



## Core Ethical Values Of Character Education: Based On Islamic Values

<sup>1</sup> Yayan Supian, <sup>2</sup> Aan Hasanah, <sup>3</sup> Bambang Samsul Arifin

<sup>1234</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>[Yayan.supian@gmail.com](mailto:Yayan.supian@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[aanhasanah@uinsgd.ac.id](mailto:aanhasanah@uinsgd.ac.id), <sup>3</sup>[bambangamsularifin@uinsgd.ac.id](mailto:bambangamsularifin@uinsgd.ac.id)

**Receive: 17/05/2023**

**Accepted: 17/06/2023**

**Published: 01/10/2023**

### Abstract

*The aim of this article is to explore the fundamental ethical principles of character education based on Islamic principles. Islam guides its followers to become the best individuals (khoirun ummat). Character education encompasses a broader scope than moral education, as it not only revolves around distinguishing between right and wrong, but also instilling positive habits that promote a sense of awareness and comprehension among children/students. This, in turn, fosters a sense of responsibility and dedication to incorporate virtuous behavior in their daily lives. The Prophet SAW epitomizes the Islamic teachings conveyed in the Qur'an and the Prophet's hadiths, thereby earning him the moniker "walking al-Qur'an." Islamic teachings on character have been gradually eroding and experiencing moral decay, with Muslims no longer serving as exemplary role models. The research approach utilized is qualitative, with a descriptive analysis method, and the data collection involves reviewing literature and previous studies.*

**Keywords:** core ethical values, character education, Islamic values.

### Introduction

Character education has a higher meaning than moral education because character education is not only about right and wrong, but also about instilling habits of goodness in life. This enables children or students to have a high level of awareness, understanding, and commitment to apply virtues in their daily lives. Therefore, character can be defined as a person's natural disposition to respond morally to situations, manifested through tangible actions such as good behavior, honesty, responsibility, respect for others, and other noble character values. In the context of Islamic thought, character is related to faith and excellence (ihsan). Faith and excellence mean constantly feeling watched by Allah (SWT).

In the perspective of Islam, character education is an effort to develop the holistic aspects of human beings in physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions, in order to produce individuals

with faithful, responsible, caring, honest, courageous, and good citizenship characters. The model of instilling character values through teaching, habituation, role modeling, motivation, and rule enforcement that is consistently and continuously implemented in daily life at home, school, and in society will shape individuals with exemplary characters, as khalifah fil Ardli (Aan Hasanah, 2014:186).

Wynne (1991) states that character comes from the Greek word meaning "to mark" and focuses on how to apply values of goodness in real actions or everyday behavior. Therefore, someone who behaves dishonestly, cheating, cruel, and greedy is considered to have a bad character, while someone who behaves well, honestly, and helpful is considered to have a good/noble character.

The Director General of Islamic Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2010), states that

character can be defined as the totality of inherent and identifiable personal traits in individual behavior that are unique. In a special sense, these traits distinguish one individual from another. Since these characteristics can be identified in individual behavior and are unique, character is closely related to an individual's personality. Although each individual's character is unique, the general characteristics that stereotype a group of people or a nation can be identified as the character of a particular community or even considered as the character of a nation. Thus, the term character is closely related to a person's personality, so one can be called a person of character if their behavior is in accordance with ethics or moral standards. However, the habit of doing good does not always guarantee that someone who is accustomed to it consciously appreciates the importance of character values. This is possible because the action may be motivated by fear of doing wrong, rather than a sincere desire to appreciate the value of honesty, for example. Therefore, character education also requires the aspect of emotion, which Lickona (1992) refers to as "desiring the good" or the desire to do virtuous acts. It is emphasized that good character education should involve not only the aspect of "knowing the good" but also "desiring the good" or "loving the good" and "acting the good," so that humans do not behave like robots indoctrinated by certain ideologies.

With conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control, and humility, while moral action is a combination of moral knowing and moral feeling manifested in the form of competence, will, and habit. These three components need to be considered in character education so that learners are aware, understand, feel, and are able to practice virtue values in their daily lives holistically and comprehensively (kaffah).

