

Community Perceptions in Resolving Ikhtilaf and Its Relevance to Surah An-Nisa' Verse 59 in Ceurih Village of Ulee Kareng District, Banda Aceh

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Abstract: Ikhtilaf is differences of opinions in understanding a matter, but not everyone can accept those differences in navigating social life. In this case, some residents of Ceurih community in Aceh can accept the occurrence of ikhtilaf, while others might find it challenging and even reject it although ideally ikhtilaf must be accepted as explained in surah An-Nisa verse 59. Based on this issue, the researcher aimed to examine the community's understanding in resolving the problem of ikhtilaf among them so far. This study was conducted using a qualitative method with field research as a means of data collection. The data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis generating descriptive data in the forms of people's words or oral and observable behaviors. The results show that there were two understandings of resolving ikhtilaf. Some people within the society agreed with the village head's decisions to resolve disagreements as mentioned in surah An-Nisa verse 59 that it is obligatory to follow ulil amr (the leader) as long as it does not contradict with Al-Quran and Sunnah. However, others dealt with ikhtilaf by making their personal decision without consulting their leader. Therefore, not all members of the community in Ceurih village implemented the essence of surah An-Nisa verse 59 in resolving the occurrence of ikhtilaf.

Abstrak: Ikhtilaf adalah perbedaan pendapat dalam memahami suatu masalah, namun tidak semua orang dapat menerima perbedaan tersebut dalam menjalani kehidupan sosial. Dalam hal ini, beberapa warga masyarakat Ceurih di Aceh dapat menerima terjadinya ikhtilaf, sementara yang lain mungkin merasa sulit dan bahkan menolaknya meskipun seharusnya ikhtilaf harus diterima seperti yang dijelaskan dalam surah An-Nisa ayat 59. Berdasarkan masalah ini, peneliti bertujuan untuk menguji pemahaman masyarakat dalam menyelesaikan masalah ikhtilaf di antara mereka selama ini. Studi ini dilakukan menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan penelitian lapangan sebagai sarana pengumpulan data. Data dianalisis menggunakan analisis deskriptif kualitatif yang menghasilkan data deskriptif dalam bentuk kata-kata atau lisan orang dan perilaku yang dapat diamati. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa ada dua pemahaman dalam menyelesaikan ikhtilaf. Beberapa orang dalam masyarakat setuju dengan keputusan kepala desa untuk menyelesaikan perselisihan sebagaimana disebutkan dalam surah An-Nisa ayat 59 bahwa wajib mengikuti ulil amr (pemimpin) selama tidak bertentangan dengan Al-Quran dan Sunnah. Namun, yang lain menangani ikhtilaf dengan membuat keputusan pribadi tanpa berkonsultasi dengan pemimpin mereka. Oleh karena itu, tidak semua anggota masyarakat di desa Ceurih menerapkan esensi surah An-Nisa ayat 59 dalam menyelesaikan terjadinya ikhtilaf.

Keywords: *Community Perceptions, Ikhtilaf, Surah al-Nisa' Verse 59*

Introduction

Differences are an inevitable aspect of life's dynamics. Diversity is an inevitable reality. Within the realm of scholarship, differing opinions are considered a blessing for humanity and contribute to the enrichment of knowledge. This has been evidenced by

eminent scholars of the past such as Imam Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali.¹ Fundamentally, differences of opinion can be categorized into two types: differences in inclination and differences in thought patterns, often referred to as differences in perspectives. Differences in inclination encompass all types of variances and disputes that occur among human beings without distinguishing levels, topics, causal factors, or actors. Differences in the understanding of a phenomenon within society have become commonplace and undeniable. There is no one person alike in this world. Each individual is a unique entity who continually possesses distinct perceptions, thoughts, and opinions when viewing the same matter.

