

# The Concept of Fitrah in Islamic Education of Children

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## Abstract

*Islamic education should be taught since an early age. The application of Islamic education should refer to human nature that tends to be accepted by the truth. In order to find out whether the concept of fitrah (Fitr) can be seen as an applicable theory in Islamic Primary Education, a philosophical approach is used to review it. This literature research falls into descriptive qualitative research. The data collection technique uses a comparative descriptive approach, while the data analysis technique uses content analysis.*

**Keywords:** Fitrah, Islamic Education, Children

## A. INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of changing the attitudes and behavior of a person or group of people in order to mature human beings through teaching and training efforts, processes, methods, and educational actions.<sup>1</sup> Students are not adults miniature, they have their own worlds so that teaching and learning methods should not be equated with adults. Students follow certain periods of development patterns. The implication of the educational process must be carried out in that period and pattern of development. Discussing students definitely covers human nature that needs guidance.<sup>2</sup>

In an Islamic perspective, Allah SWT has given humans a set of basic abilities that has tendencies to be developed. This basic ability is called *fitrah* (good potential), so that it should be developed optimally and integratedly through a good educational process so that a child are able to live in his own nature.<sup>3</sup> Potential *fitrah* must be developed both factual and actual. In order to carry out these efforts, Islam provides the basic principles in the form of Islamic values with the result of the growth of human potential which guides and directs learners.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the use of the method is not just focussing on the children's development, but also involves various aspects that are able to influence the development. This paper is considered to review the concept of *fitrah* in children's Islamic education. In order to find out the concept of *fitrah* can be seen as an applicable theory in *Islamic Primary Education*, this paper

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<sup>1</sup> Rochman Natawidjaya, *et.all. Rujukan Filsafat, Teori dan Praksis Ilmu Pendidikan*, (Bandung: UPI Press, 2008), hlm.1

<sup>2</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia,2011),hlm.106.

<sup>3</sup> Usman Abu Bakar, *Paradigma dan Epistemologi Pendidikan Islam*, (Yogyakarta: UAB Media,2013),hlm.89.

<sup>4</sup> Novan Ardy Wiyani dan Barnawi, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, (Yogyakarta: ar-Ruz Media, 2012), hlm.41.

uses philosophical approach.<sup>5</sup> In line with this approach, the descriptive and comparative are used as the method.

## B. DISCUSSION

### 1. The Meaning of Islamic Education

#### a. Education Etymology

Etymologically, there are four terms that are often used by educational experts in giving an understanding of Islamic education. These terms are:

##### 1) Tarbiyah

Tarbiyah means education. In the lexicology of the Qur'an and as-Sunnah, the term at-tarbiyah can not be found, yet there are several key terms that are related to it, namely ar-rabb, rabbyani, nurabbi, yurbi and rabbani.<sup>6</sup> In ar-Rabb, at-tarbiyah is identified as follows:

a). Fahrur Rozi stated that ar-rabb is a phoneme that has the same root as at-tarbiyah which means at-tanmiyah, namely growth and development.

b). Ibn Abdillah Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurtubi defined ar-rabb with the meaning of the owner who is the most repairing, the most controlling, the most adding, the most fulfilling.

c). Al-Jauhari interpreted at-tarbiyah, rabban, and rabba by feeding, nurturing, and nurturing.

In addition, Tarbiyah can be interpreted as a process of transforming knowledge from educators (Rabbani) to learners as well, they have a high attitude and enthusiasm in understanding and realizing their lives with a result piety, character, and noble personality are formed.<sup>7</sup>

##### 2) Ta'lim

Ta'lim means teaching. The term ta'līm comes from the word 'allama which means the process of transmitting knowledge to an individual's soul without any limitations and certain provisions. This understanding is based on the word of God:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

And He taught Adam the names (objects) of all of them, then He showed them to the angels, saying, "Tell Me the names of all these (objects), if you are correct (Q.S. al-Baqarah: 31).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pendekatan filosofis berupaya mencari jawaban atas hakikat segala sesuatu. Atau metode berpikir sesuai dengan objeknya secara sistematis, menyeluruh (universal), dan mendasar (radikal), lihat, Dede Ahmad Ghazali dan Heri Gunawan, *Studi Islam*, (Bandung:PT. Remaja Rosdakarya,2015),hlm.66.

