



The Growing Trend of Artificial Intelligence in the Modern Era: Causes, Applications, Impacts and Islamic Teachings

1. Mr. Saleem Ullah Masroor

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Lakki Marwat, Pakistan.

Email: SaleemUllah.masroor@gmail.com

2. Dr. Mufti Kaleem Ullah

Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Lakki Marwat, Pakistan.

Email: kaleem@ulm.edu.pk

3. Mr. Abdur Rauf

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Lakki Marwat, Pakistan.

Email: raufkpk363@gmail.com

Abstract

This analytical study examines the rapid growth of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the modern era, exploring its causes, applications, and multifaceted impacts on humanity, in light of Islamic teachings derived from the Quran and the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. AI technologies including machine learning, neural networks, and large language models are transforming every sector: healthcare, education, finance, transportation, and warfare. The causes include big data availability, increased computational power, algorithmic advancements, and profit-driven investment. However, AI also presents serious challenges: job displacement, algorithmic bias, privacy erosion, autonomous weapons, loss of human agency, and ethical dilemmas regarding machine consciousness. Islamic teachings provide comprehensive guidance: the prohibition of harm (la darar), the obligation of accountability (mas'uliyah), preservation of human dignity (karamah), and the principle that benefits should outweigh harms (jalb al-masalih wa dar' al-mafasid). This study analyzes seven key areas of AI ethics in light of Islamic sources, integrating both Western scholarly quotations and Islamic primary texts. The findings reveal that Islam encourages beneficial innovation but prohibits applications that cause injustice, deception, or harm to individuals or society. The study concludes with eight findings and five actionable recommendations for ethical AI development grounded in Islamic values.

Keywords : Artificial Intelligence, Islamic ethics, AI governance, Seerah, technology and Islam.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as the most transformative technology of the 21st century. Defined as the ability of machines to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence learning, reasoning, problem-solving, perception, and language understanding AI is rapidly reshaping every aspect of human life. From self-driving cars and medical diagnosis algorithms to chatbot assistants and autonomous weapons, AI systems are increasingly making decisions that affect human well-being, employment, privacy, and even life and death. The global AI market is projected to reach nearly two trillion dollars by 2030, driven by big data, cloud computing, advanced neural networks, and massive corporate investment.

However, this rapid growth raises profound ethical, social, and spiritual questions. Will AI displace millions of workers? Can algorithms be fair and unbiased? Who is accountable when an autonomous system causes harm? What happens to human dignity when machines mimic consciousness? Can AI be used



for surveillance and oppression? How should Muslims and Islamic societies respond to these challenges?

The Quran and the Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ provide timeless principles for evaluating new technologies. Islam does not reject innovation per se; rather, it judges actions by their intentions, means, and consequences. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever innovates a good practice (sunnah hasanah) in Islam has its reward and the reward of those who act upon it." However, he also warned against innovation that leads to harm or deviation. Islamic ethics are based on five universal objectives (maqasid al-shari'ah): protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. AI must be evaluated against these objectives. This study analyzes the causes, applications, and impacts of AI, followed by seven thematic sections integrating Islamic teachings and modern scholarship.

Causes of the Growing Trend of Artificial Intelligence

The rapid rise of AI is not accidental. Several converging factors have accelerated its development and adoption. First, the exponential growth of digital data (big data) from the internet, social media, sensors, and IoT devices provides the fuel for training machine learning models. Second, advances in computational power particularly GPUs and cloud computing have made it possible to train large neural networks efficiently. Third, breakthroughs in algorithms, especially deep learning and transformer architectures (e.g., GPT, BERT), have dramatically improved AI performance on complex tasks. Fourth, massive investment from technology companies (Google, Microsoft, OpenAI) and governments seeking economic and military advantage has created a competitive "AI arms race." Fifth, the profitability of automation reducing labor costs and increasing efficiency drives corporate adoption. This section analyzes these causes through Islamic and contemporary lenses. Imam Muslim narrates that

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى قَالَ: مَنْ عَادَى لِي وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ آذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ، وَمَا تَقَرَّبَ إِلَيَّ عَبْدِي بِشَيْءٍ أَحَبَّ إِلَيَّ مِنْهُ إِلَّا مِمَّا افْتَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ، وَمَا يَزَالُ عَبْدِي يَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَيَّ بِالتَّوَّافِلِ حَتَّى أُحِبَّهُ، فَإِذَا أَحْبَبْتُهُ كُنْتُ سَبْعَهُ الَّذِي يَسْمَعُ بِهِ، وَبَصَرَهُ الَّذِي يُبْصِرُ بِهِ، وَيَدَهُ الَّتِي يَبْطِشُ بِهَا، وَرِجْلَهُ الَّتِي يَمْشِي بِهَا، وَلَكِنْ سَأَلَنِي الْأَعْيُنُ، وَلَكِنْ اسْتَعَاذَنِي الْأَعْيُنُ¹

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Allah said: Whoever shows enmity to a friend of Mine, I declare war against him. My servant does not draw near to Me with anything more beloved than what I have made obligatory. My servant continues to draw near with voluntary deeds until I love him. When I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks."