The Qur'an has signaled the possibility of differences of opinion, as found in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Nisa': 59. In the practical aspects of daily life, many issues become subjects of differences of opinion, which ultimately may not be referred back to religious interests as intended in the aforementioned verse. Instead, they are often redirected towards group interests or other concerns that neglect the principles of unity and togetherness.²

The approach to dealing with *ikhtilaf* among Muslims always occurs naturally. Nevertheless, Islam is fundamentally cautious and endeavors to tightly restrict the occurrence of differences of opinion. Islam does not deny the reality of *ikhtilaf*, but it only approves of *ikhtilaf* that do not deviate from the Qur'an and Sunnah, the sayings of the companions, or the consensus of the companions. Allah and the Prophet remind the community to always restrain themselves from engaging in *ikhtilaf*. When *khilafiah* are confronted with individual subjectivity or extreme fanaticism towards certain schools of thought, unity among Muslims becomes at stake. The phenomenon that occurs is that there are groups among Muslims who are unwilling to accept differences and readily criticize others, even going so far as to accuse them of disbelief or apostasy.³ If life is perceived as an art of perception, then each person's perception plays a role in understanding and interpreting a phenomenon, as well as differences of opinion. Differing opinions do not necessarily lead to division. On the contrary, arguments from opposing viewpoints may be seen as adding to the treasure trove of information.

¹Irpan Sanusi, *Peran Pondok Pesantren Darussalam dalam menerapkan Ajaran Alquran Surah al-Nisa' ayat: 59 Untuk Menyelesaikan Perbedaan Pendapat Antar Sesama Muslim di Desa Siunggam Jae*, 6.

²Amir Mua'allim, *Memahami dan Mensikapi Masalah Khilafiyah*, 36-37.

³Suryan A, Jamrah. *Ikhtilaf dan Etika Perbedaan dalam Islam*, 2.

In an organization, for instance, differences of opinion are a treasure trove that enriches the organization's choices of approach and enhances organizational dynamics, thus driving organizational progress. Due to the diversity within society, differences of opinion naturally arise, and conflicting views may emerge between individuals. If there is no agreed-upon system to resolve these differences, it is not impossible for crises, often taking the form of power struggles, to arise. Differences in the understanding of a phenomenon within society have become commonplace. There is no one person alike in this world. Ideally, society should be open-minded in resolving *ikhtilaf* as long as they remain within the realm of secondary matters (*furu'*), but in reality, there are still some who find it difficult to accept *ikhtilaf* in matters of jurisprudence (*fikih*). Ideally, society should accept *ikhtilaf* with an idealistic attitude, as long as there is evidence or legal foundations. In recent years, *ikhtilaf* have occurred in the village of Ceurih regarding funeral gatherings, *tarawih* prayers, and other differences between the youth of the village and the elders.

Community Understanding of Surah An-Nisa' Verse 59 in Resolving *Ikhtilaf* in the Ceurih Village

Ikhtilaf, comprising differing opinions among two or more individuals regarding a specific issue, may manifest in various forms, whether they are subtly divergent or diametrically opposed.⁴ This is evident in the village of Ceurih. Such differences in understanding occur between the youth and the elders of the village. Conflicts between groups may arise, potentially pitting older generations against younger ones.

The emergence of differing opinions in every social interaction is influenced by several factors, including the inherent nature of human beings as unique individuals who are never identical to others. Each person's life experiences shape their personal character, thus accentuating differences among individuals. From the above discussion, it can be concluded that disagreements prevail dominantly, and their contributing factors can arise anywhere, anytime, with everyone experiencing disagreements to some extent.

Efforts made by local religious figures to resolve *ikhtilaf* among community members in the Village of Ceurih, Ulee Kareng Subdistrict, Banda Aceh City aim to

⁴ Asyifak. *Kajian Filosofis dan Antropologis Tentang fenomena Ikhtilaf Dalam Tradisi Pemikiran Muslim*, 1

prevent differences of opinion from escalating into hostility or disputes among the community members, as prescribed in Surah An-Nisa: 59, where resolving differences of opinion must be referred back to the law (Al-Qur'an) and (Sunnah). As stated by Allah in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa': 59:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best (way) and best in result.

