

Truth In Two Faces: An Epistemological Examination Of Islamic Law between Material And Formal

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Abstract:

This article explores the epistemological tension between material and formal truth within Islamic law. Islamic legal theory recognizes al-ḥaqq (truth) as an absolute value derived from God, yet in its practical implementation, this truth takes on two forms: material truth and formal truth. Material truth emphasizes the realization of substantive justice, integrating intention, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law), and contextual factors, while formal truth relies on procedural evidence such as shahādah (testimony) and bayyinah (clear proof) to ensure legal certainty and consistency. These dual paradigms often generate conflict in practice, as material truth may demand flexibility beyond formal structures. To resolve this dichotomy, the article proposes the principle of *maslahah mursalah* as an integrative solution. Drawing on Imam al-Ghazali's framework, *maslahah mursalah* serves as both an epistemological bridge and a practical method to balance justice and legality. The study employs a normative-conceptual method, focusing on religious courts in Indonesia. Ultimately, this paper argues that Islamic legal methodology must evolve toward a dialectical approach that harmonizes normative textualism with moral responsiveness. The integration of material and formal truth through *maslahah mursalah* can transform Islamic law into a system that is both principled and adaptive to the demands of justice in modern society.

Keywords: Islamic law, material truth, formal truth, *maslahah mursalah*, al-ḥaqq

Abstrak:

Artikel ini mengkaji ketegangan epistemologis antara kebenaran materiil dan kebenaran formal dalam hukum Islam. Dalam kerangka hukum Islam, al-ḥaqq (kebenaran) dipandang sebagai nilai absolut dari Tuhan, namun dalam praktiknya hadir dalam dua pendekatan: kebenaran materiil yang menekankan keadilan substansial dengan memperhatikan niat, maqāṣid al-syarī'ah (tujuan hukum Islam), dan konteks sosial; serta kebenaran formal yang mengutamakan prosedur melalui alat bukti seperti shahādah (kesaksian) dan bayyinah (bukti nyata) demi kepastian hukum. Ketegangan antara keduanya sering menimbulkan konflik dalam praktik yudisial. Sebagai solusi, artikel ini menawarkan pendekatan *maslahah mursalah* berdasarkan pemikiran Imam al-Ghazali. *Maslahah mursalah* tidak hanya berperan sebagai jembatan epistemologis, tetapi juga sebagai metode praktis untuk menyeimbangkan keadilan dan legalitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode normatif-konseptual dengan fokus pada pengadilan agama di Indonesia. Kesimpulannya, metode hukum Islam perlu diarahkan ke pendekatan dialektis yang mengintegrasikan teks normatif dengan sensitivitas moral. Melalui integrasi kebenaran materiil dan formal lewat prinsip *maslahah*, hukum Islam dapat tampil sebagai

sistem yang berakar pada nilai ilahiah namun tetap responsif terhadap tuntutan keadilan kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: hukum Islam, kebenaran materiil, kebenaran formal, masalah mursalah, al-ḥaqq

INTRODUCTION

Islamic law is a normative system that not only regulates human behavior in a vertical relationship with God, but also in the context of social and positive law. (Iryani, 2017) In Islamic perspective, law is not merely understood as a set of legal-formal rules, but as an expression of the values of truth, justice, and benefit. (Helmi, 2015) One of the fundamental discourses that arise in the study of Islamic law is about how the concept of *truth* is understood and applied in the dynamics of law determination. In this case, Islamic epistemology offers a rich philosophical foundation, especially related to the concept of *al-ḥaqq* which contains metaphysical, moral, and normative dimensions.

Islam views truth (*al-ḥaqq*) as something that is absolute from the side of Allah, (Naurah Luthfiah, 2023) but can be actualized contextually through reason, revelation, and spiritual intuition. In Islamic philosophy, truth is not only determined by conformity with empirical reality, but also by harmony with divine principles. This is an important basis in understanding how Islamic law does not only emphasize aspects of formal legality, but also pays attention to substantial justice or material truth. This approach is also reflected in the methodology of *uṣhul fiqh*, where the emphasis on maqāṣid al-syariah indicates the active involvement of substantial aspects in legal formulation.