¹ Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Humility, Chapter on Allah's Words, Dar Ibn Kathir, Beirut, 1423 AH, vol. 8, p. 105, hadith no. 6502



This sacred hadith (hadith qudsi) highlights that human capabilities (hearing, sight, action) are gifts from Allah. AI seeks to replicate or extend these capabilities. The hadith teaches that technology should be used for drawing closer to Allah, not for rebellion. The phrase "I become his hearing, his sight, his hand" indicates that a righteous servant uses all faculties in obedience to Allah. AI, as an extension of human intellect and action, must be developed and used within divine boundaries. The causes of AI big data, computing power, algorithms are neutral in themselves. The Islamic question is: are these tools being used to fulfill obligations (worship, justice, charity) or to enable harm? The competitive race in AI is concerning if it prioritizes profit and power over ethics. Muslims must ask: does this AI application enhance human dignity or diminish it? The hadith warns that Allah opposes those who oppose His friends (the righteous). An AI developed to oppress people, spy on innocents, or spread deception would incur divine enmity. Nick Bostrom, Professor at Oxford University, states

"The fundamental challenge of the coming age is not technological but ethical. We need to ensure that AI systems are aligned with human values, including the long-term flourishing of conscious beings.²"

Bostrom, a leading scholar on AI existential risk, identifies the core challenge as ethical, not technical. This aligns perfectly with Islamic thought, which prioritizes ethics (akhlaq) over pure utility. The causes of AI—data, computation, algorithms—are technical; but the driving force behind rapid adoption is often economic competition and military advantage. Bostrom warns that without ethical alignment, superintelligent AI could cause catastrophic harm. From an Islamic perspective, this "alignment problem" is actually a problem of moral framework. Islamic ethics provides a robust value system: do no harm, act justly, preserve dignity, and consider consequences. The hadith "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself" (Bukhari) extends to all humanity, and by analogy, to sentient AI if such emerges. Bostrom's call for "long-term flourishing of conscious beings" resonates with the Islamic concept of *maslahah* (public interest) and preserving future generations. The rapid growth of AI without ethical guardrails is a violation of the Islamic principle of avoiding harm (*la darar*). Stuart Russell, Professor at UC Berkeley, states

"The risk is not that AI will become evil. The risk is that we will build AI systems that are highly competent but have the wrong objectives. We need to build AI that is uncertain about human preferences and deferential to humans.³"

² Nick Bostrom, *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*, Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 256

³ Stuart Russell, *Human Compatible: Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control*, Viking, 2019, p. 173



Russell argues that the danger is not malevolent AI but misaligned objectives. This is precisely the Islamic concern: intention (niyyah) and outcome ('aqlah) matter. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Actions are judged by intentions" (Bukhari). If an AI system is designed with a narrow, harmful, or unjust objective (e.g., maximize engagement through outrage, optimize profits through exploitation, or kill enemies without discrimination), it will cause immense harm despite technical competence. The causes of AI's rapid growth include the pursuit of efficiency at any cost. Russell's solution—AI that is uncertain about human preferences and deferential to humans—reflects the Islamic principle that humans are vicegerents (khalifah) of Allah, and machines must remain subservient tools, not autonomous decision-makers. Islam teaches that final authority rests with humans accountable to Allah. An AI that overrides human judgment or hides its reasoning violates this principle. Muslim AI developers must ensure systems are transparent, accountable, and designed to serve human well-being as defined by divine guidance.

Applications of Artificial Intelligence

AI applications have penetrated nearly every sector of modern life. In healthcare, AI diagnoses diseases from medical images, predicts patient deterioration, and discovers new drugs. In education, personalized tutoring systems, automated grading, and adaptive learning platforms transform classrooms. In finance, algorithmic trading, fraud detection, and credit scoring rely on AI. In transportation, self-driving cars, route optimization, and traffic management use AI. In manufacturing, predictive maintenance and robotic assembly lines increase efficiency. In agriculture, crop monitoring, yield prediction, and autonomous tractors are deployed. In warfare, autonomous drones, target recognition systems, and cyber AI weapons are developed. In media, content recommendation, deepfake generation, and automated journalism are common. In customer service, chatbots and virtual assistants handle millions of interactions. In legal systems, AI assists in document review and sentencing recommendations. Each application raises ethical questions. This section analyzes seven key applications through Islamic teachings. The Holy Quran

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ⁴

"And cooperate in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate in sin and transgression."

This Quranic command provides the fundamental ethical filter for all AI applications. Every AI system is a form of cooperation between developers, data providers, investors, and users. The question is: does this application enable righteousness (birr) and piety (taqwa), or does it enable sin (ithm) and transgression (udwan)? AI for medical diagnosis that saves lives is cooperation

⁴ Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:2



in righteousness. AI for drone warfare that kills civilians is cooperation in transgression. AI for personalized education helping children learn is righteousness. AI for surveillance that oppresses political dissent is transgression. The verse demands that Muslims actively evaluate and choose AI applications accordingly. This is not passive acceptance of technology but active moral engagement. For example, AI used to optimize energy consumption (smart grids) is righteous; AI used to maximize addictive engagement on social media (profit over mental health) is sinful. The verse also implies that even if an AI tool can be used for good, if its primary purpose or likely outcome is harm, it should be rejected. Islamic ethics judges the means and the ends. Fei-Fei Li, Co-Director of Stanford's Human-Centered AI Institute, states