<sup>6</sup> Abdul Mujib, et al, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*,(Jakarta: Kencana,2006),hlm.10.

<sup>7</sup> Abdul Mujib, et al, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*,hlm.12.

<sup>8</sup> Departemen Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, (Surabaya:Danakarya ,2004), hlm.6.

Naquib al-Attas as quoted by Mahmud, defined the word ta'lim as a teaching process without any fundamental introduction. According to him, if the term ta'lim is equated with the term tarbiyah, ta'lim has the meaning of knowing everything, so that its meaning becomes more universal than the term at-tarbiyah, since at-tarbiyah does not cover knowledge and only refers to external conditions.<sup>9</sup>

### 3) Ta'dib

Ta'dib means education. According to Langgulong,<sup>10</sup> the word ta'dib is used in education like a hadith of Rasulullah SAW.

أَدَّبَنِي رَبِّي أَحْسَنَ تَأْدِيبِي

*Allah educates me, so He gives me the best education. (HR. Ibnu Hibban)*

The word ta'dib is usually translated as politeness education, manners, attitude, character, honor, moral and ethics.<sup>11</sup> Ta'dib contains the meaning as a process of recognition and acknowledgment that is gradually instilled in humans about the proper places of everything in the order of creation, then guides and directs them towards the acknowledgment and recognition of God's power and majesty in the order of being. and His existence.<sup>12</sup>

Al-Attas, as quoted by Langgulong, argued ta'dib is more appropriate, it is not only focus on teaching, but also includes other creatures apart from humans. Based on those statements, it can be said that ta'dib includes ta'lim and tarbiyah.<sup>13</sup>

### 4) Riyadhah

Riyadhah is defined as training, moral education, and seclusion for worship.<sup>14</sup> According to al-Bastani as quoted by Abdul Mujib, *riyâdah* in the context of education means educating children's souls with noble character. This understanding will be different if riyâdah is attributed to the discipline of Sufism or sports. Riyâdah in Sufism means the spiritual practice of being alone on certain days to worship and contemplate one's rights and obligations. While riyâdah in sports discipline means physical exercise to nourish the body. In children's education, al-Gazâli emphasized more on the psychomotor domain through training. Training means habituation and childhood which is suited to the method of habituation. Children who are doing positive

<sup>9</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.23.

<sup>10</sup> Hasan Langgulong, *Asaz-Asaz Pendidikan Islam*, (Jakarta: PT. Al-Husna Zikra,2000),hlm.3.

<sup>11</sup> Abdul Mujib, et al, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.20.

<sup>12</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.23.

<sup>13</sup> Hasan Langgulong, *Asaz-Asaz Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.4.

<sup>14</sup> Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *al-Munawwir, Kamus Arab Indonesia*, (Surabaya: Pustaka Progressif, 1997), hlm.548.

activities, then in their youth and adulthood it is easier to have a pious personality.<sup>15</sup>

## **b. Terminology of Education**

In a simple and general sense, the meaning of education is the process of changing the attitudes and behavior of a person or group of people in an effort to mature humans through teaching and training.<sup>16</sup> Education is also interpreted as a process by which all human abilities (talents and acquired abilities) can be affected by habituation.<sup>17</sup> Education is an effort to advance the growth of character (inner strength, character), mind (intellect), and child soul.<sup>18</sup> According to Ahmad Tafsir, the Greeks, approximately 600 years before Christ, had stated that education was an effort to help humans become human.<sup>19</sup>

Education in the National Education System Law (SISDIKNAS) Number 20 of 2003 states that: "A conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character and the skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state".<sup>20</sup>

The definition of education is still general and can be applied to all educational activities, including Islamic education. This formulation is based on the assumption that education functions as a medium to prepare the younger generation so that they can live happily and be able to play their role in society in the future. There are three issues that distinguish between Islamic education and other education. First, the desired goal. Second, the theory that forms the basis of the educational process. Third, the material presented.<sup>21</sup>

In line with Islamic education, several experts provide various definitions of Islamic education, depending on their respective perspectives. However, the essence is relatively similar, it can be inferred as a process of preparing students to live life and meet the needs of their life goals more effectively and efficiently. Nonetheless, there is a need for scrutiny in order to see the relevance of the

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<sup>15</sup> Abdul Mujib, et al, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.21.

