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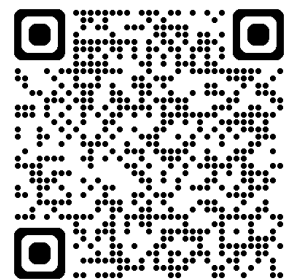
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# **SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ISLAM: THE PERSPECTIVE OF TJOKROAMINOTO & SYED HUSSEIN ALATAS**

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## **Abstract**

With the rapid invention of technology, the twenty-first century allows us to witness social injustice issues across the globe via our own electronic devices. These issues lead to the collapse of morality, hence destructing the societal fabric. Social justice discourse has been in existence since World War 2, yet most literature available pays more attention to the social justice issues from the western perspective than the views of the Muslim scholars, especially those of Malay Archipelago. Therefore, this study aims to unfold the principles of social justice according to Tjokroaminoto and Syed Hussein Alatas, and to identify the similarities and differences of views on social justice between these two figures. This qualitative study utilised document analysis whereby both of their books with the same title, "Islam dan Sosialisme" were used to analyse the principles, similarities, and differences of ideas on social justice. The findings demonstrate that both figures are among the proponents of socialism in Islam which covers the idea of social justice despite the idea being rejected by some Muslim scholars from Arabia and India subcontinents. Both figures presented the proof that socialism has its foundation in the divine revelation, and the implementation of social justice was manifested by Prophet Muhammad PBUH as the guided individual in Islam.

**Keywords:** Social Justice in Islam, Islamic Socialism, Tjokroaminoto, Syed Hussein Alatas



### **Abstrak**

Dengan penciptaan teknologi yang pantas, abad kedua-puluh satu membolehkan kita menyaksikan isu ketidakadilan sosial di seluruh dunia melalui peranti elektronik kita sendiri. Isu ketidakadilan sosial ini membawa kepada keruntuhan akhlak, seterusnya merosakkan tatanan masyarakat. Wacana keadilan sosial telah wujud sejak Perang Dunia Kedua, namun kebanyakan perbincangan menumpukan perhatian terhadap isu keadilan sosial dari perspektif barat berbanding pandangan para sarjana Islam khususnya daripada Kepulauan Melayu. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji prinsip keadilan sosial menurut Tjokroaminoto dan Syed Hussein Alatas, serta mengenal pasti persamaan dan perbezaan pandangan tentang keadilan sosial disisi kedua-dua tokoh tersebut. Kajian kualitatif ini menggunakan analisis dokumen di mana kedua-dua buku mereka dengan tajuk yang sama, “Islam dan Sosialisme” digunakan untuk menganalisis prinsip, persamaan, dan perbezaan idea tentang keadilan sosial. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua tokoh tersebut adalah antara pendokong sosialisme dalam Islam yang merangkumi idea keadilan sosial walaupun idea tersebut ditolak oleh beberapa sarjana Islam dari benua Arab dan India. Kedua-dua tokoh tersebut mengemukakan bukti bahawa sosialisme mempunyai asasnya dalam wahyu, dan pelaksanaan keadilan sosial telah dimanifestasikan oleh Nabi Muhammad SAW sebagai individu terpujian dalam Islam.

**Kata kunci: Keadilan Sosial dalam Islam, Sosialisme Islam, Tjokroaminoto, Syed Hussein Alatas**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Social justice is a continuous struggle of upholding the principles of freedom, equality, and solidarity in the pursuit of the ideal society of peace, stability, and harmony. The discourse of social justice from the western perspective has been in the scene since World War 2 and the discussion of this topic matured and developed according to the experience of the society in handling with social injustice via various trajectories such as racial discrimination, unjust distribution of rights and opportunities, violations of basic human rights, trampling on human dignity, and others. However, in Islamic perspective, social justice is mainly viewed through the lens of the primary sources of this religion which are the words of Allah, al-Quran, and the sunnah. Sunnah according to the hadith scholars refer to the sayings, actions, tacit approval, and characteristics of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (Kaswari et al. :2016). Though the Muslim scholars have their own methods in perceiving social justice depending on the conditions of their society at that moment, they still acquire the evidence from divine revelations in relation to the societal circumstance.