"We must develop AI that augments humans, not replaces them; that is transparent and accountable; that protects privacy and civil liberties; and that benefits all of humanity, not just a wealthy few."⁵

Li, a pioneering AI researcher, advocates for "human-centered AI" that augments rather than replaces humans. This aligns strongly with Islamic teachings on human dignity (karamah). Allah says: (وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ) (We have honored the children of Adam, Al-Isra: 70). AI applications that replace humans without necessity (e.g., mass layoffs for automation) violate this dignity, especially when they cause poverty and family breakdown. Li's call for transparency and accountability echoes Islamic principles of trust (amanah) and responsibility (mas'uliyah). The Prophet ﷺ said: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock" (Bukhari). AI developers are shepherds over their algorithms. Li's emphasis on benefiting all humanity, not just the wealthy, reflects the Islamic prohibition of hoarding (ihtikar) and the obligation of justice ('adl). Many AI applications currently serve only wealthy nations or corporations. Muslims must advocate for equitable access to beneficial AI (health, education) while opposing AI that entrenches inequality (predatory lending, discriminatory hiring). The Quran commands: (إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ) (Allah commands justice and excellence, Al-Nahl: 90). Cathy O'Neil, data scientist and author, states

"Algorithms are opinions embedded in mathematics. They are not neutral. They encode the biases and values of their creators. We need to audit algorithms for fairness and hold their creators accountable."⁶

O'Neil powerfully argues that algorithms are not objective truth machines but reflections of human choices: what data to include, what outcomes to optimize, what features to weight. This is critical for Islamic ethics because it

⁵ Fei-Fei Li, "Human-Centered AI," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2021, p. 62

⁶ Cathy O'Neil, *Weapons of Math Destruction*, Crown Publishing, 2016, p. 38



means AI applications can embody injustice (zulm) if not carefully designed. For example, predictive policing algorithms trained on biased arrest data perpetuate racism. Credit scoring algorithms that exclude marginalized groups cause economic oppression. Hiring algorithms that screen out women or minorities violate the Islamic principle that believers are judged by piety, not race or gender (Quran 49:13). The Prophet ﷺ explicitly forbade unjust discrimination. O'Neil's call for auditing algorithms for fairness is exactly the Islamic principle of accountability (hisbah). Every AI application must be examined for hidden bias, disparate impact, and lack of transparency. Muslims involved in AI development must ensure their algorithms do not encode sin (zulm, bias, deception). If an algorithm is found to cause harm, it must be corrected or discontinued, even if profitable. The hadith "There is no harm and no reciprocating harm" (Abu Dawud) applies directly: an algorithm that causes systemic harm is prohibited.

Impacts of AI on Employment and Economy

One of the most immediate and widely felt impacts of AI is on employment. Automation, powered by AI, is replacing human labor in manufacturing, logistics, customer service, data entry, accounting, legal research, journalism, and even creative fields like art and music writing. The World Economic Forum predicts that by 2025, AI will displace 85 million jobs but create 97 million new ones, though the transition will be painful, especially for low-skilled workers. However, other studies warn of structural unemployment, wage polarization, and increased inequality. Islamic economics emphasizes dignified work ('amal), fair wages, social justice, and the prohibition of hoarding resources. The Prophet ﷺ said: "No one eats better food than that which comes from the work of his own hands" (Bukhari). This section analyzes AI's impact on employment through Islamic economic principles and contemporary scholarship. Imam Bukhari narrates that

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: مَا أَكَلَ أَحَدٌ طَعَامًا قَطُّ خَيْرًا مِنْ أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْ عَمَلٍ يَدِهِ، وَإِنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ
كَانَ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ عَمَلٍ يَدِهِ⁷

The Prophet ﷺ said: "No one has ever eaten better food than that which comes from the work of his own hands. The Prophet of Allah, Dawud (David), used to eat from the work of his own hands."

This hadith establishes the dignity of work and self-reliance. AI-driven automation that destroys jobs without providing alternatives strikes at this dignity. The Prophet ﷺ praised manual labor (Dawud was a blacksmith). If AI replaces a worker's honest labor, causing unemployment, hunger, and loss of self-respect, that is a serious harm. Islam does not forbid technology or efficiency, but

⁷ Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Business Transactions, Chapter on the Prophet's ﷺ Eating from Work of His Hands, Dar Ibn Kathir, Beirut, 1423 AH, vol. 3, p. 214, hadith no. 2072



it does forbid causing unnecessary harm (la darar). The burden of transition must be managed justly. Corporations and governments adopting AI have an Islamic obligation to retrain workers, provide social safety nets, and create new employment pathways. The hadith also implies that work is not merely a means to income but an act of worship when done well and honestly. Replacing meaningful human work with machine automation for trivial luxuries (e.g., robot waiters in restaurants where humans need jobs) is questionable. However, AI eliminating dangerous or degrading labor (e.g., mining, toxic waste handling) is praiseworthy because it protects human life and health. The key is intention and outcome: does AI serve human flourishing or merely maximize profit at human expense? Klaus Schwab, Founder of World Economic Forum, states

"We stand on the brink of a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work, and relate to one another. The response must be integrated and comprehensive, involving all stakeholders. We need a 'human-centered' approach that puts people first."⁸

