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Faith and Behavior: Following the Hadith about the Perfection of Faith

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the importance of understanding faith (iman) in Islam not merely as an inner belief, but as a reality that must be reflected in concrete behavior. Numerous hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasize that the perfection of faith is closely related to moral conduct and social behavior. This research aims to analyze the concept of the perfection of faith from the perspective of hadith and its implications for Muslim behavior. The study employs a qualitative method with a library research approach, focusing on the analysis of authentic hadiths related to faith and behavioral indicators. The findings reveal that the perfection of faith encompasses an integrated relationship between the dimensions of creed (aqidah), worship (ibadah), and morality (akhlak), which are manifested in honesty, trustworthiness, guarding one's speech, love for others, and good conduct toward neighbors and society. This study suggests that future research may extend this discussion through empirical investigations on the implementation of the values of perfected faith within educational settings and contemporary social life.

Keywords: Faith; Behavior; Hadith; Perfection of Faith; Morality

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh pentingnya memahami iman dalam Islam tidak hanya sebagai keyakinan internal, tetapi juga sebagai realitas yang tercermin dalam perilaku sehari-hari. Hadits-hadits Nabi Muhammad SAW banyak menegaskan bahwa kesempurnaan iman berkaitan erat dengan kualitas akhlak dan tindakan sosial seorang Muslim. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep kesempurnaan iman dalam perspektif hadits serta implikasinya terhadap perilaku Muslim. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan (library research), dengan menganalisis hadits-hadits sahih yang relevan dengan tema iman dan perilaku. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesempurnaan iman mencakup keterpaduan antara dimensi akidah, ibadah, dan akhlak, yang tercermin dalam sikap jujur, amanah, menjaga lisan, mencintai sesama, dan berbuat baik kepada lingkungan sosial. Penelitian ini menyarankan agar kajian selanjutnya mengembangkan analisis empiris mengenai implementasi nilai-nilai kesempurnaan iman dalam konteks pendidikan dan kehidupan sosial kontemporer.

Kata kunci: Iman; Perilaku; Hadits; Kesempurnaan Iman; Akhlak.



Introduction

Faith is the primary foundation of Islamic teachings, inseparable from behavior and good deeds. In the Quran and Hadith, faith is often mentioned alongside righteous deeds, demonstrating that the two are inseparable. The concept of faith in Islam is dynamic, waxing and waning according to one's devotion and behavior.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provided numerous instructions through his sayings (hadith) on how the perfection of faith can be achieved and measured. These hadiths not only discuss rituals of worship but also emphasize the importance of morals and social behavior as indicators of the perfection of one's faith. This demonstrates that Islam is a comprehensive religion, governing all aspects of human life.

In this modern era, understanding the relationship between faith and behavior has become increasingly important. Many phenomena demonstrate a dichotomy between the profession of faith and the practice of daily life. Therefore, an in-depth study of the hadiths on the perfection of faith is relevant to restoring a holistic understanding of faith in Islam. (Zamroni et al., 2025). When discussing faith, there are three components of faith according to the Salaf scholars (conviction of the heart, verbal pronouncement, and practice of the limbs), explaining that these three components cannot be separated and must be in harmony within a believer.

Contemporary problems of Muslims such as radicalism, intolerance, corruption, and the challenges of modernity (materialism, individualism, secularism), and how this research is expected to provide practical solutions based on authentic hadiths.

Thus, studying the perfection of faith through the perspective of hadith is crucial as a foundation for developing a balanced Muslim character that encompasses both spiritual and social dimensions. The hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) provide a concrete illustration that perfect faith does not stop at inner conviction but must be reflected in attitudes, words, and



actions that benefit both oneself and society. Through a comprehensive understanding of these hadith, it is hoped that Muslims will be able to develop a moderate religious pattern, imbued with noble morals, and responsive to the challenges of the times without losing the fundamental values of Islamic teachings.

Research Methods

This research employs a qualitative approach with a library research method, focusing on the examination of written sources relevant to the research object. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on a deeper understanding of the concept of the perfection of faith as explained in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and its implications for human behavior. With a qualitative approach, this research seeks to explore the meaning, values, and normative messages contained in the hadith texts in a comprehensive and contextual manner.

The primary data sources in this study are authentic hadiths contained in the authoritative (trustworthy) hadith books, namely Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Sunan Abu Daud, Sunan at-Tirmidhi, Sunan an-Nasa'i, and Sunan Ibn Majah. These sources were selected based on their authority and credibility as primary references in hadith studies. Secondary data include books on hadith discourse, books on faith and morals, and scientific works in the form of journals and articles relevant to the theme of the perfection of faith and behavior in Islam.