Megawangi, the initiator of character education in Indonesia, has formulated 9 noble character pillars that should serve as a reference in character education, both in

schools and outside of schools. They are as follows: a) Love for Allah and truth; b) Responsibility, discipline, and independence; c) Trustworthiness; d) Respect and politeness; e) Care, compassion, and cooperation; f) Confidence, creativity, and perseverance; g) Justice and leadership; h) Goodness and humility; i) Tolerance and love for peace.

In the perspective of Islam, character education theoretically has existed since Islam was revealed to the world, along with the sending of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to improve or perfect human morals (character). Islamic teachings themselves contain a systematic approach that emphasizes not only faith, worship, and social interactions but also character. The comprehensive practice of Islam (kaffah) represents the character model of a Muslim, and is even personified by the character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who possessed the qualities of Siddiq, Tabligh, Amanah, and Fathonah (STAF). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) serves as a role model, and it is said that before he was appointed as a Prophet, he was called Al-Amin (the trustworthy). The characters displayed by the Prophet (SAW) are reflections of Islamic teachings as recorded in the Qur'an and the Hadiths of the Prophet (SAW). That is why the Prophet (SAW) is referred to as the "walking Qur'an."

The characters taught by Islamic teachings have gradually eroded and experienced moral decadence in today's society. Muslims are no longer seen as good role models. It has become difficult to distinguish Islamic characters from non-Islamic ones because the characters taught by Islam are no longer guiding the habits of daily life. For example, when the companion of the Prophet, Umar ibn Khattab, met a young boy who was herding a large number of animals and Umar asked him to sell a few of them. Despite Umar's persuasion that the owner of the livestock would not find out, the young boy firmly refused. This exemplifies the character values instilled by Islam, which stand independently and are

built on the foundation of Tawhid (belief in the oneness of Allah) deeply embedded in the soul and heart.

Based on previous research by Ahmad Husni Hamim et al., character education generally has a broad goal of achieving akhlaqul karimah (noble character), which is derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. In Qur'an and Hadith-based character education, the educational content can be broadly grouped into three dimensions of moral values: moral values towards Allah, moral values towards fellow human beings, and moral values towards the universe. In this article, the author examines the core ethical values of character education based on Islam, focusing on faith (Tawhid), Ihsan, and the inherent/natural characteristics of human beings.

The purpose of this article is to examine the core ethical values of character education based on Islamic values. It explores how Islam teaches its followers to become the best community (khoirun ummah) and to serve as an example to other communities. It also examines the core ethical values of character education taught by Islam in order to become a source of mercy for all of creation”

## Methods

The research method used in this study is qualitative research with a descriptive analytical approach. Qualitative research is a process of solving a problem related to humans with the aim of understanding the phenomena that occur, taking into account the social and cultural backgrounds (Pertwi & Weganofa, 2015:19). In qualitative approach, the direction and focus of the research are to build theories from data or facts, develop the synthesis of interactions and theories derived from grounded facts, develop understanding, and so on, which means that each step prioritizes the process as it is and is not limited by norms, formulas, and others (Musianto, 2002). The main objective of qualitative research is to capture the deepest meaning/understanding of a

specific event, phenomenon, fact, or problem, rather than studying or proving cause-and-effect relationships of a problem or event (Raco, 2010:106). The data collection technique used in this study is literature analysis, literature review, and previous research studies.

## Results and Discussion

### Concept of Character Reviewed in a Synthesis and Analysis Approach (Ki Hajar Dewantara)

Character is a combination of all human traits that are permanent, making it a distinct characteristic that distinguishes one person from another (Hajar Dewantara, fifth edition, 2013). The term "character" in Greek and Latin, originally from the word "charassein," means carving a permanent pattern that cannot be erased. The use of character in describing qualities and types of manifestations, such as a house having a Batak or Sundanese character, or a depiction with Japanese or Javanese patterns and colors, or someone's behavior being noble, rough, self-sacrificing, sadistic, or fierce, and so on.

Character is formed through the development of foundations influenced by education. "Foundations" refer to the innate abilities or "talents" that a child possesses from birth, which are connected to the natural disposition of the child (biological). Meanwhile, "education" encompasses all teaching and learning processes that start from the womb until adulthood, shaping behaviors influenced by cognitive maturity or "intelligible" factors.

