

## THE OBJECTIVE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION ACCORDING TO CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL FIGURES BASED ON THINKING OF THE HUMAN ESSENCE

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**Abstract** - Education is a process of humanizing humans. Humans who are worthy to be role models on earth, and humans who can heed the good life order. Either according to religious guidelines or according to other norms. Efforts to formulate concepts of education are part of an operational framework so that the educational goals of each concept can be realized. Therefore, this study was conducted using the approach of contemporary thinkers through the thoughts of Mohamad Iqbal, Al-Attas, Al-Faruqi, and Hossein Nasr. The study was conducted with a qualitative method approach because the data used were sourced from literacy data.

**Keywords:** education, character thinking, norms

**Abstrak** - Pendidikan adalah sebuah proses memanusiakan manusia. Manusia yang layak agar menjadi teladan di bumi, dan manusia yang mampu mengindahkan tata hidup yang baik. Entah sesuai dengan panduan agama maupun sesuai dengan norma-norma yang lain. Upaya-upaya perumusan konsep pendidikan adalah bagian dari kerangka kerja yang bersifat operasional agar tujuan pendidikan dari masing-masing konsep dapat terealisasi. Oleh karena itu kajian ini dilakukan menggunakan pendekatan pemikiran dari para pemikir kontemporer melalui pemikiran Mohamad Iqbal, Al-Attas, Al-Faruqi dan Hossein Nasr. Kajian dilakukan dengan metode kualitatif karena data yang dipakai bersumber dari data-data literasi.

**Kata Kunci:** pendidikan, pemikiran tokoh, norma

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a process to shape humans as humans should be. The existence of a correct understanding of who humans are is an initial

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or basic success before carrying out the educational process. Because education is a human process. Humans who deserve to be role models on earth, and humans who can heed a good way of life.<sup>1</sup> Either according to religious guidelines or according to other norms.

Apart from being a humanizing process, education is also a parameter of the progress of society. The formulation of educational goals is essentially an idea that is implied in society. Then continued my education to be actualized. Thus, a good education is an education that is an incompatibility between the ideals of society and the goals of education. Thus, it will make education can be said to be quality education.

The formulation of the essence and purpose of education is a vision that guides the course of the educational process in the right direction according to the “needs society” background. So, if there are many obstacles in the process, it will be easier to straighten out. Education will be directed following the objectives that have been formulated by remaining grounded in the correct knowledge of what the true essence of education is.

In this paper, the author will try to describe some of the thoughts of Muslim leaders about education. Especially educational Muslim figures who are considered as contemporary Muslim education figures. Where this is very relevant or at least closer to today’s contemporary times. These figures are Mohamad Iqbal who has thoughts on “will”; Syed Muhamad Naquib Al-Attas with the concept of “adab”; Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi with the idea of “Islamization of knowledge”; and Syed Hossein Nasr with his thoughts on “sacred cosmology”.<sup>2</sup>

By knowing the thoughts of the four figures above, at least it can be a reference for formulating the essence of education and educational goals following the ideals in the process of humanizing humans. Furthermore, knowing the sociocultural and political background of each character will help in finding the correct solution to the existing background.

Then, the formulation of the essence and purpose of education can be relevant to the times in today’s era where humanitarian or social problems become very common. Because the problem of humanity is a problem of education. The hope is that with the right education

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<sup>1</sup>Ismail SM, *Pendidikan Islam, Demokrasi dan Masyarakat Madani* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2013), hlm. 37.

<sup>2</sup>Hasan Basri, *Filsafat Pendidikanna Islam* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 2009), hlm. 190.

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formulation following the correct knowledge of human essence, it will bring up solutions to various social problems that arise.

The issue of humanity is a problem that will determine the progress of civilization. Civilization and humanity boil down to a good education. According to B.J. Habibie that education is the key to solving a problem as well as education is a process that can consciously elevate human status. So the conceptualization of education should not only be practical but also substantial.

Therefore, this paper is present in the context of being a critical study of the substantial formulation of education so that the direction and ideals of the progress of civilization and humanity can be realized. So in short, following the theory of education, because the students are human beings, the understanding of who is human essence to be known becomes very important in formulating the goals and essence of education to be formulated.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This paper uses a scientific study approach because it is based on field data following the thoughts of contemporary Islamic education figures. The study was conducted using a qualitative literacy approach. Because all data taken is based on literacy data contained in books, papers, journals, manuscripts, and other written sources. Thus, the analysis used is content analysis, with the principle of dissecting all data and then looking for comparisons and suitability to produce a conclusion.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Human Essence According to Contemporary Muslim Philosophers**

Scientists formulate in several categories of historical times, namely classical, medieval, and contemporary times. The contemporary era is the closest era to the current era. Therefore, the contextualization of the historical and socio-political background at that time was not much different from now. Likewise, educational figures in the contemporary era become the closest reference for formulating human essence as an important input for conceptualizing the formulation of the essence and goals of education. The following is a brief description of human essence according to the four Muslim figures who live in the contemporary era.