In the implementation of Islamic law, two forms of approach to truth are known, namely material truth and formal truth. (Amalia, 2017) Material truth in the context of Islamic law refers to efforts to find real justice based on the reality that occurs. (Dedy Irawan, 2020) Although it is not always included in the procedural aspects. For example, *ijtihad* of qadis (judges) and fatwas of scholars, (Hertino, 2016) which are often the field of actualization of this approach, which emphasizes the importance of intention (*niyyah*), legal purpose (*maqāṣid*), and contextual considerations. In practice, this approach can be more responsive to social conditions and human values, although it risks the subjectivity of legal judgment.

On the other hand, formal truth in Islamic law emphasizes the importance of form, procedure, and textual legitimacy in assessing truth. This approach uses shar'i frameworks such as *shahadah* (testimony) and *bayyinah* (clear evidence) as the basis for determining the law. (Malik, 2012) In the Islamic justice system, the formal approach serves to maintain order, clarity, and measurability of the law, but is often criticized for neglecting substantial truth.

Conflicts between material and formal truth often arise in actual cases. This situation shows the gap between the value of substantial justice and the more rigid legal system. (Irfani, 2020) The fuqaha also differ in their views, with some emphasizing the importance of maintaining procedural legality to prevent legal chaos, while others emphasize contextual justice even at the expense of procedural aspects. This tension is not only conceptual, but also has a direct impact on the legitimacy of Islamic law in the eyes of the public.

In order to bridge the tension, Islamic thinkers developed an integrative approach through the principle of *maslahah mursalah*. (Asmuni, 2024) Imam al-Ghazali, for example, proposed that *maslahah* can be used as a basis for harmonizing between legal texts and contextual justice. This approach aims to ensure that the law does not lose its spiritual and substantial aspects, while not neglecting the systemic imperatives of formal procedures and evidence. Within the framework of *maqāṣid sharia*, this principle becomes an important tool to balance between form and content, between legality and morality, between legal certainty and social justice.

Previous research that discusses similar topics related to the object of this study has indeed been done, but the focus is only limited by one object. Among them are, Shufiatul ihda, with the title "Addressing the Meaning of Truth (Al-Haqq) in the Qur'an." (Shufiatul Ihda, 2024) The focus of his research is aimed to describe the meaning of truth in the Koran which focuses on his study in surah Al-Baqarah verses 146-147 and in surah Yunus verse 32. Where using the book of interpretation Ibn Katsir and Al-Azhar interpretation. In this research we use research methods that are literature, in the type of research library or also called (Library Research). Which is where researchers use books in collecting data. Then Naurah Lutfiah. "Philosophy and Criteria of Truth in Islamic and Western Perspectives." (Naurah Luthfiah, 2023) The focus of his research is to dissect the meaning of philosophy in understanding truth, namely according to Islamic and Western views. Where there shows that the criteria of truth in Islam rests on the principle of *tawhid* which recognizes absolute truth belongs only to God, in contrast to the West which relies on the senses and ratios as the main benchmark of truth, using a literature approach.

Looking at the two previous studies, the novelty of this research lies in the integrative approach offered in dissecting the epistemological and practical relations between material and formal truth in Islamic law. If previously Islamic legal studies tended to separate these two forms of truth in a normative-textual or social-contextual framework, this article seeks to propose a dialectical model that emphasizes the importance of *maslahah* as an epistemological and practical bridge. In addition, novelty is also seen from the effort to make *maslahah mursalah* not only a normative instrument, but also a critical paradigm in building a responsive and transformative Islamic legal system.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses normative research. (Ahmad Rozidi, 2024) because it examines internal problems present in Islamic law and Indonesian positive law. In this case, it examines the concept of truth in Islamic law, namely formal and material truth, with a focus on analyzing its application in the judicial sphere, particularly in religious courts in Indonesia. Then, a conceptual approach is used. The conceptual approach is used to help researchers understand the philosophical foundations and principles of Imam Ghazali's *Maslahah Mursalah* theory, which is used as a bridge to harmonize the two perspectives of truth in examining this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Truth in Islamic Epistemology

The concept of Islamic law in the perspective of sharia cannot be separated from a basic understanding of the definition of Islamic law itself. In general, Islamic law is defined as a set of provisions derived from the revelation of Allah and the sunnah of the Prophet that aims to regulate human life as a whole, both in aspects of worship and muamalah. (Palmawati Tahir, 2018) This law is divine because it comes directly from God, but in practice it requires human reasoning through *ijtihad*. Therefore, in Islamic epistemology, law is not only normative, but also reflects the dynamics of rationality and the historical context of Muslim society.