The biological aspect or the innate nature of a person's character is closely related to their hereditary traits, where ancestors strive to improve the quality of their descendants (eugenics) and their surrounding environment. This can be compared to cultural teachings about "maintaining lineage" in our society, which are still considered important with the term "bibit, bèbèt, bobot" in choosing a life partner; the bibit or individual must be healthy and of good quality, bèbèt as good

offspring (bèbèting wong atapa, bèbèting ratu, ksatria), and bobot, both physically and mentally, must also be of good quality.

Within the soul, character represents the consistent balance between a person's inner life and all their outward actions, serving as an important foundation in their life, which then reflects their distinctive behavior. For example: individual A always has good intentions, and their actions are always good as well; individual B has good intentions but, influenced by others, their actions are not always good; individual C also has good intentions but, due to intense fear, they never actualize their goodness; individual D has good intentions but is always caught in fantasies and confusion in their actions, and so on. In this case, even though individuals A, B, C, and D have good intentions, they are always involved in various problems, where individual A is consistent/firm, individual B is inconsistent (unstable), individual C is fearful, individual D is always confused, and so on.

The comparison between consistent intentions and energy is what constitutes character or, more precisely, it can be referred to as the distinguishing characteristic, sign, or mark of an individual. Because character is something fixed between the principles of the inner self and outward actions, the goodness or badness of behavior depends on the quality of the inner self. Compare the division of the inner self or human soul as a combination of aspirations, feelings, and will (cipta-rasa-karsa), and the raw and mature state of cipta-rasa-karsa determines the raw or mature state of the soul. When the soul generates energy, character becomes apparent.

When the soul feels mature, it will result in wisdom. Within the human soul, there is a living and unconscious part that influences our desires, known as the subconscious. This also affects our character. For example, when someone sees an object, thoughts or imaginations arise about the object, such as its appearance, purpose, and how to make it. Then, feelings of pleasure or displeasure towards the object

arise and eventually solidify into a persistent desire. However, this desire may not necessarily align with the energy we possess, as it still depends on the character or color patterns of a person's soul.

For example, the impact of people's preferences for a product (food, clothing, books, friendships, scenery, etc.), if not deliberately considered and felt in advance, often matches their actions, behavior, or, in other words, their attitudes and daily appearances. This means that some individuals are simple, some are beautiful, some are arrogant (bourgeois in character), some are pure, some are dishonest, some are rough, and so on. The merits and flaws of all these qualities depend on the goodness or badness of the mind, feelings, and will (individually and collectively as the trilogy of "cipta-rasa-karsa"). "Wisdom" refers to the maturity and perfection of this spiritual trilogy.

### **The concept of character based the human primordial nature (fitrah) can be understood from various perspectives.**

Fitrah, according to Muhammad Ibn Asyur as quoted by M. Quraisy Shihab, refers to a system manifested by Allah in every creature. The fitrah specific to human beings is what Allah has created in them, pertaining to their physical body and intellect (soul).

Fitrah can be understood as purity, the potential for being Islamic, the recognition of the oneness of Allah, the condition of being safe and steadfast, sincerity, the predisposition to accept truth, the basic potential of human beings or the inclination to worship, the determination or innate destiny of human beings regarding happiness and suffering in life, and the natural disposition or original temperament of human beings.

According to Abdul Mujib Fithrah, fitrah refers to the innate disposition or natural inclination of human beings, including the purity or sincerity in carrying out activities. Hamka also supports this view, stating that fitrah is the original feeling

within the soul that has not been influenced by others.

Al-Maraghi states that fitrah implies the inclination to accept truth. By nature, humans tend to seek and accept truth, even if it resides only in their hearts. Sometimes, humans find the truth but turn away from it due to external factors. Fitrah can also mean the original determination or fate of human beings regarding their happiness and deviation. According to Ibn Abbas, Ka'ab bin Qurodi, Abu Sa'id al-Khudry, and Ahmad bin Hanbal, humans are born with their original determinations, whether they will be happy or deviate. It all depends on the determination acquired since birth. This initial determination is called fitrah, which cannot be influenced by any external conditions, including the process of education. If the original determination is good, their life will always be good even if they initially deviate. Similarly, if the original determination is deviant, they will remain deviant even if they act like a good person.