Understanding the meaning of Surah An-Nisa', Verse 59, in a humane manner involves following what Allah and the Prophet have commanded and whatever directives are given by leaders, albeit with some considerations regarding issues. Obedience comes in two forms: obedience to Allah and the Prophet, while for *Ulil Amri*, the term "*ati'u*" (obedience) is not used. Hence, there are individuals who may not be compatible with the leadership of certain individuals, whether it be leadership at the village level or elsewhere according to their respective levels.⁵ Following the Qur'an and Hadith is obligatory for Muslims. Deviating from these guidelines is not permissible. Obeying Allah's commandments and avoiding His prohibitions is a duty. As Muslims, it is incumbent upon us to follow the guidance contained in the Qur'an and Hadith.

Dhani, as one of the community members, expresses his understanding of Surah An-Nisa': 59, stating: Speaking of obedience to Allah also means obedience to the Prophet and to the leaders chosen among us. Therefore, if we obey Allah by following His commandments and avoiding His prohibitions, as stated in the Quran, if we obey the Prophet by following his traditions and abstaining from what he has forbidden, and if we obey the leaders chosen among us, meaning that they guide us towards the path of truth,⁶ Thus, some members of the community may not consult the leaders of the village in the event of *ikhtilaf* because, according to them, not all *ikhtilaf* need to be referred back to the leaders. Therefore, they resolve them on their own according to their abilities.

⁵ Results of the interview conducted by the author with Tgk Marhaban Imuem from Ceurih village on June 12, 2021.

⁶ Results of the interview conducted by the author with Dhani from the community of Ceurih village on June 20, 2021.

From the above description, the researcher found that not all residents of the Ceurih village understand and are capable of implementing the meaning of Surah An-Nisa Verse 59 in resolving *ikhtilaf* in their daily lives. Among those considered to understand the meaning of Surah Al-Nisa Verse 59 in resolving *ikhtilaf* that have occurred among them so far are only the religious figures in the village, while the general population still has not resolved *ikhtilaf* based on Surah An-Nisa Verse 59, mainly due to a lack of religious knowledge and their limitations in understanding the contents of Surah An-Nisa Verse 59. However, despite many of them not fully implementing the resolution of *ikhtilaf* based on this verse, religious figures continue to make efforts to explain it to the community with the aim of enabling all residents of the Ceurih village to resolve *ikhtilaf* in accordance with the teachings recommended in Surah An-Nisa Verse 59.

Community Attitudes in Resolving *Ikhtilaf* in the Ceurih Village

Based on the interview results with Mr. Drs. H Mustafa, the village head of Ceurih Village, he stated that: Attitudes towards *ikhtilaf* (differences) depend on the issue; if it pertains to matters of *ikhtilaf* (differences) in religious law, we defer to the experts, namely Tgk Imum and those who understand the matter. And if the issue at hand is related to state law and cannot be resolved or managed by the village, we will refer it to the legal or state authorities.⁷ So far, the community of Ceurih village has been able to accept differences of opinion and resolve them amicably to avoid conflicts because the community still respects or values traditional and religious leaders. Although differences of opinion have sometimes led to disputes, we, as leaders, strive to resolve them.

We adhere to the Quran and Hadith. If there is a dispute concerning religion, we will hold consultations with the entire community to find a solution to the matter. Furthermore, we will summon community leaders and knowledgeable scholars who can provide opinions based on the Quran and Hadith. For example, if there is a disagreement regarding the permissibility of *qunut* prayers and we, as the governing body, are not well-versed in the Quran and Hadith, we will defer to those who are knowledgeable in the matter. Subsequently, we will engage in consultations and reach a decision collectively

⁷ Results of the interview conducted by the author with the village head of Ceurih village on June 12, 2021.

or through village consensus. This has been our practice in resolving differences of opinion.⁸

Differences arising in matters of *Usuliyah* are considered erroneous and deviant. For instance, all Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the final Prophet and Messenger. Therefore, any claim of the existence of prophets after Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is considered deviant and erroneous in terms of *Usuliyah*. Disputes concerning *Usuliyah* principles should not be followed, and the community must remain steadfast in their understanding that has been established over time. Local religious leaders also reject individuals who propagate teachings contrary to theirs, deeming such teachings deviant and not in accordance with *the Ahlus Sunnah wal Jamaah* beliefs, according to them.