Tjokroaminoto and Syed Hussein Alatas are among the Muslim scholars who had conceptualised the notion of social justice from Islamic perspective. Their books of “Islam dan Sosialisme” were the main sources in extracting their ideas on social justice. Though the books are peripheral to socialism, this study perceived socialism as the concept that covers the discussion of social justice due to their concerns surrounding the human dignity, fair and just distribution of rights and opportunities, and the shared brotherhood among the members of society. Tjokroaminoto was a prominent figure in Indonesia, as he was actively involved in politics and propagating his views on Islam to the Indonesian citizens. A movie, “Guru Bangsa (Nation’s Teacher): Tjokroaminoto” was even created to commemorate his huge contributions to the socio-politics arena in Indonesia. On the other hand, Syed Hussein Alatas was among the significant sociologist who vastly contributed to the academic scene in Malaysia. His deep works and interest on social justice, corruption, intellectual captivity, and imperialism can be seen from his numerous writings. Both figures, Tjokroaminoto and Syed Hussein Alatas joined politics in their efforts to disseminate their principles based on justice. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the principles, similarities, and differences of social justice from the thoughts of Tjokroaminoto and Syed Hussein Alatas.

## Life Background of Tjokroaminoto and Syed Hussein Alatas

Raden Mas Haji Oemar Tjokroaminoto, better known as Tjokroaminoto was a significant Indonesian figure who actively involved in politics in disseminating his ideology on Islam towards the Indonesian's citizens. He was born to a religious aristocratic family and had the Javanese title of Raden Mas, though he preferred to use the title Haji (for one who performed the pilgrimage to Mecca) before his personal name. His great grandfather named Kyai Bagoes Kasan Basari was a prominent Kyai (Muslim scholar) in Ponorogo, East Java and managed a *pesantren* (an Islamic boarding school). His grandfather, Raden Mas Adipati Tjokronegoro was a regent in Ponorogo and once conferred a medal from the Dutch government for his loyalty and devotion to the Dutch government. His father, Raden Mas Tjokroamiseno was a chief district officer in Madiun (Melayu : 2002). According to Hamka, a significant Indonesian Muslim figure, the characteristics of Tjokroaminoto was described as someone slender with sparkling eyes, moustache curling upwards, and has a firm body. He was a charismatic individual who gained people's respect and they were impressed by him. Hamka added that an Indo-Dutch person espoused that Tjokroaminoto works diligently, and a good orator who could charm the people with his convincing speech (Taufik et al. :2005). Among his intellectual publications include Islamic History (Tarikh Agama Islam), General Regulation for Muslim (Reglament Umum bagi Umat Islam), Culture and Islamic Customs (Kultur dan Adat Islam), and Islam and Sosialisme (Islam and Socialism). Tjokroaminoto was actively involved with politics through Sarekat Islam.

On the other hand, Syed Hussein Alatas was a prominent Malaysian academician, sociologist, public intellectual, and politician. He was the son of Syed Ali Alatas and Sharifah Ragan Alaydrus and born in Bogor, Indonesia on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1928 (Iseas: 2021). He is the older brother of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas and the father of Syed Farid Al-Attas, Malaysian sociologist who is currently a professor at the National University of Singapore. He was a prolific author who had written books on several topics such as corruption, multi-racialism, imperialism, and intellectual captivity. Among his famous books include: *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, *Intellectual in Developing Society*, *The Problem of Corruption*, and *Islam and Socialism*. Alatas began his academic career as Head of the Research Department at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Institute of Language and Literature) in 1958. He was a part-time lecturer at the University Malaya in 1960 and by 1963, he was appointed as the Head of the Cultural Division of Malay Studies department of the same university. From 1967 to 1987, he took up the position of Head of the Malay Studies Department at the University of Singapore (Hassan: 2005). After his return to Malaysia, he was elected as a Vice Chancellor of University Malaya, yet his position was abruptly terminated by the Anti-Corruption Agency due to the allegation of office procedures breach. It is believed that it was a politically motivated move, as Alatas consistently pushed for reform in the university (Ngu: 2002). Syed Hussein was also an active politician whereby he constantly advocated for multiculturalism. He was one of the founders of Parti Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia (Gerakan) and believed that the role of the opposition parties is to provide checks and balances rather than for the sake of opposing. Alatas left Gerakan and joined Alliance Party (IKATAN) in 1972. He later formed Parti Keadilan Masyarakat Malaysia (PEKEMAS) and left due to his academic responsibilities. In 1982 and 1983, he joined Berjasa Party which is a component of Barisan Nasional (National Front). In 1985, he rejoined the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) – which he was previously a member of in 1946. Syed Hussein Alatas passed away in 2007 at his house in Kuala Lumpur due to heart attack.