Nurcholis Madjid defines fitrah as the original pure occurrence in humans, which provides innate abilities and intuition to distinguish between truth and falsehood, reality and falsehood. Fitrah contains inherent natural tendencies of human beings and the nature of their existence. Fitrah can also mean the natural disposition inherent in human beings. According to al-Qurthubi, humans are born with different temperaments (*tabiat*). These temperaments can be in the form of inclinations in children or in their hearts and souls, which can lead to *ma'rifah* (knowledge) of Allah.

According to Sayyid Quthub, fitrah is the human soul that needs to be accompanied by religious nature. The relationship between the human spiritual nature and religious nature is essential, as both are creations of Allah within human beings as basic potentials that provide wisdom, transform oneself towards betterment, heal the wounded soul, and redirect oneself from turning away.

Al-Ghazali explains that fitrah is the foundation that humans acquire from birth, possessing the following privileges: a) Believing in Allah; b) Ability and willingness to accept goodness and knowledge, or the basic ability to receive education and instruction; c) Inquisitiveness to seek the essence of truth, which translates into the power to think; d) Biological urges such as hunger, thirst, and sex; e) Other human strengths and qualities that can be developed and perfected.

Quraish Shihab suggests that the term "fitrah" is derived from the word "fataru," which means to create. It implies the creation of something for the first time without any prior example. Thus, fitrah can also be understood as the origin or innate occurrence since birth. Sayyid Quthub states that fitrah is the human soul that needs to be accompanied by religious nature. The relationship between the human spiritual nature and religious nature is strong. Considering both are creations of Allah within human beings as basic potentials, they provide wisdom, transform oneself towards betterment, heal the wounded soul, and redirect oneself from turning away. Indeed, since birth, humans have been equipped with their respective fitrah or potentials, including the inclination and natural tendency to recognize and practice religion, including Islam. However, due to human interaction with the surrounding natural environment, sometimes humans behave negatively. Therefore, Islamic education's task is to rectify individuals and guide them back to the right religion, namely monotheism (*Tawhid*/Islam), and to return to the One and Only God, Allah. This inherent fitrah from Allah remains unchanged according to His provisions.

From this perspective, it is evident that fitrah is a potential within each individual that inclines towards truth and goodness, manifested in the conscience of human beings, as mentioned in the Quran. Based on this fitrah, in the social order of life, positive attitudes should always take precedence. If a

person prioritizes negative attitudes, it means they are denying their fitrah. Similarly, negative assumptions, as stated in the Quran, should not be made by humans towards others who share the same belief or faith in God.

Thus, fitrah is essentially a potential for goodness that plays a significant role within every individual. This fitrah is the foundation of the positive aspect and optimistic view of human beings. This positive aspect is the fundamental reality of human beings, indicating an inherent instinct to recognize ethical principles. However, alongside this inherently positive and optimistic fitrah, humans also possess negative realities that give rise to a pessimistic view of human beings, portraying them as weak creatures.

As mentioned above, within humans, there is a potential called fitrah. Fitrah drives humans to always incline towards goodness, and this is where the relevant connection between Islam and human fitrah lies, as Islam also serves as a guide for humans towards the right and righteous path. In other words, Islam has a dimension of humanity as it aims to guide humans towards happiness. Humanity here is not an independent concept but rather humanity that emanates from the Divine.

### **The Concept of Ihsan as Character Education**

Hadith of Muslim No. 8:

"Then he (Gabriel) said, 'Inform me about Ihsan.' The Prophet replied, 'It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him, yet He sees you.'"

Nur Kholis Madjid interprets Ihsan as the teaching of experiencing the awareness of the presence of God in one's life, by internalizing oneself as if facing and being in the presence of God while worshipping. Ihsan is an education or practice to achieve true meaning.