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First is Iqbal, the essential essence of man is his will, not reason or understanding. Will is a virus of enormous power that drives human activity. Education in his time was criticized as education that tends to shape non-Muslim characters, namely training human reason more than his will. The essence of education is the training of the human will.<sup>3</sup>

Why does he see human essence in his will? Because for Iqbal, the will is a force that drives all human activities. The combination of various wills whose fulfillment is directed at a goal will form the human personality. Where the ideal personality, further according to Iqbal, is a personality that is led by the will to love God, or in another language referred to as a transcendental will.<sup>4</sup>

Then, for Al-Attas, the essence of man is his *adab*. The meaning of *adab* is the recognition and acknowledgment of the reality that knowledge and everything that exists consists of a hierarchy according to its categories and levels, and that a person has his place in relation to that reality and with physical capacities and potentials, intellectual and spiritual.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the concept of a civilized man is an individual who is fully aware of his individuality and aware of his proper relationship with himself, his God, society, and nature, both visible and unseen. That means, awareness of the place of everything in the system of creation that leads humans to awareness of God in the existing order (being).

In the context of science, *adab* is an order of mind that recognizes and acknowledges the hierarchy of knowledge based on the criteria of nobility or nobility itself, such as someone whose knowledge based on revelation is nobler than those whose knowledge is based on reason. *Adab* towards nature is putting plants, rocks, mountains, rivers, valleys, lakes, animals, and their habitats in the right places.

Besides that according to Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi, the human essence is integrative knowledge. Humans have comprehensive and interrelated knowledge, which means there is no dichotomy between knowledge, instead, they are integrated with each other. The position of the Islamic education system in Muslim countries in the midst of Western colonialism: has no meaning, for several reasons, its graduates do not know the laws or regulations and work patterns that apply in the new civilization introduced by the colonizers; graduates do not

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<sup>3</sup>Mohamad Iqbal, *The Key Point in Iqbal's Educational Philosophy* dari <http://www.allama-iqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct82/5.htm>.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>Muhamad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam*, the paper delivered first world conference on Muslim Education in 1977 held in Makkah, hlm. 8.

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master science; as a consequence, graduates were not prepared to run the administrative machinery imposed by the colonialists.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, the attitude of the colonizers opened new schools and universities, whose graduates met the needs of the colonizers. Consequences of the colonial policies above: The traditional Islamic system is frozen, or dead. Western education becomes a symbol of achievement which in turn discredits not only Islamic education but also traditional Islam. Impact on education: Stagnation in Islamic education. Less superior in modern education. Muslim are dependent on foreign ideas. That's what makes people's views become dichotomy. Therefore Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi initiated about the essence of humans as humans who have integrated knowledge, unlike what was initiated by the colonial policy with the dichotomy of science.

The last according to Hossein Nasr Humans mediate the material-physical and spiritual worlds, namely one of the tasks of humans is to uphold the order of the cosmos. Man has a soul which enables him to know the Holy God, and it is through the soul that God inspires His knowledge to man. Thus, humans as part of the material-fiscal world originating from the spiritual world are essentially the enforcers of the cosmic order.<sup>7</sup>

As an enforcer, he has a soul that makes it possible to know a holy God and get inspiration from Him, and can learn from the earth quantitatively, morally, intellectually, and spiritually so that humans are able to carry out the task of mediating the two worlds above, namely the material and spiritual worlds. Thus it does not make people lose their understanding of religion which is understood in the wrong way by Europeans. Instead, religion becomes the spirit of the establishment of the cosmic order. Or what in Nasr is referred to as the term sacred cosmology.

## **2. Historical Background and Objective Condition of the Community**

The objective conditions and historical background surrounding the four figures above are some of the important factors that make the diversity of their concepts of view about humans. The following will briefly describe the historical background conditions as well as the

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<sup>6</sup>M.A. Fattah Santoso, Materi Kuliah Filsafat Pendidikan Islam-Magister Pendidikan Islam Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, tidak diterbitkan.

<sup>7</sup>M. Sharif, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1966), hlm. 954.

objective conditions of the people that occurred at that time.