## Social Justice according to Tjokroaminoto

Social justice recognized different compartments of justice such as relational justice, which refers to the inter-relationship among members of society, the relationship in the sphere of marriage, family interactions, neighbours, employers and employees, and the connection between the state leaders and its citizens. Besides, distributive justice is also considered one of the branches of social justice whereby, it circulates around the distribution of rights, and opportunities for different parties such as women, refugees, and disabled community. As a political leader during his time, Tjokroaminoto had the intention to relate socialism to Islam due to external force of respecting the socialism from the western perspective.

The notions of these ideas that is embedded in Tjokroaminoto is explained as follows:

### a) Human Dignity, Muslim Brotherhood, and Equality of Mankind as the elements of Relational Justice

Islam is a religion that emphasizes interpersonal relationships regardless of race and religion (Bahar: 2019). Human relationship that consists of a complex web of interpersonal connection and engagement surrounding different parties such as family, employers, the authority, and the state leaders requires the element of justice to ensure the peace, harmony, and stability in a society. Respecting diversity of creations of Allah; who was created in different pairs, genders, nations, and tribes, which aims for the different community to get to know each other and not to feel overpowered due to their background should be the primary foundation in maintaining relational justice. The prevailing thought of superiority, racism, even in the twenty-first century has long been diminished by Islam through the words of Allah, Quran and the practise of the Prophet as the leader of the ummah (Suleiman: 2020). Allah mentions explicitly in the Quran, 13. *O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.* (Quran, 49:13). The Prophet, mirrored the teaching of the Quran by practising justice, fairness, and equality towards the ummah in his era as a hope that it could be exemplified by the entire society members after his generation. He despised the idea of supremacism based on race, tribes, and nations in many of his interaction with the society. One of the significant events surrounding this notion was stated in the farewell sermon of the Prophet. He explicitly mentioned that *“No Arab has any superiority over a non-Arab and no non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab and no white has any superiority over a black and no black has any superiority over a white except on the basis of taqwa (God-conscious behaviour). The most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most pious and righteous of you.”*

In explaining on the importance of respecting human dignity, Tjokroaminoto points out the examples such as from the gathering of Muslims of different background of race, skin colour, status, classes, and position to assemble every Friday to establish Friday prayer without having any argument on the decree of the leader of the prayer (*Imam*). In addition, he also elucidated similar circumstances during the biggest celebration on two occasions, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid Al-Adha. The annual congregation does not only indicate the similar honour and dignity of the mankind, but it also shows the unity of the objective of humanity which is to demonstrate the love and compassion to Allah SWT.

Among the important tenet in Islam that must be established among Muslims is in the form of brotherhood and kinship on the axis of *tauhid* (oneness of Allah). This brotherhood does not look into the social background, physical appearance, or social status, yet it is united in accordance with the submission to Allah SWT. Islam has already dismantled the enmity based on descendant, nationality, skin colour, and appearance. The brethren among Muslims are blossomed from the feeling of real love with each other (Tjokroaminoto 2019). Allah is the one who plays the biggest role in uniting the hearts of Muslims though they might be enemies

in the previous phase of their life. The *Muqallib al-Qulub*, the turner of the hearts, Allah SWT has the power to create real love among Muslims when they hold firmly to the rope of Allah. Allah mentioned in the Quran, “*And hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you - when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. And you were on the edge of a pit of the Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may be guided.*” (Quran, 3:103)