The data collection technique was carried out through documentation, namely by collecting hadiths directly and indirectly related to the theme of the perfection of faith and its relationship to behavior. The quality and validity of the collected hadiths were then verified through a search of the sanad (chain of transmission) and matan (translation), referring to books on hadith interpretations and the assessment of hadith scholars, so that the data used could be truly scientifically justified.

Data analysis was conducted through several systematic stages. First, identifying hadiths relevant to the research focus. Second, classifying hadiths based

on subthemes related to the perfection of faith, such as faith and morals, faith and social relationships, and faith and self-control. Third, analyzing the apparent and inner meanings of the hadiths by referring to the commentary of prominent hadith scholars, such as Imam an-Nawawi, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, and others. Fourth, synthesizing the concept of the perfection of faith comprehensively and its implications for individual and social behavior. Fifth, contextualizing the understanding of the hadiths with the realities of contemporary life to make them relevant to the challenges of today's Muslim community.

To strengthen the analysis, this research also employs a normative-theological approach, understanding the hadith not only as a historical text but also as a universal guideline for values. With this approach, the research findings are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of studies on faith and morals, while also offering practical solutions to contemporary problems facing Muslims based on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Results and Discussion

The Concept of Perfection of Faith in the Hadith

Perfection of faith, from the perspective of the hadith, encompasses three main dimensions: belief (aqeedah), worship, and morals. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that faith is not merely a verbal confession or a mere conviction of the heart, but must be manifested in concrete deeds.

One of the fundamental hadiths about the perfection of faith is:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

It means: "None of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith demonstrates that the perfection of faith has a strong social dimension. A believer with perfect faith is one who cares for others as much as he

cares for himself. This reflects the principles of altruism and empathy as integral parts of faith.

Faith and Behavior Towards Others

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that behavior toward fellow human beings reflects the perfection of one's faith. In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA):

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُحْسِنْ إِلَى جَارِهِ

It means: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him do good to his neighbors." (HR. Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith directly links faith in Allah and the Last Day with good behavior toward one's neighbors. This demonstrates that true faith is not merely confined to vertical rituals of worship to Allah; it must also be manifested in horizontal relationships with fellow human beings, starting with those closest to one's immediate environment, namely one's neighbors.

Scholars explain that being kind to one's neighbors encompasses various forms: not harming others by word or deed, helping them in times of hardship, sharing their happiness, and upholding their honor. This is a concrete implementation of the perfection of faith in social life. (Herman, 2025).

Honesty as a Pillar of Perfect Faith

Honesty is an important indicator of the perfection of faith. Rasulullah SAW said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُحْسِنْ إِلَى جَارِهِ

It means: "Indeed, honesty leads to goodness, and indeed goodness leads to heaven." (HR. Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith explains that honesty is the path to comprehensive goodness (al-birr), which ultimately leads to Paradise. Conversely, lying leads to evil and Hell. Honesty in this hadith encompasses honesty in words, actions, and intentions.

In the context of modern life, honesty has become increasingly crucial in various aspects: business, education, government, and social relations. The crisis of trust that occurs in society is often rooted in the loss of honesty. Therefore, this hadith provides a fundamental solution: building a good society must begin with cultivating individual honesty.

Maintaining the Oral and Perfection of Faith

Control over the verbal is an important aspect of the perfection of faith. Rasulullah SAW said:

مَنْ كَانَ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَلْيُكَلِّمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ لِيَصْمُتْ

It means: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak good or be silent." (HR. Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith lays out a very clear principle of communication: speak kindly or remain silent. There is no third party for vain or hurtful words. This demonstrates Islam's strong emphasis on the ethics of speech as part of the perfection of faith.

The tongue is the most sinful organ, yet its impact can be profound. Backbiting, provoking conflict, harsh language, and idle chatter are examples of verbal abuse that undermine the perfection of faith. Conversely, kind words, constructive advice, and dhikr are uses of the tongue that enhance the quality of faith. (Larasati et al., 2025).