According to Imam al-Ghazali, the meaning of Ihsan implies muraqabah (feeling watched by Allah). Muraqabah is

the supervision carried out by a supervisor, with the return of the burden of the heart to Him. That is, the condition of the heart that is produced by knowledge. This condition results in various deeds in the body and within the heart. Regarding the supervisor's perspective on the deeds, there are two ways to view it. First, the view before the deed is done, and second, the view during the deed. The view before the deed should consider one's intention and motivation. If it is for the sake of Allah, it should be continued. But if it is driven by desires and influenced by Satan, one should feel ashamed before Allah and cease doing it, and then criticize oneself for such desires and tendencies.

Muraqabah in matters of obedience is through sincerity, perfection, paying attention to its etiquettes, and guarding oneself against various disasters. As for muraqabah in sins, it involves repentance, regret, deterrent measures, shame, and being preoccupied with contemplation. Muraqabah in permissible matters involves paying attention to its etiquettes, then witnessing the giver of blessings in those pleasures, and expressing gratitude. A servant, in all conditions, will not be free from the tests he must face with patience. He must be grateful for them. All of this is part of muraqabah (Jamaluddin al-Qasimi, *Ihya ulum al-din* translation, 2010:673).

In relation to character, when someone has achieved Ihsan, they will feel constantly watched by Allah SWT in their good behavior and interactions. Consequently, they will develop good character based on Islamic values as the embodiment of the integration of knowledge, emotions, and motivations for righteousness (Islamic character).

### **Islam as Core Ethical Values (Aan Hasanah)**

Islam serves as a conceptual framework in character education by understanding the concept of human beings who possess physical, spiritual, and psychological elements, as well as the concept of Fitrah, which emphasizes the

potential for religiosity and inclination towards truth. With these two concepts, character education that is developed is based on the development of an individual's religious potential.

By using the perspective of ethics in character education, Islam functions as core ethical values, the core values that serve as the source of individual behavior. There are several core ethics that can be derived as values that can be taught through educational methodology. When we talk about values in character education, those values should be reachable at home, in schools, and in society. These values can be agreed upon and universally applicable in the context of character education, as they are considered good values, agreed upon collectively, and need to be taught in order to shape the characters of children, society, and the nation. These values have a directive nature, as they guide towards good and responsible behavior, ultimately contributing to the goals of national education.

Islam, as the basis for character education, is used as a conceptual framework for the development of character education. Human beings are both the subject and object of character education. Humans consist of physical aspects, such as health, cleanliness, and neatness. Spiritual aspects are related to the development of religiosity in learners, including faith and piety. Emotional aspects are related to the development of affective aspects in learners, such as empathy, creativity, and kindness. Intellectual aspects are related to the intelligence of learners. These aspects of character are developed in national character education.

### Conclusion

Character is a combination of all human qualities that are fixed, thus becoming a distinctive mark that distinguishes one person from another.

Character is based on human nature, meaning the inclination to accept the truth because, by nature, humans tend to seek and accept the truth even if it resides only in their innermost hearts (conscience). This inherent nature constantly drives human beings from within to always stay upright, not deviating, and to strive towards goodness and the rightful truth. Character in Islam will be realized wherever and whenever a person has embedded the values of *ihsan*, which means feeling watched by Allah (God), so that the manifestation of their character is based on the truths of the Qur'an and Hadith (teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him).

### References

- Aan Hasanah. Conceptual framework of National Character Education in Islamic perspective. *Jurnal Penjaminan Mutu* volume I, UIN SGD, 2014.
- Ki Hajar Dewantara. *Thoughts, Exemplary Behavior, Independent Attitude (Education)*. Yogyakarta: UST-Press, 2013, fifth edition.
- Mulyasa. *Character Education Management*. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2018.
- Ahmad Husni Hamim et al. Core Ethical Values of Character Education (based on Islamic values). *UIN Sunan Gunung Djati, Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, volume 6 number 1, 2021.
- Nur Kholis Majid. *Paramadina Foundation Article*, accessed on April 5, 2023.
- Jamaludin al-Qasimi, *Tahdzibu Mauizhatil Mukminin Min Ihya Ulumudin*, translated by Asmuni. Bekasi: Darul Falah, 2010.
- Raco, J. R. *Qualitative Research Methods: Types, Characteristics, and Advantages*. Jakarta: Gramedia, 2010.