<sup>16</sup> Rochman Natawidjaya, *et.all. Rujukan Filsafat, Teori dan Praksis Ilmu Pendidikan*, hlm.1.

<sup>17</sup> Muzayyin Arifin, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, (Jakarta: PT. Bumi Aksara,2009),hlm.13.

<sup>18</sup> Abdul Khobir, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, (Pekalongan: Stain Press,2009),hlm.5.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmad Tafsir, *Filsafat pendidikan Islam* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya,2006),hlm.33.

<sup>20</sup> Lihat, Undang-undang Republik Indonesia No.20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional pasal 1 ayat 1.

<sup>21</sup> Imam Suraji, *Prinsip-prinsip Pendidikan Anak dalam Perspektif al-Qur'an dan Hadis*, (Pekalongan: Stain Press,2011),hlm.127.

formulation within the basic framework of the concept of Islamic education.<sup>22</sup>

Al-Khâtib al-Baghdâdi (died 463 H) argued that Islamic education as an activity based on Islamic teachings would ideally rely on two things. First, the Qur'an and al-Hadith, and the second is the *ijtihad* of Muslim thinkers.<sup>23</sup> Ibnu Maskawaih (d. 421 H) stated that Islamic education (*tarbiyah*) is the *adab* (courtesy) of the Shari'a and takes its functions and conditions so that the child becomes accustomed to it.<sup>24</sup> According to al-Gazâli (d. 505 H), central in education is the heart because the heart is the essence of human beings.<sup>25</sup>

Ahmad D. Marimba as quoted by Mahmud, stated that Islamic education as physical and spiritual guidance based on Islamic religious laws leads to the formation of the main personality according to Islamic provisions, what is meant by the main personality is the Muslim personality, namely the personality that is in accordance with Islamic values. Islam.<sup>26</sup> According to Abuddin Nata, Islamic education can be interpreted as education that is based on the values of Islamic teachings as stated in the Qur'an and al-Hadith as well as in the thoughts of the scholars and in the practice of the history of the Muslim community.<sup>27</sup>

Based on the limitations and understandings of Islamic education above, it can be stated that Islamic education is a deliberate guidance activity to achieve Muslim personality, both with regard to physical, spiritual, intellectual and moral dimensions. Islamic education is a process of consciously guiding an educator so that the physical, spiritual and intellectual aspects of students improve and develop toward the formation of an Islamic personality, family and society.<sup>28</sup>

## 2. Essence of Fitrah in Islam

With regard to fitrah, Allah SWT has provided the following explanation:

فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ  
ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

*So turn your face straight towards religion (Islam); (according to) Allah's fitrah because He has created humans according to that (fitrah). There is no change in Allah's creation. (That is) the straight religion, but most people do not know. (QS. ar-Rûm [30]: 30).*

<sup>22</sup> Usman Abu Bakar, *Paradigma dan Epistemologi Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.99.

<sup>23</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.232.

<sup>24</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.233.

<sup>25</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.245.

<sup>26</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.24.

<sup>27</sup> Abuddin Nata, *Manajemen Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2007), hlm.161.

<sup>28</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.25.

The word fitrah also refers to the words of the Prophet Muhammad narrated by Imam Bukhari.

كُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ يُوَلَّدُ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ فَأَيُّوَاهُ يَهُودًا أَوْ نَصْرَانِيَةً أَوْ يُمَجْسَانِيَةً

Every child who is born in a state of fitrah, it is his parents who make him a Jew, Christian, or Zoroastrian. (HR. Bukhārī).<sup>29</sup>

The content of the hadith above shows that what is meant by fitrah is the good potential that is innate from birth, but that potential plays a role in shaping its future development through environmental influences. Since in making Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians is misleading. Fitrah according to etymology (language) means human nature.<sup>30</sup> According to al-Alusī, the terminologically fitrah is a character that is ready to accept the straight religion (Islam).<sup>31</sup> Ibn Kašīr defines fitrah as monotheism or acknowledging the Oneness of Allah.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, al-Marāgī viewed that fitrah implies a tendency to accept the truth.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, several experties interpreted the word fitrah can mean various definitions, these are:

- 1) fiṭrah means ṭuhr (holy)
- 2) fiṭrah means Islam (religion of Islam)
- 3) fiṭrah means monotheism (acknowledging the oneness of Allah)
- 4) fiṭrah means sincere (pure)
- 5) fiṭrah means the human tendency to accept and act on the truth.
- 6) fiṭrah means al-garīzah (instinct)
- 7) fiṭrah means the basic potential that serves Allah
- 8) fiṭrah means provision for human beings both happiness and misery.<sup>34</sup>

Based on al-Qur'an letter ar-Rum verse 30, the meaning of fitrah is human basic ability that develops dynamically and best-owned by Allah to him by containing components that are dynamic and responsive to the influence of the surrounding environment, including the influence of education. These components are: (1) talent, (2) instinct or gharizah, (3)

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<sup>29</sup> Abu ‘Abdīlah Muhammad bin Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, Jilid II (Semarang: Toha Putera,t.t), hlm.118.

<sup>30</sup> Luis Ma’luf, *al-Munjid*, (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm al-Malayin, 1986),hlm.588.

<sup>31</sup> Mahmūd al-Bagdādī al-Alusī, *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, jilid XI, (Beirut: Dār aš-Surās al-‘Arabi,t.t),hlm.41.

<sup>32</sup> Abu al-Fidā Isma‘īl bin ‘Umar Ibn Kašīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’an al-‘Aẓīm*, jilid XI, (Dār at-Taibah li an-Nasyr wa at-Tauzi’,t.tp,1999),hlm.312.

<sup>33</sup> Ahmad Mustafā al-Marāgī, *Tafsīr al-Marāgī*, jilid XXI,(Mesir: Mustafa al-Bāb al-Halabī,t.t),hlm.45.

<sup>34</sup> Armai Arief, *Pengantar Ilmu dan Metodologi Pendidikan Islam*,(Jakarta: Ciputat Press,2002),hlm.7.

drivers or impulses, (4) character or temperament, (5) intuition or inspiration.<sup>35</sup>

### 3. Modern Educational Theory

There are at least three educational theories that can determine the direction of child development. These theories include Nativism (Arthur Schopenhauer 1788-1860), Empiricism (John Locke 1632-1704), and Convergence (Lois William Stern 1871-1938).

- a. Nativism holds that talent has an important role. There is no point in educating people if the child's talent is not good, so that education is likened to "turning gold into silver" is something that is impossible.
- b. Empiricism holds that education is very necessary. His theory is known as the "Tabularasa Theory". In the context of education, educators are people who are able to give color to students.
- c. Convergence recognizes the previous streams. Therefore, according to this term, education is very necessary, but the talents (nature) that exist in students also affect the success of education. This flow seems to be a mixture of Nativism and Empiricism, even in reality, it emphasizes more on the importance of education. The convergence flow is a stream that is widely embraced by educators today. While the schools of Nativism and Empiricism have become obsolete and have begun to be abandoned by many of their adherents.<sup>36</sup>

The starting point for the differences in each school (nativism, empiricism and convergence) lies in the factors that influence human development, human development determined by innate factors (nativism) or by educational and environmental factors (empiricism), or both influence each other (convergence). The concept of education in various streams recognizes that humans have the potential to be educated.<sup>37</sup>

In relation with educational theory, it can be said that fitrah contains educational implications that connote convergence, since it contains events which is filled by the basic potential of a true and straight religion (ad-dīn al-qayyim), namely Islam. In the other hand, that basic potential can be changed by the surrounding environment.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, the view of nativism, empiricism, and convergence always influence the steps of the educational process, it has been basically recorded in the concept of Islam.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Hasan Basri dan Beni Ahmad Saebani, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2010), hlm.128-129.

<sup>36</sup> Armai, *Pengantar...*, hlm.5-6.

<sup>37</sup> Jalaluddin, dan Abdullah Idi, *Filsafat Pendidikan*, (Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada, 2011), hlm.198.

<sup>38</sup> Armai, *Pengantar*, hlm.7-8.

<sup>39</sup> Usman Abu Bakar, *Paradigma dan Epistemologi Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.92.