Trust and Integrity

The nature of trust is a fundamental characteristic of the perfection of faith. In a popular hadith, Rasulullah SAW said:

لَا إِيمَانَ لِمَنْ لَا أَمَانَةَ لَهُ، وَلَا دِينَ لِمَنْ لَا عَهْدَ لَهُ

It means: "There is no faith for people who do not have trust, and there is no religion for people who do not keep their promises." (HR. Ahmad)

This hadith emphasizes that trustworthiness and keeping promises are inseparable parts of faith. A person who betrays a trust or breaks a promise is considered to have imperfect faith. Trustworthiness in this hadith has a broader meaning: maintaining trust, carrying out responsibilities properly, and not betraying others.

In the modern context, trustworthiness encompasses professionalism in work, integrity in carrying out duties, honesty in economic transactions, and loyalty in carrying out entrusted mandates. This hadith is highly relevant for building a work culture of integrity and a trustworthy social system.

Leaving the Useless

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also explained that the perfection of a person's faith is seen in their ability to abandon useless things. In a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA):

مِنْ حُسْنِ إِسْلَامِ الْمَرْءِ تَرْكُهُ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُ

It means: "One of the good things in Islam is to abandon what is not beneficial to him." (HR. Tirmidhi)

This hadith teaches the principles of effectiveness and focus in life. A good Muslim is one who can distinguish between what is beneficial and what is futile, then chooses to focus on what is beneficial. This includes abandoning unnecessary conversations, time-wasting activities, and the irrelevant affairs of others.

In today's digital information age, this hadith is highly relevant. With the numerous distractions of social media, online gossip, and unnecessary information, this hadith serves as an essential guide for maintaining focus and productivity in line with the goals of life as a Muslim. (Rahmah et al., 2025).

Love and Tenderness

Perfection of faith is also reflected in an attitude of compassion and tenderness towards God's creatures. Rasulullah SAW said:

الرَّاحِمُونَ يَرْحَمُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ، ارْحَمُوا مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَرْحَمْكُمْ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاءِ

It means: "Those who are merciful will be loved by Allah, the Most Merciful. Love the creatures on earth, and surely you will be loved by those in the sky."
(HR. Abu Daud and Tirmidhi)

This hadith demonstrates the law of reciprocity in compassion: the more we love God's creatures, the more we receive His mercy. Compassion here is universal, not limited to fellow Muslims but to all creatures on earth, including animals and the environment.

The implementation of this hadith in contemporary life includes: social awareness, humanitarian activities, protection of children and the vulnerable, animal welfare, and environmental preservation. All of these are manifestations of the perfection of faith taught by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). (Lutfiyah & Kurjum, 2024).

The Interrelationship of Dimensions of Faith

The above hadiths demonstrate that perfect faith has interrelated dimensions: a vertical dimension (relationship with God) and a horizontal dimension (relationships with fellow creatures). The two are inseparable. A person cannot claim to have perfect faith if he is merely diligent in worship but has poor morals toward others.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was once asked about a woman who diligently prayed at night and fasted during the day but hurt her neighbors with her words. He replied that she would be in Hell. This demonstrates that ritual worship without good morals does not reflect the perfection of faith.

Conversely, good morals without a foundation of true faith and worship are also imperfect. Islam demands balance and integration between faith, ritual

worship, and noble morals. This is what is meant by the perfection of faith from the perspective of the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Conclusion

Based on a study of the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) concerning the perfection of faith, it can be concluded that faith in Islam is not an abstract concept separate from practical life, but rather a foundation that must be manifested in concrete behavior. Perfection of faith encompasses three interrelated dimensions: true belief (aqidah), consistent performance of ritual worship, and noble morals in social life.

Indicators of perfect faith mentioned in authentic hadiths include: loving for others what one loves for oneself, being kind to one's neighbors, being honest in one's words and deeds, guarding one's tongue from unwholesome speech, being trustworthy and keeping promises, abandoning unprofitable behavior, and having compassion for all of God's creatures. The hadiths on the perfection of faith provide practical guidance that is highly relevant to contemporary life. Amidst the moral crisis and the loss of human values, these hadiths offer solutions for building individual and societal character that is imbued with integrity, caring, and dignity. Implementing the hadiths on the perfection of faith requires awareness, commitment, and consistency. Contemporary Muslims are required not only to memorize these hadiths, but more importantly, to make them a guide to life and practice them in their daily lives. Thus, faith is not only a theological concept, but becomes a transformative force that changes individuals and society for the better. This study recommends the need for hadith-based moral education in the Islamic education system, da'wah campaigns that emphasize behavioral aspects as part of faith, and the creation of a social environment that supports the implementation of the values of perfect faith in everyday life.



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