The brotherhood in Islam is also viewed as the character of wanting the best for fellow Muslims as they wish for themselves. Muslims will not envy and wish misery to their fellow Muslim brothers and sisters as these elements are not something that they want themselves to be inflicted upon. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*None of you will have faith till he wishes for his (Muslim) brother what he likes for himself.*” Besides that, Muslims to another fellow brother or sister in faith will not practise injustice and dishonour them by degrading and dehumanise them as they remember their similar origins which is from the same father of humanity, Prophet Adam. Despite different cultural background, skin colour, nationality, language, or other external factors, Muslim will find ways to strengthen their bonds and find numerous ways in pleasing Allah SWT. Oppression among fellow Muslims is discarded and denounced strongly if one truly incorporates the notion of brotherhood in Islam, The Prophet mentioned, “*A Muslim is a brother to the other Muslim. He does not treat him unjustly, he does not leave him alone and he does not dishonour him. There is no greater evil that that one should hold a Muslim in contempt.* (Musnad Ahmad).

On the notion of equality, according to Tjokroaminoto (2019), Muslims are not distinguished by social status, amount of wealth, physical appearance, and others, but by the piety and closeness to Allah SWT which is only known by Allah as no one could view the content of someone’s intentions and purity of the heart besides Allah SWT. The idea of equality was mentioned by the Prophet when he mentioned that “*Muslims are like one body of a person; if the eye is sore, the whole body aches, and if the head aches, the whole body aches*” (Muslim, Hadith 256). The togetherness of Muslims should be instilled in oneself till the pain of certain community members will be internalised by other community members. Besides that, the Prophet also used a metaphor to signify believer’s relationships among each other. Narrated by Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari, he mentioned that the Prophet said “*A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other*”. To reiterate and emphasize this metaphor used, he clasped his hands with the fingers interlaced. Just like a building which consisted of many different parts, Muslims are also of different background yet are united based on the glorification of Allah. They are willing to provide support for each other if in case their fellow brothers and sisters need assistance.

## **b) Relational Justice in Marriage Institution**

Marriage institution is one of the most important phases in someone’s life. Family who adopts justice, compassions, and love as their moral compass will breed healthy and peaceful society members. Both men and women need to make the marriage function to produce excellent men that could contribute to the society. Across the history, the Prophet witnessed oppression was exercised to the women as the husband treat women like his wealth and property whereby, they freely sell and use them for their own benefits. In response to this custom, the prophet determined the guidelines in rendering women’s rights in several aspect such as in the inheritance and ownership of wealth and properties.

Tjokroaminoto mentioned that marriage alone does not promise that the husbands’ and wives’ characteristics are to be united as both have their own characters and ways of life to be implemented in a marriage. To protect the women’s rights, prior to the process of solemnisation, he mentioned that Islam allows the female or her *wali* (her guardian) to state explicitly in the marriage contract that if the husband is married to the second wife, the first wife is permitted to appeal for divorce if such event occur. This is to preserve the right of the

woman in a marriage institution. If the woman insists to be in a monogamy setting, she has the right to leave the situation that she does not feel comfortable with. (Tjokroaminoto: 2019) Though polygamy has its own benefits according to certain parties, as it might assist the widows who lost their husbands to build a new life alongside, and with the help of the new husband, or any other additional advantages, the wife who refused to be in polygamy due to her own incapability and unwillingness to deal with incoming challenges that might requires sacrifice of her emotional and physical needs can appeal for divorce from the husband.

On another occasion, even though there is no case of polygamy involved in a marriage, and if it happens that mutual love and compassions no longer exist, perhaps to the extent that remaining in a marriage might bring harm to someone's physical and mental health, Islam also allows people to be divorced. It proves that justice needs to be implemented in a marriage and both parties deserve their own trajectories of life once justice is found to be absent in the relationship. According to Tjokroaminoto, several rights of a wife towards the husband includes: 1) The husband must protect and take care of the wife by providing necessities to her. 2) If a man has more than one wife, the wives deserve to be given their own bedroom and similar treatment must be given to each of them. 3) The husband is also required to give permission to the wives to visit or be visited by their parents or children from their ex-husbands. The wives also need to be allowed to visit and be visited by their relatives for at least once a year. Women rights in a marriage institution shows that Islam exhibits justice to be implemented in any sphere of life oppression must not be committed to both genders. Men who are commonly superior in strength should not repress women in any ways especially in physical aspect, yet men should act as the protectors to the women's dignity in a marriage institution.