Ikhtilaf in matters of *Furu'* (Branches of Jurisprudence), which pertain to *Furu'iyah* nature, is a natural occurrence. In such cases, the emphasis should be on fostering tolerance, understanding, and mutual advice.⁹ Leadership should demonstrate wisdom and maintain trustworthiness while adhering to the teachings of the Quran and Hadith, both of which are subject to the interpretation of scholars through *ijtihad*. We will seek to identify the root cause of the disagreement and resolve it in accordance with relevant verses or hadith. If it concerns governance, we will address it according to governmental regulations, recognizing the diverse understandings within the community. Sometimes, the disagreement may not lie in the actions themselves but rather in the community's reluctance to accept them, which depends on individual understanding. With knowledge, individuals develop their own attitudes towards addressing such matters.

If the resolution of religious understanding disputes at the village level proves inadequate, we will call upon experts and knowledgeable individuals capable of resolving the issue.¹⁰ Not all impacts of differences are negative; sometimes, they can be positive if they complement each other and accept differing opinions. However, if differences are

⁸ Results of the interview conducted by the author with Tgk Marhaban Imum from Ceurih village on June 12, 2021.

⁹ Muhammad Rezky Ranuwijaya Nursain dan Achmad Musyahid, *Ikhtilaf di Kalangan Masyarakat Islam di Makassar*, 167-168.

¹⁰ Results of the interview conducted by the author with Tgk Marhaban Imum from Ceurih village on June 12, 2021.

exploited to undermine others or express dissatisfaction, it can lead to disputes, hostility, or even conflicts. Differences of opinion should not always be avoided but rather addressed. When handled and approached positively, differences of opinion can bring significant benefits and energy, although they may also pose a risk of conflict and hostility, even though those with differing opinions may not necessarily be hostile towards each other.

As for reprehensible differences, they include disagreements in matters of principles or creed, as they can indeed divide the Muslim community and weaken its existence, or differences in matters that are definitive (*qathi'i*) based on unequivocal evidence. Likewise, differences of opinion in subsidiary matters (*dhanni*) are approached with contention and discord. It cannot be denied that everyone has the right to express their opinions, as long as they remain within the bounds and scope of *ijtihad* permitted by Sharia with full decorum, without reproach, and without blaming each other, so that the meaning of mercy in the diversity of the *ummah* is fulfilled.

However, what is most important is not to prohibit differences of opinion or eliminate differing views, but how we approach differences of opinion in matters of *ijtihad* so that these differences become a blessing rather than a curse. In this context, there is an interesting message from Imam Syahid Hasan Albanna, which was later popularized by his disciples, including Yusuf Qardhawi, namely: "We collaborate and help each other on matters we agree on, while on matters we disagree on, we should all refrain and respect each other." This means that if we differ in opinion on the matter of *qunut* during *Fajr* prayer, we should respect it, but we can still work together in performing *Fajr* prayer because we all agree that *Fajr* prayer is obligatory.

As for the impact of differences of opinion, it is not always positive or negative. If differences of opinion are driven by intentions to undermine others, dissatisfaction or displeasure towards others (desires) will have negative consequences. Conversely, there are both positive and negative impacts of differences of opinion, including:

- a. Positive Impact: Differences of opinion can have a positive impact if the issues can be accepted without any desire to undermine others and if one can accept the opinions of others without directly condemning them.
- b. Negative Impact: Differences of opinion driven by individual or group interests without considering others or aiming to be superior to others will lead to prolonged

disputes and the emergence of new problems, resulting in the following consequences:

1. It will lead to contradictions.
2. It will result in disputes, and even
3. Lead to conflicts.

Implementation of Surah An-Nisa: 59 in the Ceurih Village

The implementation and application of the community towards Surah An-Nisa verse 59 have not been fully realized because their level of understanding has not yet comprehended the verse. Most of the community has not practiced or applied Surah An-Nisa verse 59 in resolving *ikhtilaf* that have occurred among them so far. This is evidenced by the fact that there is still a tendency among the people that when *ikhtilaf* arise, they do not engage in consultation or inform the leaders, but rather resolve them on their own. Therefore, in this regard, Tgk Imum, as a religious leader, strives as much as possible to implement the teachings of Surah An-Nisa verse 59, even though they have not been fully implemented.¹¹ Tgk Imum and other religious figures endeavor to provide understanding about the teachings of Surah An-Nisa verse 59 through religious studies held in the local village so that the community understands the teachings outlined in Surah An-Nisa verse 59 and also implements them in their community life.¹²