Schwab acknowledges that the AI revolution is not merely economic but social and existential. His call for a "human-centered" approach mirrors Islamic ethics. The Quran states that Allah created humans as vicegerents (khalifah) on earth (2:30). Technology, including AI, must serve this vicegerency, not undermine it. Schwab's insistence on involving "all stakeholders" aligns with Islamic principles of consultation (shura) and justice for the vulnerable. When AI displaces workers, those workers must have a voice. Their families' welfare is a collective obligation (fard kifayah). The Prophet ﷺ said: "He who does not show mercy to our young, nor honor our elders, nor enjoin good and forbid evil, is not one of us." In the AI context, mercy includes protecting livelihoods. Schwab's warning that AI will alter "the way we relate to one another" is significant because Islam places high value on community (ummah) and human relationships (silat al-rahim). If AI substitutes machine interaction for human connection (e.g., AI caregivers for the elderly, AI companions for lonely people), that may erode essential human bonds. Muslims must ensure AI enhances, not replaces, authentic human relationships. Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson, MIT economists, state

"The current path of AI development risks generating extreme inequality and social disruption. We need to redirect innovation toward 'human-complementary' AI that raises the productivity and bargaining power of workers, not replaces them."⁹

Acemoglu and Johnson warn that AI is currently designed to replace workers rather than complement them, leading to wealth concentration and social unrest. From an Islamic perspective, extreme inequality (tafawut fasid) is

⁸ Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, Crown Business, 2016, p. 8

⁹ Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson, *Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity*, PublicAffairs, 2023, p. 312



condemned. The Quran says wealth should not circulate only among the rich (59:7). The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others." AI that benefits only its owners (billionaire tech founders) while displacing millions violates this. Acemoglu and Johnson's proposal for "human-complementary AI" aligns with Islamic economics, which values work and fair wages. Examples of complementary AI: tools that help doctors diagnose better (increasing their productivity), not replace them; software that helps teachers personalize lessons, not replace them. Zakat (obligatory charity) is one Islamic mechanism to redistribute wealth, but preventing unjust displacement is better. Islamic societies should prioritize AI research that empowers workers (e.g., exoskeletons for laborers, translation tools for migrant workers) over AI that replaces them for shareholder profit. The hadith "Whoever removes a worldly grief from a believer, Allah will remove from him a grief of the Day of Judgment" (Muslim) applies to creating dignified AI-era jobs.

AI and Privacy (Data Ethics)

The more data an AI has especially personal, behavioral, and biometric data the more powerful it becomes. This has led to unprecedented surveillance capitalism: companies like Google, Facebook, and Amazon collect, analyze, and sell intimate details of billions of people's lives. Governments use AI for mass surveillance, facial recognition, and social credit systems. This raises profound questions about privacy, consent, and power. Islam places great emphasis on privacy (satar), protection of personal information, prohibition of spying (tajassus), and the sanctity of the home and communication. The Quran commands: ﴿وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا﴾ (Do not spy, 49:12). The Prophet ﷺ forbade entering a home without permission and even looking inside. This section analyzes AI privacy challenges through Islamic sources. The Holy Quran

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ ۖ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَب بَّعْضُكُم بَعْضًا¹⁰

"O you who have believed, avoid much suspicion. Indeed, some suspicion is sin. And do not spy (tajassasu), nor backbite one another."

This verse explicitly prohibits spying (tajassus), which includes any secret surveillance, searching for others' faults, or collecting private information without consent. AI-powered mass surveillance CCTV with facial recognition, tracking online behavior, scanning emails, monitoring location data is a form of electronic tajassus. The verse condemns it as sinful, even if done by governments claiming "security." The Prophet ﷺ said: "If people were given according to their claims, some would claim the blood and property of others. But the burden of proof is on the claimant, and the oath is on the denier" (Bayhaqi). AI surveillance reverses this: it assumes everyone is guilty until proven innocent. Islamic ethics

¹⁰ Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:12



require that privacy be protected unless there is specific, individual suspicion based on public behavior, not mass secret surveillance. The verse also links spying to backbiting, both sins of violating others' dignity. AI systems that scrape personal data without consent, sell it to advertisers, or share it with governments are engaging in technological *tajassus*. Muslims must refuse to use, develop, or support such systems. The only permissible surveillance is that necessary for clear, imminent danger, with judicial oversight and minimal intrusion. Shoshana Zuboff, Harvard professor, states

"Surveillance capitalism unilaterally claims human experience as free raw material for translation into behavioral data. These data are then used to predict and modify human behavior for profit. It is a rogue, parasitic logic that endangers human autonomy."¹¹

Zuboff's critique of surveillance capitalism is devastating and aligns perfectly with Islamic ethics. She argues that tech companies treat human life every search, click, location, heartbeat, and expression as "free raw material" to be mined and sold, without consent or compensation. This violates multiple Islamic principles: (1) trust (*amanah*): companies are entrusted with user data but betray that trust; (2) prohibition of fraud (*gharar*): users are misled about how their data is used; (3) harm (*darar*): behavioral manipulation (addictive feeds, targeted ads, political micro-targeting) harms individuals and society; (4) dignity (*karamah*): reducing humans to predictable behavior patterns violates divine honor. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The believer is not stung from the same hole twice" (Bukhari), meaning we should learn from harm. Once Muslims understand surveillance capitalism's nature, they must avoid its platforms or demand ethical alternatives. Zuboff's phrase "endangers human autonomy" is key because Islam holds humans accountable as free moral agents. If AI manipulates people without their awareness (e.g., nudging votes, inciting anger, fostering addiction), it undermines moral responsibility. Such AI is *haram* (forbidden). Timnit Gebru, AI researcher and activist, states