First, the background during the time of Mohamad Iqbal, education in his time was criticized as education that tends to shape non-Muslim characters, namely training human reason more than his will. Especially at a time when Muslims experienced adversity that seemed to have no help. Politically, they have experienced divisions, economically they have experienced chronic poverty, and socio-culturally, Muslims have experienced a dichotomy of knowledge that is too severe, ignorance, and the spread of superstition. In addition, the motivation that Muslims in the Indian subcontinent must get out of British colonialism by gaining independence to form their own country (Pakistan). It is from this background that Iqbal gives a human view of his will or ego.<sup>8</sup>

Second, the historical background of the community according to Al-Attas is that the problems that arise in contemporary Muslim culture are rooted in two causes that can be categorized as external and internal causes. External factors are the religious-cultural and socio-political challenges of Western culture and civilization. While the internal factors are (1) errors in understanding science and its application, (2) the loss of *adab*, (3) and the emergence of false leaders. According to Al-Attas, the first thing that must be addressed and which really helps improve the other two factors is the “loss of *adab*”. Whereas explained in the previous sub-chapter, *adab* is part of wisdom and justice, then the loss of *adab* will result in ignorance and injustice.

Third, the historical background of the people that influenced Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi so that he has the concept of humans as people who have integrative knowledge is as follows. According to Al-Faruqi, the position of the Islamic education system in Muslim countries in the midst of Western colonialism is meaningless, for several reasons, 1) graduates are not familiar with the laws and work patterns that apply in the new civilization introduced by the colonizers; 2) graduates do not master science; 3) as a consequence, graduates are not ready to run the administrative machinery imposed by the colonialists. Then the attitude of the colonizers who opened new schools and universities, whose graduates were only to meet the needs of the colonizers.

The consequences of the colonial policies above against Muslims are 1) The traditional Islamic system is frozen, or dead. 2) Western education becomes a symbol of achievement which in turn discredits not only Islamic education but also traditional Islam. Moreover, the impact on education causes education in the Muslim world to experience,

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<sup>8</sup>M.A. Fattah Santoso, Materi Kuliah, hlm. 78.

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stagnation in Islamic education, lack of excellence in modern education, and Muslim dependence on foreign ideas (Eropa and Amerika).<sup>9</sup>

The solution that has been carried out by reformist Muslims in the early 20th century such as Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Abduh is the addition of Western sciences to the existing curriculum (Traditional Islamic disciplines) on the grounds that Western sciences are value-free and will not undermine Islamic values is not very successful. This means that this solution failed, thus science and technology in the Islamic world did not develop and the traditional Islamic sciences were not reformed. Therefore, there needs to be another solution, proposed by Al-Faruqi, namely is the Islamization of knowledge.

Fourth, as for Syed Hossein Nasr's background, why he initiated the concept of sacred cosmology is that many people are ignorant of environmental sustainability and the failure of the education system that cares about the environment so that the environment is still damaged. In Western discourse, religion and spirituality in their broadest sense are related to the issue of Spirit, the Divine, the Holy in which the spirit emanates from the Divine, and the Divine is sacred. Thus, a spirituality that eschews the Holy One as embraced by many in the West is not true spirituality. Since the focus of religion's attention is on recognizing and celebrating the sacred, religion is the home of spirituality.<sup>10</sup>

For Nasr, religion (not spirituality) is a storehouse of the sacred and ways of accessing it. Therefore, religion is a source of environmental ethics and cosmology (knowledge of the natural order). The reference "We must educate future generations" as a solution to the problem of sustainability has begun to lose its benefits, dealing with the fact that environmental education has been going on for more than 30 years, but the planet Earth is still in ruins.<sup>11</sup> Since 1996, for Nasr, the source of the environmental crisis has been a spiritual crisis, "This earth bleeds from wounds caused by humanity which is no longer in harmony with Heaven (read: which means Holy of Holies) because it is in constant conflict with the environment".

The spiritual crisis here does not mean the loss of individual spiritual-religious experience, but the loss of spiritual-religious knowledge about nature. This means that universal humanity is

<sup>9</sup>Tahereh Javidi Kalateh Jafarabadi, *Mullah Sadra's Idea about "existence" and "motion in substance" and its educational implications*, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, hlm. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Intelektual Islam, Teologi Filsafat dan Gnosis*, Terj. Suharsono dan Jamaluddin MZ, (CHS Press: Yogyakarta, 1991) hlm. 915.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

experiencing an environmental crisis. Various solutions have been offered but to no avail. The solution is to find out where the weak points are, and it turns out that religion has not yet entered into the role of religion. Religion that gives its view of nature. Ethical values of nature need to be revived, namely with a religious approach (sacred cosmology).

### **3. Implications for the Formulation of the Essence and Goals of Islamic Education**

After understanding the general thoughts and background that gave rise to the four figures above, a common thread can be drawn regarding the formulation of the essence and purpose of education. The following is a more detailed discussion regarding the essence and purpose of education according to the four contemporary figures.