### c) Distributive Justice from the Point of View of Tjokroaminoto

The element of distribution is considered one of the major sections in the discussion of social justice, as it pertains to the rights and opportunities to be given to many parties. Tjokroaminoto viewed that distributive justice is also one of the vital elements of social justice, when he specified a subtopic about charity in Islam in his literature. He stated that charity is considered a part of the element of distributive justice in Islam whereby the injunctions circulating charity are divided into two divisions which are compulsory and recommended. Charity that relies on the will of the people with regards to the amount or type, be it monetary or materials is considered recommended in Islam. Furthermore, the charity that is obligated on Muslims is called *zakat*, whereby it aims to purify the wealth of the Muslims which indicates that there might be possibilities of injustice that happens in the pursuit of acquiring the wealth (Hasan: 2021). There are different types of *Zakat*, such as *Zakat al-Fitr* and *Zakat al-Mal*. *Zakat Al-Fitr* has its own specific amount and time to be conducted which is paid by the end of the holy month of Ramadhan in Islamic calendar whereas *Zakat al-Mal* are required to pay annually on wealth that covers gold, silver, currency, property, and others. The amount of *Zakat al-Mal* is only 2.5% of net wealth that a person possesses for a year if a Muslim reach the financial threshold (*nisab*).

According to Tjokroaminoto, three aspects in the foundations of social justice include the voluntarily sacrificing of oneself and prioritizing the public interest over oneself, fair distribution of wealth in the act of obligating *zakat*, as one of the pillars of Islam, and encouraging people of not perceiving poverty as a form of humiliation and accepting poverty is better than causing harm and assault to people.

Besides that, Tjokroaminoto also connects the verse on accumulation of wealth with distributive injustice. He quoted Surah At-Taubah, verse 34 to prove that amassing wealth without the social function is prohibited in Islam “34. *O you who have believed, indeed many of the scholars and the monks devour the wealth of people unjustly and avert [them] from the way of Allah. And those*

*who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah - give them tidings of a painful punishment.* This verse elucidated that those who spend their money not in the way Allah permits, by only focusing on their needs and luxury without spending and assisting other people, will receive harsh payback. It is the role of the state to manage fair distribution to the society members in ensuring no injustice or exploitation occurred during the process.

In summary, Tjokroaminoto's views of the relationship between social justice and Islam is based on some crucial elements which are human dignity, Muslim brotherhood, and equality of the mankind which characterise the notion of relational justice. In addition to his concept of social justice among society members, he did not undermine the role of justice to be implemented in a marriage institution which is normally left unattended by some scholars. Distributive justice, which is one of the major elements of social justice gets attention from Tjokroaminoto when he specified several chapters in his writings.

### **Social Justice According to Syed Hussein Alatas**

Syed Hussein Alatas was a prominent socialist in Malaysia and his ideas on social justice, corruption, intellectualism, and captive mind were expounded in published works. Alatas was a deep believer that Islam and Socialism do not detach from each other; if one widens the perspective on socialism and does not continuously relate this school with Marxism and Communism hence denied the existence of socialism in Islam embedded in the content of Quranic verses and the prophetic sunnah. According Alatas (2021), those who rejected the idea of socialism in Islam will give impact in the dominance of capitalism and support the idea of status quo.

He identified major characteristics of socialism which covers the idea of social justice. These characteristics encompass faith in the rule of law, emphasis on welfare and justice for the people, prioritization of collective interest over individual benefits, resentment against poverty and exploitation, glorification of duty and the disapproval of indolence, championing human equality, the belief of the development of an individual is dependent on the environment, the restriction of the property ownership, and the recognition of injustice that might occur in the process of acquiring wealth.