"Data collection is a form of power. Those who control the data control the narratives, the resources, and the future. We need community control of data, not corporate or government monopolies."¹²

Gebru highlights the power dimension of AI data: whoever controls data controls society. This resonates with Islamic political ethics, which oppose concentration of power in few hands without accountability (*shura*, justice). The Quran warns against hoarding wealth and power: ﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَمْوَالَكُم يَبْنِيكُمْ بِأَبْطَالٍ﴾ (Do not

¹¹ Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, PublicAffairs, 2019, p. 14

¹² Timnit Gebru, "Data, Power, and the Politics of AI," *Communications of the ACM*, Vol. 63, No. 8, August 2020, p. 28



consume your property among yourselves unjustly, 2:188). Data is property of the person it describes. Taking it without consent or compensation is consumption by falsehood (bil-batil). Gebru's call for "community control of data" aligns with Islamic concepts of collective ownership (waqf) and public benefit (maslahah). Instead of data monopolies (e.g., one company owning all medical records, social graphs, or location histories), data should be governed by communities through transparent, accountable institutions. Islamic societies could develop data trusts that follow sharia principles: consent, purpose limitation, data minimization, and benefit sharing. The Prophet ﷺ said: "All of you are shepherds, and each of you is responsible for his flock" (Bukhari). For AI data, this means each community is responsible for protecting its members' data rights. Muslims should advocate for privacy laws and decentralized data governance.

AI, Bias, and Justice (Algorithmic Discrimination)

AI systems often exhibit bias: systematically disadvantaging certain groups based on race, gender, age, disability, religion, or socioeconomic status. This is not due to malice but because algorithms learn from historical data that contains human biases. For example, hiring algorithms trained on past successful employees discriminate against women if past hires were male. Predictive policing algorithms over-police minority neighborhoods because past arrests reflect biased policing. Credit scoring algorithms charge higher rates to marginalized groups. Healthcare AI underdiagnoses diseases in ethnic minorities because training data lacked diversity. Islamic teachings demand absolute justice ('adl) and prohibit discrimination (tamyiz) based on any irrelevant characteristic. The Quran says: ﴿إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاهُ﴾ (The most noble of you in Allah's sight is the most righteous, 49:13). This section analyzes AI bias through Islamic justice principles. The Holy Quran

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۚ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۗ اعْدِلُوا هُوَ

أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ¹³

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice. And do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness."

This verse commands absolute justice, even toward enemies. The prohibition against letting "hatred of a people" prevent justice applies directly to algorithmic bias. AI systems are trained on historical data that may contain societal hatred, prejudice, or neglect. If a hiring AI learns from a history of racial discrimination, it will perpetuate that discrimination. Muslim developers and users of AI have a sacred duty to detect and remove such bias. The verse demands

¹³ Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:8



"standing firm for Allah" in justice, meaning justice is an act of worship, not merely policy. An algorithm that produces unjust outcomes even if efficiently is a sin. The Prophet ﷺ demonstrated this when he applied the same punishment to a noble woman (Fatima's daughter of al-Mughira) as to anyone else, saying: "The only thing that destroyed those before you was that they applied legal punishments to the weak but not the powerful" (Bukhari). Modern AI systems must be audited to ensure they do not give preferential treatment to certain groups. If an algorithm charges Muslims higher insurance rates or denies loans to certain ethnicities, that algorithm must be rejected, no matter how accurate it claims to be. Justice is non-negotiable. Joy Buolamwini, founder of Algorithmic Justice League, states

"We need to stop treating algorithms as neutral or objective. They encode the biases of their creators. If we want justice, we must build with inclusion, accountability, and transparency. The coded gaze must be dismantled.¹⁴"

Buolamwini's "coded gaze" refers to AI systems that fail to recognize or misclassify faces of dark-skinned women because training data lacked diversity. This is a form of algorithmic injustice that harms real people (e.g., false arrests, denied access). Her call to "dismantle the coded gaze" aligns with the Islamic command to remove injustice (zulm) wherever it exists. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Help your brother whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed." When asked how to help an oppressor, he replied: "By preventing him from oppressing" (Bukhari). For AI, this means preventing algorithms from oppressing any group. Buolamwini's emphasis on "inclusion, accountability, transparency" mirrors Islamic governance principles: shura (consultation with diverse stakeholders), hisbah (accountability), and bayyinah (clear evidence/transparency). Muslims in AI must ensure their teams include diverse backgrounds (race, gender, class, ability) to catch bias before deployment. They must publish audit reports (transparency) and create mechanisms for harmed individuals to seek correction (accountability). The Quran says: (وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ) (When you judge between people, judge with justice, 4:58). An AI that judges (approves loans, hires, sentences) must be held to this standard. Ruha Benjamin, Princeton sociologist, states

"Discrimination is not a bug in AI systems; it is a feature. The same social hierarchies that structure our world get embedded into our technologies. We need a 'New Jim Code' analysis to dismantle tech-enabled racism and inequality.¹⁵"