According to Mohamad Iqbal, the essence of education is the training of the human will in order to develop a personality type or Islamic character so that humans can carry out their roles on earth and meet the challenges of their times. Thus, the enlightened personality (where the will of loving God dominates the hierarchy of human will) will realize its position in essence as one of the greatest energies of essence to prosper it and build an ideal social order.

Furthermore, the essence and purpose of education according to Syed Naquib Al-Attas, education is the recognition and acknowledgment—which is progressively implanted in humans—about the real place of everything in the order of creation, which leads a person to the recognition and acknowledgment of the existence of God in the order of being and existence. Because this “*adab*” is Al-Attas’s view of education, he calls education with the term “*ta’dib*”, do not use term “*tarbiyah*” or “*ta’lim*” as in the result of the international conference on Islamic education.<sup>12</sup>

Then according to Ismail Raji Al-Faruqi as views on the Islamization of knowledge with various backgrounds, he views that the essence and purpose of Islamic education is an effort to help humans to have integrative knowledge (synthesizing the treasures of Islam and modern science) for the process of social, political and economic transformation.

The last is the view according to Syed Hossein Nasr about the essence and purpose of Islamic education. The essence and purpose of Islamic education according to Nasr is the introduction and development

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<sup>12</sup>M. Sharif, *A History*, hlm. 56.



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of sacred cosmology (spiritual-religious views on the natural order and human relations with it), so that it is hoped that students will be able to become enforcers of the cosmic order with the task of mediating the material-fiscal world and the spiritual world. With this educational goal, it is hoped that environmental damage can be stopped or at least prevented.

The above are some concepts of diversity about the essence and purpose of Islamic education formulated by the four Muslim leaders of contemporary education. Of the four concepts above, each has its own uniqueness and characteristics. This is because it is based on the scope or background that gave rise to it. But at least from the four background conditions surrounding the four figures, they can represent various conditions that seem to be happening in the current era.

The formulation of the essence and purpose of education from the four figures above is a response to the people and the objective conditions of the reality of Muslims with various existing problems. Therefore, the thoughts that emerge from the four figures, namely Mohamad Iqbal, Al-Attas, Al-Faruqi, and Hossein Nasr are very relevant to their historical background. Because the thoughts of each are in the context of creating a change response to a system that does not fit within the historical space and objectivity of Muslims.

As Mohamad Iqbal thought about the essence and purpose of his education, this is very relevant with the hope that social change through individual change in this case is his will. Likewise, Al-Attas thought about his education is very relevant to his historical background because Al-Attas wants a change in society (social change: justice and prosperity) through individual changes, namely his *adab*.<sup>13</sup>

Then, Al-Faruqi's educational thought becomes very relevant because he wants social transformation through the transformation of individuals and systems, namely the Islamization of knowledge. Finally, Nasr's thoughts are very relevant to his historical background because Nasr wants people who are aware of sacred cosmology as enforcers of the order of the cosmos that is being damaged. It is the same with changes on the social scale through individual changes, namely individuals who are aware of their duties as enforcers of the cosmic order.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Almut Beringer, "Reclaiming a Sacred Cosmology: Sayyed Hossein Naser, the Perebial Philosophy, and Sustainability Education". *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*. Vol. 11. November, 2006, hlm. 2-3 dan Muhaimin. *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam*. (Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosda Karya. 2004), hlm. 7.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

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Among the four thoughts above, all of them emphasize the occurrence of social change through individual changes with different approaches. Efforts to make this change are carried out through the educational process. The content of education following the historical background of each is the approach used. Mohamad Iqbal with an ego or will approach. Al-Attas with the adab approach. Al-Faruqi with the Islamization of science approach and Nasr with the holy or sacred cosmology approach.

### **CONCLUSION**

Education is a process to shape humans as humans should be. It should be with a correct understanding of who really is humans. This understanding is an initial success before carrying out the educational process. Because education is a human process. Humans who deserve to be role models on earth, and humans who can heed a good way of life. Either according to religious guidelines or according to other norms.

Efforts to formulate concepts are part of an operational framework so that the educational goals of each concept can be realized. Moreover, with the diversity as described above, it can be a guide in running a system and as a reference for a work program either in the learning material or curriculum. With the hope, the ideals written in the vision and mission can be grounded in the form of activities, work programs, guide books, and so on. So that there is a match between the plans and educational outcomes.

The ultimate goal of education is to humanize humans with the right approach, with the right knowledge of human essence. Especially in the contemporary era, known as the millennial era, besides the industrial 4.0 era. Where the role of humans is replaced by the role of media and technology. So if humans do not survive by controlling the technology and media, then humans will be replaced. Thus the role of education with an understanding of the true essence and purpose becomes very important in its assessment.

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