In the Islamic view, the concept of truth is known as *al-ḥaqq*, which does not simply mean "true" logically or empirically, but also contains ontological and transcendental values. (Shufiatul Ihda, 2024) *Al-ḥaqq* in Islam refers to something that is in accordance with God's will and true reality. (Ayyubi, 2018) Truth is not only measured through the instruments of reason and the five senses as in Western epistemology, but also through revelation which is the main source of knowledge in Islam. Thus, truth in Islam is comprehensive, covering rational, spiritual and moral aspects.

In the view of Islamic philosophical figures, for example, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and Al-Ghazali have their own views in understanding the concept of truth. (Ridlo, 2023) Al-Farabi views truth as the compatibility between human reason and active reason, while Ibn Sina emphasizes more on the ability of the intellect to capture immaterial reality. Meanwhile, Al-Ghazali combines rational and spiritual approaches, emphasizing that true truth can only be achieved by purifying the soul and opening the heart to divine light. This philosophical approach shows that truth cannot be separated from the intellectual process as well as spiritual experience.

As for the *ushul fiqh* approach, the concept of truth is more methodological and absolute. (Dedi, 2020) *Ushul fiqh* as a discipline that discusses the methodology of extracting Islamic law rests on the principle that legal truth can be achieved through valid reasoning of the *nash* (Qur'an and Sunnah). (Hayatan, 2019) Rules such as *istinbat*, *qiyas*, and *ijma'* are epistemological instruments used to approach legal truth. Although the results of a *mujtahid's ijtihad* are not always absolutely correct, the process is still appreciated as a form of effort to achieve *al-ḥaqq* contextually.

It is important to understand that in the Islamic perspective, not all forms of truth are singular and absolute. (Saifuddin, 2018) There is a difference between absolute truth that comes from God and relative truth that is achieved through human reason. Therefore, the Islamic legal system recognizes the space for differences of opinion (*ikhtilaf*) as a consequence of the limitations of human reason in capturing God's intentions perfectly. In fact, this plurality of views is a richness in the Islamic legal tradition and shows the depth of Islamic epistemology that recognizes human limitations while leading to divine truth.

Therefore, we can narrate that in terms of sharia, Islam comes with a unique approach to understanding truth, both in the context of philosophy and law. By

placing revelation as the main foundation, Islam integrates reason and spirituality in the search for truth. Islamic law is not simply a product of legal-formal logic, but is the result of the interaction between the divine text and human reality. Therefore, understanding truth in Islam requires a holistic view, which is able to combine God's decrees, the ability of reason, and sensitivity to the social and moral context of mankind.

Material Truth in Islamic Law

Material truth in Islamic law refers to efforts to find the essential and substantial truth behind an event or legal issue. (Yasin, 2016) In the perspective of Islamic law, material truth is not only limited to external facts that can be proven formally, but also considers the inner and moral aspects that accompany it. This means that in the process of determining the law, truth is not only assessed from the suitability of the procedure, but from the accuracy of the substance in accordance with the principles of Islamic law. This is in line with the principle of substantive justice which is at the core of Islamic law.

In practice, material truth becomes an important foothold in the process of *ijtihad qadi* (judge's *ijtihad*) as well as in the determination of fatwas of scholars. (Aisyah, 2018) When facing a case that is not explicitly explained in the *nash* (text of the Qur'an and Hadith), the *mujtahids* are required to explore the deepest meaning of the law through an approach that takes into account the context, the purpose of *sharia*, and the social conditions of society. This kind of *ijtihad* aims not only to enforce textual laws, but also to ensure that the laws applied are able to achieve justice and benefit for the people.

One concrete example of the application of material truth is the role of intention (*niyyah*) in various laws of worship and *muamalah*. (Rufaida, 2020) In Islam, intention is the basis for the acceptance of a deed. For example, in the case of someone who gives away property, whether it is called alms or debt depends on the intention of the giver, even though outwardly the form can be the same. Therefore, material truth in this context is not only judged by external actions, but also by a person's inner motivation, which cannot always be proven empirically, but is decisive in determining the law.

The principle of *maqashid sharia* is also an important representation of material truth. *Maqashid sharia* are the main objectives that Islamic law seeks to achieve, namely safeguarding religion, soul, mind, offspring and property. (Rialita, 2023) In making legal decisions, a *qadi* or scholar needs to consider whether the law chosen actually leads to the protection of these five goals. When the law is formally enforceable, but actually causes harm to one of the *maqashid*, then the approach is considered contrary to the material truth.