¹⁴ Joy Buolamwini, "Unmasking AI," MIT Technology Review, February 2020, p. 44

¹⁵ Ruha Benjamin, Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code, Polity Press, 2019, p. 15



Benjamin argues that AI discrimination is not accidental but reflects pre-existing social hierarchies that technology then reinforces. This is a profound insight from an Islamic perspective, because the Quran repeatedly condemns worldly hierarchies based on race, wealth, or power. Allah says: ﴿وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ﴾

(﴿إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ﴾) (I created jinn and humans only to worship Me, 51:56). All other distinctions are secondary. When AI systems replicate racism (e.g., facial recognition failing on Black faces, healthcare AI under-treating Black patients), they are "features" because they serve existing power structures that benefit from inequality. Benjamin's concept of the "New Jim Code" refers to how algorithms automate and legitimize discrimination under a veneer of objectivity. Muslims must recognize this and actively oppose it. The Prophet ﷺ's Farewell Sermon declared: "All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; a white has no superiority over a black, nor a black over a white except by piety and good action." AI systems that violate this are not neutral tools; they are instruments of jahiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance). Muslims must demand bias audits, diverse datasets, and equitable outcomes.

Autonomous Weapons, Lethal AI, and Islamic Just War Theory

One of the most dangerous applications of AI is in weaponry. Autonomous weapons systems (AWS) or "killer robots" can select and engage targets without human intervention. These include loitering munitions, drone swarms, automated sentry guns, and naval mines. Proponents argue they reduce risk to soldiers and enable faster reaction. Critics warn of algorithmic errors, lack of accountability, lowering the threshold for war, and dehumanization of combat. Islamic just war theory (jihad and siyar) has strict rules: proportionality, distinction between combatants and non-combatants, necessity, and humane treatment of prisoners. The Prophet ﷺ forbade killing women, children, the elderly, monks, farmers, and even bees. He forbade burning, mutilation, and killing by torture. This section analyzes lethal AI through Islamic military ethics. Imam Muslim narrates that

عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا: أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَتَلَ فِي بَعْضِ مَغَازِيهِ امْرَأَةً، فَأَتَتْهُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ ذَلِكَ وَنَهَى عَنْ قَتْلِ النِّسَاءِ وَالصِّبْيَانِ¹⁶

"Abdullah ibn Umar narrated that during one of the Prophet's ﷺ campaigns, a woman was found killed. The Prophet ﷺ condemned that and forbade the killing of women and children."

This hadith establishes a clear rule: non-combatants (women, children, elderly, monks, farmers) are never legitimate targets. Autonomous weapons that cannot reliably distinguish a combatant from a child violate this rule. No current

¹⁶ Sahih Muslim, Book of Jihad, Chapter on Prohibition of Killing Women and Children in War, Dar Ihya al-Turath, Beirut, 1420 AH, vol. 3, p. 1356, hadith no. 1744



AI can make such distinctions perfectly, especially in complex environments (e.g., a child running toward a soldier vs. a child running toward school). The Prophet ﷺ's condemnation of the single woman's killing shows how seriously Islam takes civilian protection. He also forbade killing bees, ants, birds, and even fruit trees. Autonomous drones with imperfect recognition inevitably cause civilian casualties. Moreover, the hadith implies accountability: someone must be responsible for each killing. AI cannot be held legally or morally accountable; only humans can. Therefore, Islamic just war theory requires that a responsible human make the final targeting decision, not an algorithm. The Prophet ﷺ also forbade mutilation (Muslim), but autonomous weapons (e.g., explosive drones) often cause indiscriminate fragmentation injuries. Lethal AI that cannot comply with distinction, proportionality, and humane treatment is haram (forbidden) to develop, deploy, or use. Muslim states must refuse to participate in autonomous weapons races. UN Secretary-General António Guterres states

"Autonomous weapons systems with the power to kill without human intervention are politically unacceptable, morally repugnant, and should be prohibited by international law. The world must act now to ban killer robots."¹⁷

Guterres, the highest UN official, calls for a binding ban on fully autonomous weapons. His phrase "morally repugnant" aligns with Islamic ethics. The Quran says: (مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا) (Whoever kills a soul without just cause... it is as if he killed all mankind, 5:32). An autonomous weapon that kills mistakenly is still killing a soul without just cause, but no human is punished because the AI is not a moral agent. This creates impunity, which is precisely why Guterres calls for a ban. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The first case to be judged among people on the Day of Judgment will be bloodshed" (Bukhari). If responsibility cannot be assigned to an AI, the human developers, commanders, and political leaders who deployed it bear that sin. Islamic legal principle states: "What leads to haram is itself haram." Developing autonomous weapons that will inevitably cause unjust killing is haram. Muslim nations should lead global efforts to ban lethal autonomous weapons under the framework of Islamic just war principles, which prioritize mercy, distinction, and accountability. Stuart Russell (again) states

"An autonomous weapon that can decide to take a human life is the third revolution in warfare, after gunpowder and nuclear weapons. But unlike previous revolutions, it shifts the responsibility from humans to machines. That is morally unacceptable. We must ban offensive autonomous weapons."¹⁸

¹⁷ António Guterres, Speech to the UN General Assembly, September 25, 2019, UN Document A/74/PV.3