#### **a) Distributive Justice in the Thought of Syed Hussein Alatas**

In the writing of Syed Hussein Alatas, he majorly unfolds that social justice is deeply connected with the idea of distributive justice. For instance, he quoted the notion of wealth circulation only among the rich from Surah Al-Hashr, "*So that it will not be a perpetual distribution among the rich from among you.*" (Quran, 59:7) The Quran is against the dissemination of properties only among the wealthy community because assisting the poor and downtrodden is a part of social responsibility that needs to be upheld in attaining the pleasure of Allah. Apart from that, he also quoted several events of the prophet signifying this notion. He expounded that the ideal society in the point of view of Prophet Muhammad is, society without distributive injustice in which he envisioned that a time would come when a person will wonder about to give charity with no one to accept it. This is due to the practice of the wealthy community acknowledging their social responsibility and willingness to allocate the portions of their properties to the poor. The state acquires the wealth of the rich to be distributed to the poor as an act of purification. This compulsory act referred to *zakat* (obligatory alms), one of the pillars that constitutes Islam. The principle of social justice in this circumstance is in the utilization of state power to acquire the wealth of the rich for the benefit of the poor (Alatas: 2021). Islam made it mandatory to protect the right of the poor in acquiring basic needs by the implementation of *zakat* as it prioritized the relationship of Muslim brotherhood in sustaining peace, stability, and harmony in society. The wealth accumulated from the *zakat* is often used for social benefits such as



funding the poor, veterans, and disable community. Besides, *zakat* is also used to provide scholarship for the underprivileged community.

Zakat is not the only commandment with the purpose of protecting the rights of the destitute and downtrodden. Besides, there is also discouragement of certain practice that showcased the social justice principle by the protection of the rights of the poor. For the example, exploitation by middlemen is demoralized in Islam due to the notion of not wanting the wealth to be circulated around only certain community members. Alatas took the example from the prophetic hadith when Ibn `Umar told the companions that the people used to buy food from the caravans in the lifetime of The Prophet. He further expounded that The Prophet used to forbid them to sell it at the very place where they had purchased it (but they were to wait) till they carried it to the market where foodstuff was sold. Ibn `Umar said, *"The Prophet also forbade the reselling of foodstuff by somebody who had bought it unless he had received it with exact full measure."* (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 2123 & 2124) The discouragement of the Prophet is for the purpose of defending the rights of the buyer, as the buyers could come from many different background and status. The buyers might have many mouths to feed and are in desperation of fulfilling the basic needs. Hence, the act of exploitation by the middlemen is strictly denounced in Islam.

Noticing that the marriage institution requires justice and compassions to be implemented in the household, Alatas quoted an event to signify the balance between these two aspects from the story of one of the prophet's companions, The mother of Muawiya, Hind, and her husband, Abu Sufyan. Hind once complained to the prophet that Abu Sufyan was a miser and asked whether it was alright for her to take his money secretly. The Prophet replied *"You and your sons may take what is sufficient reasonably and fairly"* From this event, it could be deduced that though the property ownership is absolute, it is still subjected to the requirement of justice. The rights of the people who are under someone's responsibility and care needs to be fulfilled despite the full ownership of property remains unadulterated.

## **b) Human Dignity as One of the Pillars of Social Justice**

Islam is a religion that champions the notion of human dignity whereby every mankind is entitled to it (Nasution et al.: 2019). The Quran as the main source of Islamic reference mentioned many verses about human dignity includes the verse from Surah Al-Isra, *"We have certainly honoured children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference"* (Quran, 17:70) The status of the children of Adam is lifted by Allah despite their sizes and strength over other creations of Allah. Mankind is created with freewill hence those who chose to become believers by worshipping Allah, continuously pleasing Him by practicing the principle of enjoining the good and forbidding the bad, (*Al-Amr bil Ma'ruf Wa al-Nahy An al-Munkar*) has special status among all his creations. Besides, as an exemplary figure in Islam, Prophet Muhammad exercised the idea of social justice when he mentioned that *nobody has ever eaten a better meal than that which he has earned by working with his own hands* (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Hadith 2072). Prophet Muhammad, as the society leader, emphasized the importance of labour in sustaining one's life and not by following the tradition of inheriting wealth from the family. The Prophet himself was involved with the livestock industry and entrepreneurship at a young age.