One of the results of *ijtihad* that also reflects the spirit of material truth is *istihsan*, which is leaving a general law in order to choose a law that is more in line with justice in a particular case. (Chadziq, 2019) It can be argued that *istihsan* does not contradict the *Shari'ah*, but rather strengthens the flexibility of Islamic law to remain contextual and relevant. For example, in the case of a doctor who violates the prohibition against touching members of the opposite sex in order to save a patient's life, *istihsan* allows for an exception to the law for the sake of greater *maslahat*, reflecting an alignment with the substance of truth rather than the

prevailing linear procedure.

Thus, material truth in Islamic law is not just a theoretical concept, but an important foundation in shaping a legal system that is fair, contextual, and oriented towards the benefit of the people. Through instruments such as intention, maqashid sharia, and istihsan, Islamic law shows elasticity and depth that can answer the complexity of social reality. This makes Islamic law not only a normative system, but also an ethical and spiritual system rooted in the search for the true meaning of justice.

Formal Truth in Islamic Law

In the Islamic legal system, in addition to emphasizing substantial or material aspects, formal aspects also receive important attention. Formal righteousness refers to the validity of an action or legal decision based on the form and procedure that has been established in substance. (Hoesein, 2012) This means that an action is considered valid if it meets administrative and procedural requirements, regardless of the content or motivation behind it. This focus on form aims to create order and consistency in the implementation of the law. Thus, Islamic law is not only concerned with the moral essence, but also the legitimacy of forms and procedures.

The distinctive feature of formal truth in Islamic law is seen in the importance of evidentiary procedures and formal legality in deciding a case. (Habibi, 2020) Procedures such as the submission of shahadah (testimony), the use of bayyinah (evidence), and the fulfillment of the pillars and conditions in the contract are examples of how forms and rules become the basis for judgment. In this context, the validity of the law is strongly influenced by its formal structure, not merely the content or purpose of the action. This aspect shows that Islam as a legal system has a strict and structured administrative mechanism.

One of the real applications of formal truth in Islamic justice is the use of evidence in the form of testimony (shahadah). (Habibi, 2020) In Islamic law, the testimony of two fair men can be the basis for legal decisions, although materially it does not necessarily reflect the true truth. In addition, bayyinah or concrete evidence such as documents, evidence, or the confession of the defendant is an important component in testing the legality of a case. In other words, judges cannot make verdicts based on intuition or assumptions, but must adhere to a legally valid evidentiary structure.

This formal approach has advantages in maintaining procedural fairness. (Sutiyoso, 2010) *First*, it ensures that there are fixed standards that all parties can follow, thus preventing arbitrary practices. *Second*, this approach provides protection for the rights of litigants through a clear and measurable system. When all processes are carried out according to procedures, legal decisions can be said to be fair from a formal perspective, although they may not necessarily reflect substantial justice. This is especially important in a judicial system that requires objectivity and consistency.

However, the formal truth-based approach also has limitations that cannot be ignored. One of the main weaknesses is the potential to ignore substantial truth when the focus is too heavy on administrative aspects. (Imeltha, 2024) For example, a guilty defendant may be acquitted due to insufficient formal evidence,

even though morally he has clearly done wrong. This situation shows that procedural justice is not always in line with true justice. Therefore, reliance on formal evidence alone can obscure the essence of justice itself.

On the other hand, the application of formal law often raises ethical dilemmas, especially in cases that are difficult to prove textually but have strong indications contextually. (Hasan, 2019) This poses a challenge for Islamic judges who are required to balance between formal legality and substantial wisdom. In the modern context, some Islamic judicial systems have tried to overcome this limitation by expanding the scope of interpretation and using the maqāṣid sharia approach, the general purpose of sharia, which is more flexible in accommodating the value of justice.

Thus, formal truth in Islamic law is an important pillar that ensures order and legality in legal practice. However, this approach needs to be combined with considerations of substantial justice so that the law does not lose its moral and ethical soul. In the contemporary context, the development of an Islamic legal methodology that is able to combine these two approaches is an urgent need. This will not only enrich the treasures of Islamic law, but also strengthen its relevance in answering the challenges of justice in the modern era.