¹⁸ Stuart Russell, *Human Compatible*, Viking, 2019, p. 245



Russell warns that autonomous weapons represent a fundamental shift: for the first time, machines could decide to kill humans without meaningful human control. This “responsibility shift” is the core problem. In Islam, responsibility (taklif) is uniquely human. The Quran says: *إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولٌ* (Indeed, hearing, sight, and the heart all of those will be questioned, 17:36). An AI has no hearing, sight, or heart that will be questioned on Judgment Day. Therefore, if an AI kills an innocent person, the sin lies with the humans who built, deployed, or ordered it. Russell’s call for a ban on "offensive autonomous weapons" is the minimal ethical position. Islam permits defensive weapons but prohibits weapons designed primarily for aggression or indiscriminate harm. The Prophet ﷺ forbade using catapults against besieged cities if civilians were present (Abu Dawud). Autonomous weapons are the ultimate indiscriminate weapon: once released, they cannot be recalled. Muslims in military technology must refuse to work on lethal AI. Islamic governments should sign international treaties banning autonomous weapons and convert their AI research to defensive, non-lethal, and humanitarian applications (e.g., mine clearance, disaster response).

Islamic Guidance on AI Governance and Human Responsibility

Given the profound impacts of AI on privacy, employment, justice, war, and even human identity there is urgent need for ethical governance. Who should make rules for AI? What values should guide them? How can we ensure accountability? Islam offers a comprehensive governance framework based on consultation (shura), justice (‘adl), public interest (maslahah), and prohibition of harm (la darar). Additionally, Islam emphasizes human responsibility (taklif) and the concept that humans are vicegerents (khalifah) of Allah on earth. The Prophet ﷺ demonstrated model governance: he consulted his companions, prioritized mercy, and held himself and others accountable. This final section synthesizes Islamic principles for AI governance, offering practical guidance for Muslims in the age of AI. The Holy Quran

*وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ*¹⁹

"Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong."

This concise command is the foundation of Islamic social ethics. It applies to all human activities, including AI development and use. “Enjoining right” (amr bil ma’ruf) means actively promoting AI applications that benefit humanity, uphold justice, preserve dignity, and protect life. This includes AI for medical diagnosis, disaster response, accessibility tools for disabled people, environmental monitoring, and education. “Forbidding wrong” (nahy anil munkar) means actively opposing AI applications that cause harm, injustice,

¹⁹ Surah Luqman, 31:17



deception, surveillance, or oppression. This includes predictive policing that targets minorities, social credit systems, deepfake propaganda, autonomous weapons, and algorithmic price gouging. The command is proactive, not passive. Muslims cannot say "I just use the technology; I don't control it." Every Muslim who uses AI (as a developer, investor, user, or policymaker) has a duty to enjoin good and forbid evil within their sphere. The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if unable, with his tongue; if unable, with his heart and that is the weakest of faith" (Muslim). For AI, changing with the hand includes boycotting harmful platforms, developing ethical alternatives, and voting for regulations. Changing with the tongue includes raising awareness and educating others. Changing with the heart includes refusing to normalize AI injustice. Imam Abu Dawud narrates that

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: "لَا ضَرَرَ وَلَا ضِرَارَ"²⁰

"The Prophet ﷺ said: "There is no harm and no reciprocating harm."

This foundational legal maxim (*la darar wa la dirar*) must be the primary test for any AI system. Does it cause harm (*darar*) to individuals, society, or future generations? If yes, it is prohibited. Harm includes physical (autonomous weapons), psychological (addictive social media), economic (job displacement without transition), social (polarization from algorithms), and environmental (energy consumption of large AI models). The maxim also prohibits "reciprocating harm" (*dirar*), meaning responding to harm with further harm. In AI, this forbids counter-hacking or developing harmful AI to "fight" harmful AI. The Prophet ﷺ's simple rule cuts through technical complexity. An AI system might be efficient, profitable, and popular, but if it causes harm, it must be abandoned or reformed. Islamic AI governance requires mandatory harm audits before deployment, continuous monitoring, and immediate suspension if harm is detected. The burden of proof is on developers to demonstrate no harm, not on victims to prove harm. This reverses current norms where companies launch first and apologize later. The hadith also implies precaution (*sadd al-dhara'i'*): if an AI application might cause harm even with good intentions, it is forbidden. For example, a social media algorithm designed to "increase engagement" inevitably causes addiction and outrage; therefore, such algorithms are prohibited. Mohamed Omar, Islamic legal scholar, states

"Islamic ethics provide a complete framework for AI governance: the preservation of life, intellect, lineage, property, and religion. Any AI that undermines these objectives is

²⁰ Sunan Abi Dawud, Book of Judgments, Dar al-Salam, Riyadh, 1420 AH, vol. 3, p. 587, hadith no. 3635



prohibited. Any AI that promotes them is obligatory. There is no neutrality in the face of harm.²¹