In other events, Alatas quoted some significant events from the Prophet's life with regards to the protection of the destitute and downtrodden. He quoted the occasion where The Prophet said *to seek him among the weak ones for they are given provision or are given help only by reason of the presence of the weak ones.* The Prophet championed and defended the right of the poor and continuously reminded the Muslims on their contribution to the society. Additionally, Abu Dharr Al-Ghiffar, a companion of the Prophet who regularly fight for the rights of the poor among the Muslim community said of the Prophet the following *"My friend ordered me to observe*

seven things: he ordered me not to leave the poor and be near them; he ordered me to consider my inferior and not consider my superior; he ordered me to join ties of relationship even when relatives are at a distance; he ordered me not to ask anyone for anything; he ordered me to speak the truth even when it is bitter; he ordered me not to fear for God sake the reproach that anyone may cast on me; and he ordered me to repeat often, 'There is no might and no power accepting God' for these words are part of the treasury under the Throne. The components mentioned in the event signify many social justice principles such as fighting for the rights of the weak, to maintain the relationship of the close and distant relatives, and to remain honest on all occasions. Defending the rights of the poor and oppressed is one of the important duties as a believer who aspires to hold on to the rope of Allah.

### **c) Individuals affecting Syed Hussein Alatas View on Social Justice in Islam**

Syed Hussein Alatas proved that he is not alone in connecting the thoughts of socialism with Islam. With the principles of social justice embedded in the thoughts of these thinkers, Alatas is convinced that social justice elements have always been in existence in the Islamic tradition. For instance, he described Mustafa Husni Assiba'i, a prominent leader of the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslimin*), as one of the proponents of social justice in Islam clearly expounded his ideas on the book entitled Socialism Islam "*Al-Ishtirakiyyah al-Islamiyyah*). According to Alatas, though Mustafa Husni Assiba'i leaves the area of socialism undefined except what is mentioned in Islamic tradition, it does not indicate that socialism cannot be derived from Islam.

Apart from Assiba'i, Alatas also mentioned about the book of Syed Qutb, 'Social Justice in Islam' whereby he touched upon the role of the state in economic life. Alatas mentioned that Syed Qutb is prone to the idea of the state's intervention on private ownership on certain shareable sources in society. Syed Qutb said that private individuals or companies should not own the important sources of water, light, heat, electricity, and coal as the power of monopoly imposes monopolist's will upon the public and allows them to easily conduct disgraceful exploitation to the society. The monopoly of these sources opens the door of subtle oppression in the name of capitalism.

Alatas identified three noticeable trends in the Muslim world from the most influential in his era to the one having the greatest potential for future development. The most influential, according to him, is the capitalist and semi-feudal ideology embedded in Islamic or nationalistic terms. The second is the western mold of nationalist, socialist, and communist and the third, with the highest potential of development is the Islamic reformist strength of which Islamic socialism is a part. However, the third trend can only prevail if the thinkers develop the conception of social justice in Islam. Analysis of the ideology and relatable issues of false consciousness among Muslims and the authority needs to be studied further.

### **Syed Hussein Alatas and Tjokroaminoto**

Syed Hussein Alatas added another prominent figure in supporting the idea of Islam and socialism whereby he quoted Tjokroaminoto in many of his opinions. Alatas agreed that Tjokroaminoto, the leader of Sarekat Islam, then the biggest political party in Indonesia, contributed a lot to the idea of Islam and Socialism. Tjokroaminoto made several differences between the types of socialism where he mentioned that most of the theories of socialism shared the purpose of improving the fate of the poorest, so the human dignity could be lifted and respected by pulling the roots of poverty. Furthermore, the existing theories of socialism condemned the present society, the economy, the legal order, and yearned for reformation though violence is not a necessity in revolt. Syed Hussein Alatas and Tjokroaminoto shared the same thought on the foundation of social justice in Islam, is embedded in the life of Prophet Muhammad through his interactions and communication with the society members. Injustice

was never committed by the Prophet, and he firmly established and promotes justice in different spheres of life.