Tension between Material and Formal Truth

The tension between material and formal truth in Islamic law is a serious issue that often arises in judicial practice. (Saleh, 2025) Material truth emphasizes the achievement of ultimate justice, while formal truth focuses on conformity to applicable legal procedures. When these two approaches clash, a dilemma arises between following technical rules or upholding the values of true justice. In the context of Islamic law, this debate becomes even more complex as it involves both ethical and theological dimensions. Therefore, it is important to understand how this tension occurs in the realm of praxis and theory.

One obvious example can be seen in judicial cases where evidence is rejected due to procedural flaws, even though the evidence demonstrates substantial truth. (Saleh, buku referensi sistem peradilan di Indonesia: proses, hak, dan keadilan, 2024) For example, a person's testimony may be rejected because it does not meet formal requirements, such as the number of witnesses or the moral status of the witness. In these circumstances, substantive truth is overlooked due to attachment to formal forms. In fact, the essence of Islamic law itself strongly emphasizes the value of justice and the benefit of the people. When procedure overrides substance, the law can lose its ethical power.

The debate between material and formal truth has been going on since classical times in the discussion of fuqaha. (ZTF, 2008) Some scholars emphasize the importance of legal form and legality because they are considered to maintain order and certainty. Others, however, argued that the law should not lose its spirit, which is justice and the objectives of Sharia. This difference in approach reflects different perspectives on the function of law: whether as a technical device or as a moral tool. This tension continues to be the subject of study in ushul fiqh and Islamic legal philosophy.

In the contemporary context, this kind of debate often arises when Islamic law is confronted with a modern judicial system where the point is between formal

procedures and legality. (Saleh, hukum dan peradilan di Indonesia: kajian teori dan praktik hukum di indonesia, 2025) For example, in religious courts in Indonesia, judges often have to weigh between following national legal procedures or considering the value of justice according to fiqh. When the procedural aspect is too dominant, there is a risk that Islamic law is perceived as merely copying positive law without regard to its substantial value. This can create the perception that Islamic law is incapable of delivering true justice.

The impact of this tension is also felt in the legitimacy of Islamic law in the eyes of the community. When court decisions are perceived as not reflecting a sense of justice, trust in the institution of sharia law can decline. (Putri, 2023) People begin to question the relevance of Islamic law if it is unable to respond to real problems wisely and fairly. Therefore, maintaining a balance between form and substance is important for the sustainability of the authority of Islamic law. Legal legitimacy is not only determined by procedure, but also by social acceptance of its justice.

Therefore, there needs to be a methodological update in Islamic legal reasoning, so as not to be trapped in a rigid dichotomy between formalism and substantialism. Judges and Islamic jurists must be trained to understand maqāṣid sharia as a foundation in interpreting legal procedures. In this way, formal truth is no longer an obstacle to the achievement of material justice, but rather a supporting instrument. Legal procedures are not abandoned, but functioned proportionally. This is what is called an integrative approach in the practice of Islamic law.

Thus, the tension between material and formal truth is not to be contradicted absolutely, but understood as a dialectical space towards a just and relevant law. Islamic law needs to place the value of justice as the main goal without neglecting the importance of orderly procedures. This awareness must be embedded in the legal education system and contemporary fiqh reform. Harmonization between form and content is an important step in maintaining the authority of Islamic law in modern society. This tension is a challenge, as well as an opportunity towards the improvement of Islamic law in the future.

Reconciliation Efforts: *maslahah mursalah* as a Meeting Point

Reconciliation efforts between textual Islamic law and the demands of contextual justice often become a tug-of-war in legal praxis. In this context, the theory of *maslahah mursalah* developed by Imam al-Ghazali is a potential meeting point. (Muslim, 2023) This concept departs from the assumption that Islamic law does not only aim to maintain form, but also to ensure the benefit of the people. That way, *maslahah mursalah* is not just a complement, but an ethical framework in responding to social dynamics. It is present to maintain the relevance of sharia without ignoring the text.

Imam al-Ghazali defined *maslahah mursalah* as a benefit that is not explicitly mentioned in the text, but does not contradict it. This means that if a human interest is considered important to protect, and it is not rejected by the shar'i argument, then it can be used as a basis for law. In this case, Ghazali still places the text as the authority, but opens up space for interpretation based on

benefit. This shows that *maslahah mursalah* is not a form of legal liberalization, but rather a method of maintaining the *maqāṣid* of *sharia*. This approach balances norms and reality.