Obedying and following the commandments of Allah and the Prophet in avoiding all prohibitions is an order to obey the leader, for example, the directive from the village head to hold a consultation to organize the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. Therefore, even though we may sometimes have differing opinions about celebrating the Prophet's birthday, we still participate in such consultations, which is a form of obedience to the leader (village head). Differences of opinion can occur anywhere, anytime, and with anyone.

Differences of opinion can also arise due to various factors, whether in the workplace, educational environment, social, cultural, political settings, community, or even within a single group. Individual differences involve feelings, principles, opinions,

¹¹ Results of the interview conducted by the author with the village head of Ceurih Village on June 12, 2021.

¹² Results of the interview conducted by the author with Tgk Marhaban Imum from Ceurih village on June 12, 2021.

or ideas related to one's self-esteem, pride, and identity. Differences of opinion will always exist; that's the fundamental law, because inherently, humans are monodualistic beings, meaning they function both as individuals and as social beings. Thus, in their status as social creatures, humans cannot avoid social interactions. It is within these social interactions that differences of opinion arise, stemming from humans' freedom to assess things. Therefore, it's indeed impossible to eliminate differences of opinion, especially for those of us living in a democratic society like today.

The occurrence of differences of opinion in implementing Islamic law, besides being caused by human factors, is also due to other factors related to religion. These causative factors have evolved throughout the development of the law in subsequent generations. As Islamic law history progresses, these factors have increasingly become complex, sometimes leading to fierce disputes, especially among laypeople.

Compliance with leaders is a necessity for the people because leaders are chosen to be role models by their constituents. As long as leaders do not command wrongdoing, we are obliged to obey the rules in order to comply with *Ulul Amri*. The practice of Surah Al-Nisa verse 59 is still observed by the local community, although not all issues need to be referred to *Ulul Amri* if the problem can still be addressed, either through familial or village means. In terms of the community's initiative in practicing Surah Al-Nisa verse 59, it still exists, but only a few actually apply the substance of the teachings in their daily lives, especially in resolving *ikhtilaf* in Ceurih Village. Educating the community that issues arising within society can be resolved with Allah's law through the guidance of the Quran and Sunnah is crucial because the Quran and Sunnah serve as pillars for Muslims and guides in their daily application of upholding Allah's commands.

From the explanation above, it's evident that the community has not fully implemented the teachings of Surah Al-Nisa verse 59 in both attitude and daily practice. Proof of this lies in the fact that there are still members of the community who, when faced with *ikhtilaf*, do not refer them back to *Ulil Amri* (leaders) as a manifestation of practicing Surah An-Nisa. This is because doing so embodies good values and constitutes an act of obedience and worship. *Ulil Amri* serves as the guiding figure for the community, resolving differences of opinion by reverting to the Quran and Sunnah because they understand the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah, and returning to these teachings leads to better outcomes.

Conclusion

After Based on the research conducted by the author, it can be concluded at the end of this discussion that not all members of the community understand and comprehend the implementation of Surah An-Nisa verse 59 in their daily lives, especially in resolving *ikhtilaf*, due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of Surah An-Nisa verse 59. Only a few community leaders, such as religious figures in Ceurih Village, have a deep understanding and are capable of implementing it in resolving *ikhtilaf*. However, some other community leaders in Ceurih Village do not fully grasp the meaning and implementation of Surah An-Nisa verse 59.

Furthermore, the stance taken by community leaders in Ceurih Village in resolving *ikhtilaf* is as follows: in the event of disputes concerning religious matters, the village head will hold consultations with all members of the community and seek solutions to the issues. Additionally, they will summon community leaders and religious figures who can provide opinions based on the Quran and Hadith. If disputes arise concerning state law, they will engage in collective deliberation, and if the issues cannot be resolved, they will be referred to the legal system or state authorities

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