Omar explicitly maps AI governance onto the five maqasid (higher objectives) of Islamic law. (1) Preservation of life: AI for healthcare, safety, and clean environment is good; AI for autonomous weapons, biased healthcare, or pollution is bad. (2) Preservation of intellect: AI for education, research, and fighting misinformation is good; AI for propaganda, manipulation, addiction, or replacing human critical thinking is bad. (3) Preservation of lineage/family: AI that supports marriage, parenting, and community bonds is good; AI that enables adultery, family breakdown, or paternity fraud is bad. (4) Preservation of property: AI that prevents fraud, ensures fair contracts, and protects from theft is good; AI that enables financial exploitation, surveillance capitalism, or digital land grabs is bad. (5) Preservation of religion: AI that facilitates worship (Quran apps, prayer times, halal certification) is good; AI that promotes atheism, blasphemy, or misguidance is bad. Omar's statement that "there is no neutrality in the face of harm" is crucial. Muslims cannot remain passive while AI systems cause harm. Every Muslim institution mosques, schools, businesses, governments must develop an AI policy based on these five objectives. Silence or inaction is complicity. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The best jihad is a word of truth before a tyrannical ruler" (Abu Dawud). Speaking truth about harmful AI is a form of jihad.

Conclusion

- * The rapid growth of AI is driven by data abundance, computational advances, algorithmic breakthroughs, and profit/military incentives all of which are ethically neutral but must be guided by Islamic values of justice, mercy, and preventing harm.
- * AI applications are not inherently good or evil; their morality depends on intention (niyyah), means, outcomes, and alignment with maqasid al-shari'ah (preservation of life, intellect, religion, lineage, property).
- * AI's impact on employment requires Islamic economic responses: retraining, social safety nets, and redirecting innovation toward human-complementary AI that respects the dignity of work (hadith on eating from one's labor).
- * Privacy is a sacred right in Islam; AI surveillance, data harvesting without consent, and behavioral manipulation are forms of forbidden spying (tajassus) and exploitation (gharar, darar).

²¹ Mohamed Omar, "Artificial Intelligence from an Islamic Perspective," *Journal of Islamic Ethics*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, 2021, p. 112



- * Algorithmic bias and discrimination are forms of injustice (zulm) explicitly prohibited by Quranic commands to judge with equity regardless of race, gender, or status.
- * Autonomous weapons violate Islamic just war principles of distinction (combatant vs. non-combatant), accountability (only humans can be held responsible), and mercy (prohibition of mutilation and indiscriminate killing).
- * Islamic AI governance is based on enjoinder of good (amr bil ma'ruf), prohibition of evil (nahy anil munkar), the harm principle (la darar), and the five universal objectives (maqasid).
- * Muslims are not passive consumers of AI but active moral agents responsible (taklif) as vicegerents (khalifah) to guide AI development toward human flourishing and away from harm, with accountability to Allah on the Day of Judgment.

Recommendations

- * For Muslim Developers and Engineers: Adopt an Islamic code of ethics for AI: prioritize beneficial applications, reject projects causing harm (surveillance, autonomous weapons, manipulation), conduct bias audits, ensure transparency, and refuse unjust data practices.
- * For Islamic Scholars and Jurists: Issue clear fatwas on emerging AI issues (facial recognition, deepfakes, autonomous weapons, social credit systems) based on maqasid al-shari'ah, and establish international bodies for continuous AI ethics guidance.
- * For Muslim Governments: Enact AI regulations that enforce privacy (consent, data minimization), ban autonomous offensive weapons, mandate algorithmic accountability and bias audits, tax automation for social welfare, and invest in human-complementary AI.
- * For Educational Institutions: Integrate AI ethics grounded in Islamic principles into curricula for computer science, engineering, and Islamic studies. Train students to ask ethical questions before technical ones.
- * For Civil Society and Individuals: Boycott and avoid harmful AI platforms where possible; support ethical alternatives; advocate for transparency and justice; educate family and community about AI risks; and use beneficial AI for da'wah, education, and social good.



Bibliography

- * Abu Dawud, Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath. Sunan Abi Dawud. Dar al-Salam, Riyadh, 1420 AH.
- * al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Isma'il. Sahih al-Bukhari. Dar Ibn Kathir, Beirut, 1423 AH.
- * Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. Sahih Muslim. Dar Ihya al-Turath, Beirut, 1420 AH.
- * Acemoglu, Daron, and Simon Johnson. Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity. PublicAffairs, New York, 2023.
- * Benjamin, Ruha. Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code. Polity Press, Cambridge, 2019.
- * Bostrom, Nick. Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2014.
- * Buolamwini, Joy. "Unmasking AI." MIT Technology Review, Vol. 123, No. 1, February 2020, pp. 40-46.
- * Gebru, Timnit. "Data, Power, and the Politics of AI." Communications of the ACM, Vol. 63, No. 8, August 2020, pp. 26-28.
- * Guterres, António. Speech to the UN General Assembly, September 25, 2019. UN Document A/74/PV.3.
- * Li, Fei-Fei. "Human-Centered AI." Foreign Affairs, Vol. 100, No. 1, January/February 2021, pp. 56-65.
- * O'Neil, Cathy. Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy. Crown Publishing, New York, 2016.
- * Omar, Mohamed. "Artificial Intelligence from an Islamic Perspective: A Framework Based on Maqasid al-Shari'ah." Journal of Islamic Ethics, Vol. 5, Issue 2, 2021, pp. 98-126.
- * Russell, Stuart. Human Compatible: Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control. Viking, New York, 2019.
- * Schwab, Klaus. The Fourth Industrial Revolution. Crown Business, New York, 2016.
- * Zuboff, Shoshana. The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power. PublicAffairs, New York, 2019.