On human dignity as one of the principles of social justice, both figures take the examples of Prophet Muhammad's engagement with the society members. The Prophet Mohammed raised the status of labour and workers when he worked as a trader prior to his fulltime role as the Prophet and leader of the *ummah*. He would not mind mending his own clothes and shoes despite being descended from the highest Arab aristocracy. Besides, both are on the same opinion that the Prophet raised the status of the slave and were given rights which they never obtained before. They become fellow brothers and sisters of faith, allowed to become members of the family who mistreated them before the emergence of Islam. According to Tjokroaminoto, *"If we Muslims truly understand and practice the teachings of Islam, we cannot avoid becoming a true Democrat and a true socialist"*

In the translation note of the book *Islam and Socialism* published by Gerakbudaya, the translator, Sharifah Afra Alatas (2021) mentioned that Tjokroaminoto was one of the sources of inspiration of Syed Hussein Alatas, as he was among the Muslim figures who had a positive attitude towards socialism. However, Alatas also mentioned that Tjokroaminoto might be influenced by another figure who supports the idea of Islam and socialism, which was Shaikh Mushir Hosain Kidwai, a lawyer from India who also works as the Secretary of the Pan-Islamic Society in London.

### **Polemic of Shaikh Mushir Hosain Kidwai and Tjokroaminoto**

Alatas noticed that the writings of Tjokroaminoto was influenced by Kidwai, as his explanation on the topics were heavily related to Kidwai's writings. In fact, this issue was raised by Kevin Fogg (2019) in his published article on 'Indonesian Islamic Socialism and Its South Asian Roots' in which he proposed that Tjokroaminoto plagiarized Kidwai as both publications are highly similar. Fogg mentioned that out of the eleven chapters of Tjokroaminoto's book, only the final chapter owns most of the original material from Tjokroaminoto, as the chapter expounded mostly about his political organization, Sarekat Islam. Since plagiarism is considered a heavy accusation, as it involves academic integrity of a figure, some might question his intentions to be dishonest (Sharifah Afra Alatas: 2021). However, Fogg himself explained that the practice of Indonesian writers to extract heavily from foreign writings was common. He also added that South Asian Ideas had long impacted Tjokroaminoto's thoughts due to the historical tradition of translating and republishing South Asian works into Indonesian. In comparison to Kidwai's text, Tjokroaminoto's books received more attention and consecutive interest to Indonesian citizens as his text was reprinted seven times from 1946 to 2010, meanwhile Kidwai's English text has not been reprinted (Kevin Fogg: 2019). Despite the issue of plagiarism raised by Fogg, Tjokroaminoto's thoughts on Islam and socialism remains relevant as his book was also published in Malaysia in 2019 hence indicating the possible applicability in the neighbour country.

### **CONCLUSION**

Social injustice events that keep happening before our eyes made us seek the solutions from any relevant and applicable theories from many sources. The western proposed their theories based on the experience of long historical events meanwhile Islamic tradition offers solutions derived from the words of Allah, Al-Quran and the prophetic sunnah of Muhammad SAW. Though several parties commented that divine revelations are no longer applicable in the twenty-first century, the evidence proved the opposites. There are two figures from Malay Archipelago that proposed a relationship between socialism and Islam namely Tjokroaminoto from Indonesia and Syed Hussein Alatas of Malaysia. As the socialism covers the principle of social justice, this paper seeks to explore the thoughts of these prominent figures that mainly

quoted the divine scriptures, Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah. Tjokroaminoto relates social justice to the idea of human dignity, Muslim brotherhood, and equality of the mankind. He also does not degrade the importance of justice to be implemented in marriage institution. Besides, he also highlights the component of fair distribution of wealth and rights to the deserved community members. However, according to several scholars, the thoughts of Tjokroaminoto is mainly inspired by Syeikh Mushir Hosain Kidwai from India. Some of them even suggested that Tjokroaminoto's works is a plagiarism of Kidwai's writings yet elaborated that foreign writings extracted by Indonesian writers was a common scene. Syed Hussein Alatas also noticed this scene and mentioned that Tjokroaminoto's work is heavily inspired by Kidwai. Syed Hussein Alatas, as a prominent sociologist in Malaysia also has similar thoughts with Tjokroaminoto as he supports almost all his ideas on social justice and Islam. Alatas relates many of his opinion on social justice to the fair distribution by quoting several verses from Al-Quran and Al-Sunnah. He also viewed human dignity as one of the important of elements of social justice. These two figures contributed in the notion of social justice in Islam and their ideas should not be neglected in the modern era.

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