One of the main strengths of this theory is its flexibility in dealing with the times. When the text does not explicitly address a contemporary issue, *maslahah mursalah* can be a relevant solution. Ghazali distinguished between valid and invalid *maslahah*, emphasizing that *maslahah* must be in line with the basic principles of *Shari'ah*. Therefore, it is not an arbitrary justification, but remains bound to the objectives of Islamic law. This is a form of epistemological moderation in Islamic law.

As a concrete example, in the realm of family law, this theory has been widely applied in contemporary cases. For example, in the drafting of the Child Protection Act or the limitation of the age of marriage in some Muslim countries. Textually, there may not be an explicit argument that mentions the minimum age of marriage. However, in order to safeguard the interests of children - such as education, health, and the right to protection - age restrictions become *shar'i* legal through *maslahah mursalah*. This is a form of contextual justice that remains within the normative frame.

Another relevant case is the legal judgment against a husband who does not support his wife for a certain period of time. In classical *fiqh*, the divorce process is not always facilitated except in very limited circumstances. However, with the *maslahah mursalah* approach, this provision can be revised to protect women's rights and avoid injustice. Although not explicitly regulated in the text, the principle of protecting the soul, dignity, and honor is the basis for consideration. With this, the law becomes more adaptive but still has a *shar'i* meaning.

The *maslahah mursalah* approach also shows how Islamic law is not closed to social change. (Hidayatullah, 2018) It is not rigid, but alive and contextual, as long as it remains within the corridors of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. This dismisses the notion that Islamic law is only legalistic and static. On the contrary, with the principle of *maslahah mursalah*, the law is able to answer the needs of the times while maintaining divine values. Herein lies the specialty of Ghazali's approach as an epistemological bridge.

From a methodological point of view, *maslahah mursalah* creates harmony between normative approaches and empirical reality. (Muslim, 2023) It gives room for rational and moral considerations, without having to rule out revelation. In the realm of *fatwa* and legislation, this principle is widely used by contemporary scholars as a form of social *ijtihad*. In the midst of the challenges of modernity, *maslahah mursalah* is an effective means to avoid conflict between text and context. This approach ensures that Islamic law remains alive and solutive.

Thus, *maslahah mursalah* according to Imam Ghazali is not only a legal theory, but also an ethical mechanism that integrates spirituality, justice and humanity. It is proof that Islamic law is highly adaptable, without losing its normative identity. In a changing world, this approach becomes an important tool to create substantive justice. As a meeting point between text and reality, *maslahah mursalah* offers a balanced and transformative solution. This is the inclusive and

progressive face of Islamic law.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this discussion shows that Islamic law is not only a normative system based on text, but also holds epistemological wealth in understanding the truth. The two main approaches, namely material truth and formal truth, are a mirror of the tension between aspects of substance and procedure in the practice of Islamic law. Truth in Islam (al-ḥaqq) is understood as something that comes from God, but in practice it needs to be bridged with reason, intuition, and social experience.

Material truth in Islamic law emphasizes true justice and the purpose of sharia (maqashid sharia). This approach comes through qadi ijihad, consideration of intention (niyyah), and the use of the istihsan method. Through this framework, Islamic law is more adaptive to the complexity of social reality. On the other hand, formal truth focuses more on legality and procedures such as testimony (shahadah) and concrete evidence (bayyinah), with the aim of maintaining consistency and order in the justice system.

The tension between these two approaches often creates dilemmas in the Islamic legal system, especially when formal law fails to address contextual justice. Some scholars emphasize procedural legality, while others place justice as a top priority. The imbalance between the two has the potential to undermine the legitimacy of Islamic law, especially in the eyes of a society that demands laws that are not only legal, but also just and humane.

As an effort to harmonize, the principle of maslaḥah mursalah is a solution that bridges form and content in Islamic law. Imam al-Ghazali's idea of the importance of the benefit of the people as a basis for legal considerations shows that Islamic law has an internal mechanism to transform without losing its identity. Through this approach, Islamic law can remain normative but still responsive to the demands of the times.

Finally, integration between material and formal approaches is a must in the development of equitable Islamic law. A legal paradigm that only favors one aspect will risk creating inequality, both in legal validity and social acceptance. Therefore, the development of Islamic legal methodology in the future needs to be directed towards a holistic and dialogical approach, by making maslaḥah mursalah as an epistemological bridge between text and context.

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