Based on Islam view, the basic ability or nature is called "fitrah".<sup>40</sup> Islam is in line with the three views above, holding the view that the effective role of education in fostering human personality is influenced by the environment and supported by human innate factors (fitrah).<sup>41</sup>

#### 4. Fitrah based Children's Education

Fitrah is a virtue given by God (Allah SWT) to humans who become educable human potential. This potential is a complex thing that consists of: spirit (spirit), qalb (heart), 'aql (mind), and nafs (soul). These potentials are spiritual or mental-psychic. In addition, humans are also equipped with physical-sensual potential in the form of a set of sensory organs that function as instruments to understand the outside world and various events that occur in their environment. Thus, fitrah is a basic human concept that plays a role in shaping the development of students in addition to the environment (education).

However, although fitrah can be influenced by the environment, its condition remains neutral. It has a dynamic nature, reactive, and responsive to outside influences.<sup>42</sup> Fitrah that is potential must be developed between factual and actual. In order to carry out these efforts, Islam provides basic principles in the form of Islamic values to the growth of human potential which is guided and directed.<sup>43</sup> In this process, educational factors play a very large role in determining the shape of a child's personality pattern. Thus, the theory of human nature with regard to education includes five basic things: a) Humans are originally God's creatures who are clean from sin and dirt of worldly desires, b) God gives a natural spirit to humans in the form of a desire and tendency to seek the truth, c) Fitrah means tending to monotheism and surrendering to God's will, d) The basic will of human nature to seek knowledge, and e) The influence of the family environment, school environment, and community environment can contaminate the values of human nature.<sup>44</sup>

Based on this concept, children's education is expected to have functioned as a medium for developing children's potential in accordance with their nature by paying attention to the pattern of child development. Theoretically, it can be done in the following ways:

- a. The method of democratic education, namely education since it is carried out by giving independence to students to determine their choice of interests and talents and develop their thoughts and opinions as long as they have a positive impact on their intellectual development and progress.

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<sup>40</sup> Mahmud, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam*, hlm.84-85.

<sup>41</sup> Jalaluddin, dan Abdullah Idi, *Filsafat Pendidikan*, hlm.131.

<sup>42</sup> Armai, *Pengantar*, hlm.8.

<sup>43</sup> Novan Ardy Wiyani dan Barnawi, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* hlm.41.

<sup>44</sup> Hasan dan Beni, *Ilmu*, hlm.129-130.

- b. Education with a conscience, namely applying a sympathetic and empathetic approach to the intellectual development of students and personal experiences expressed by students to their educators.
- c. Education with a rational approach, namely educating children with a ratio size. Truth can only be accepted if it is conveyed logically and systematically and is based on accurate data.
- d. Education with an empirical approach, namely the development of Islamic education methods based on the experiences of educators.
- e. Education with a naturalistic approach, namely the development of Islamic education based on the natural development of students.
- f. Education with the *basyīran wa nazīran* approach, namely raising everything that makes students happy and giving something that creates fear or through threats.
- g. The exemplary approach, namely the development of Islamic education methods with the main examples from educators so that students imitate positive behavior that is beneficial for the advancement of their intellect and moral goodness.<sup>45</sup>

### C. CONCLUSION

Islamic education is a process of consciously guiding consciously an educator in educating students' physical, spiritual, and intellectual aspects in order to make them grow and develop properly. The Islamic theory of nature, namely the good potential that is innate from birth, but this potential plays a role in shaping its future development through environmental influences. In modern educational theory, three theories determine the direction of child development. They are the innate/talent factor (nativism), the educational factor (empiricism), and the combination of innate and educational influence (convergence). Those three theories above have been recorded in the concept of Islam through the theory of *fitrah*. The educational effective role in fostering human personality is influenced by the environment and supported by human innate factors (*fitrah*). It plays a significant role in shaping the development of students in the environment (education). Furthermore, the concept of nature-based Islamic education is an effort in order to optimize the development and growth of students' subjects on a good basis by placing students as subjects rather than objects. Here this research process dealing with ideal methodology development, conductive, and applicable approach.

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<sup>45</sup> Hasan dan Beni, *Ilmu*, hlm.141-142.

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