects of intelligence that Al Ghazali mentioned above are similar to the moral elements that need to be developed. However, Al-Ghozali explains from the root of moral intelligence which is the middle way or midpoint of two things that are extreme opposites (*bayna al-Ifrath wa at-Tafrith*) and the standard of goodness and badness weighed through reason and religious law (*sharia*).

Thus, the primary point of developing moral intelligence starts from the psychological side, namely from cognitive and affective abilities for good and evil, as well as training to balance the strength in humans so that it does not exceed the mandatory level and not less than that. This is obtained through education and habits.

Thus, al-Ghozali also argues that humans always have the opportunity to change. Especially children who still really need guidance and direction. He once said in *Ihya* (Al-Ghazali, 2009): "*If morals did not change, then will, advice, and education would mean nothing. And the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) would never have said: hassinû akhlâqakum, improve your morals.*"

Furthermore, al-Ghozali said, "*How can it be denied to human morals when moral improvement in animals can occur? For, al bazi (a predatory bird) can be changed from a wild animal to a tame one. Voracious dogs can also be educated, restrained and ethical. Similarly, a horse from a wild animal becomes a tame and obedient animal. All of these are examples of moral change.*"

Factors Affecting Moral Intelligence

The level of moral intelligence itself influences changes in children's morals and their development. There are at least two factors that affect moral intelligence: individual factors and social factors. Individual factors stem from a child's innate characteristics, and social factors come from his environment.

If a child has a temper, for example, it may be due to their sensitivity to experiences and reactions to social interactions. Dr. Ibrahim el-Fiki says files can be closed and opened in the human brain. There are angry files, sad files, disappointed files and so on. These files are a divine gift to be put to good use.

Therefore, self-control is essential. Because self-control influences the development of moral intelligence. A study conducted by Michel et al. found that kindergarten children who had self-control were more successful than impulsive children in resisting the temptation to cheat during play experiments.

However, the age of the child dramatically affects moral development. The older the child, the more reasoning develops in different stages. This is because children are not yet able to judge as a whole. Children aged five can better understand moral criteria and provide more precise moral judgments than children aged 3-4 (Pranoto, 2020; Shahtalebi et al., 2011).

Al Ghazali considers that the nature of morals and habits changes along with human development, especially in the human soul. The soul is like a body that was created incompletely. Perfection is done through teaching and education, including the *tazkiyatun nafs* or *riyadhotun nafs* (purification of the soul) and *mujahadun nafs* (lust control). Therefore, the educational process goes through stages.

However, Al-Ghozali focuses more on the social context, which significantly influences moral intelligence and children's future. The first social circle is the family. As the smallest community, the family is an effective moral builder. A child must be in the lap

of a *solihah* and a pious mother. Al Ghozali refers to the Prophet's hadith that children are naturally born religious and faithful. But his parents have changed this fundamental foundation.

There are several fundamental roles of the family. *First* is the educational role. The family is the leading educational environment for children. The family directs and guides to a good and right path. Such as how to sit, prohibit talking a lot, and being afraid of the dangers of stealing, betraying, lying, and others (Al-Ghazali, 1988b).

As stated in Surah Luqman verse 13: "*And remember when Luqman said to his son, while he was instructing him, "My son, do not associate partners with Allah. Indeed, shirk is a manifest injustice."*

Second is the role of socialization. In this case, the family plays a role in helping to prepare children to be able to place themselves as stable individuals in society and participate in community life constructively.

Third is the protection function. The family plays a role in protecting children from the dangers of negative associations with their environment. This protection is psychological where a child feels safe amid the family. Iman al-Ghozali suggested that a child be permitted to play good games after tired of studying. Because forbidding play and making him tired of learning can reduce intelligence and make children look for reasons to avoid learning.

Fourth is the affective function. The family teaches family members to have a clean heart and to be free from envy, jealousy, prejudice, and resentment. So that a child is rich in feelings of togetherness, empathy, and sympathy.

Thus, moral intelligence is strongly influenced by two factors, namely individual and social factors. However, social factors - in this case the family - have a dominant role in children's moral intelligence development. As signalled in Surah at-Tahriim verse 6: "*O you who believe, keep yourselves and your families away from hellfire*".

IV. CONCLUSION

Al-Ghozali emphasized the spirit of religion, where the motivation of a wise person is not only for happiness in this world but also in the afterlife. Therefore, the measure of good and evil is the Shari'a, not just the mind and heart. Every child has the potential to be intelligent in morals because a child is born in a pure state. Educational factors and family habits or social factors influence the formation of children's morals. Al-Ghozali in this case is closer to the school of empiricism. Because individually a child's genetic elements do not significantly influence the development of a child's moral intelligence. There are four basic morals which are aspects of developing moral intelligence in children, namely *al-hikmah* (wisdom), *as-syaja'ah* (courage), *al-iffah* (self-preservation), and *al-adl* (justice). These four basic morals originate from lust (*an-nafs as-syahwaniyah*), but these passions are controlled proportionally through cognitive and affective education processes. The concept of moral intelligence in children that al Ghazali has discussed needs to continue to be developed. Since childhood, every person's potential for moral intelligence needs to be nurtured. Suppose a person can believe in and practice the principles of good and evil. In that case, he has mental stability (*al-istiqrar an-nafsi*) as a condition for mental health and achieving happiness. In a social context, moral intelligence makes a healthy society (*as-shihah al-*

mujtama'iyyah) where individuals unite in mutual respect, appreciation, and love and avoid egoism.

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