

The Concept of *Fitrah* for Children in Ibn Katsir's Qur'an Exegesis: A Pedagogical Implication in Early Childhood Islamic Education

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Abstract

The debate in child development is the factors that influence development, such as genetic factors, heredity, or environmental factors. Filling the room for dialogue and discourse on the conflict of these two causes, Islam offers an alternative to the Qur'an fitrah definition. This study aims to reveal the concept of child fitrah according to Ibn Katsir in the Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim and the pedagogical implications in early childhood Islamic education. This study uses qualitative research methods with a descriptive-analytic approach. The data were collected through documents and analyzed using the Creswell model analysis technique. The results showed that the concept of human nature (fitrah), according to Ibn Katsir, is based on good innate potential, i.e., Tawheed or religious nature. Therefore, education has to maintain this nature as a positive external agent by referring to Allah's guidance through the Prophet's revelations and examples. It then manifests by observation, literacy, modeling, and reasoning in the learning activity. In the educational process, these efforts can be: 1) Wisdom, which can be interpreted as literacy and modeling. The activities can be memorization and

recitation with modeling from adults or teachers; 2) *Mau'idhoh*, oral transmission method to convey messages, reasoning, and even warnings; 3) If necessary, an excellent *Jidal* method can be used. Thus, the potential of *Fitrah* is transformed into a necessity for humans to fulfill their "primordial promise" to Allah. Finally, this study provides a basis for pedagogical practice based on the concept of *fitrah* according to Ibn Katsir in the implementation of early childhood Islamic education.

Keywords: *Fitrah, Tafsir, Ibn Katsir, Pedagogy, Early Childhood Islamic Education*

Abstrak

Perdebatan dalam kajian perkembangan anak adalah faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi perkembangan yaitu antara faktor genetik, hereditas atau faktor lingkungan. Dalam mengisi ruang diskusi dan perdebatan terkait kontroversi kedua faktor tersebut, Islam memberikan alternatif dengan konsep *fitrah* dalam Al-Qur'an. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap konsep *fitrah* anak menurut Ibnu Katsir dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim dan implikasi pedagogis konsep tersebut dalam pendidikan Islam anak usia dini. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif analitik. Data diambil melalui dokumen dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis model Creswell. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konsep *fitrah* manusia menurut Ibnu Katsir berdasar pada potensi bawaan yang bersifat baik yaitu *fitrah tawheed* atau agama yang lurus. Oleh karenanya pendidikan bertugas untuk menjaga *fitrah* tersebut sebagai agen eksternal yang positif dengan mengacu pada petunjuk Allah melalui wahyu dan teladan Rasul. Hal tersebut kemudian dimanifestasikan dalam aktivitas belajar melalui kegiatan observasi, literasi, modeling, reasoning. Dalam proses pendidikan maka upaya tersebut dapat dilakukan dengan menerapkan metode: 1) Hikmah, yang bisa dimaknai dengan literasi dan modeling, kegiatannya bisa berupa memorization dan recitation dengan pemodelan dari orang dewasa atau guru. 2) *Mau'idhoh*, metode oral transmission untuk menyampaikan pesan, reasoning, dan bahkan peringatan. 3). Bila diperlukan bisa menggunakan metode *Jidal* yang baik. Dengan demikian potensi *Fitrah* bertransformasi menjadi keharusan bagi manusia untuk memenuhi "janji primordial" nya kepada Allah. Terakhir, penelitian ini memberikan dasar praktik pedagogik berdasar konsep *fitrah* menurut Ibnu Katsir dalam pelaksanaan pendidikan Islam anak usia dini.

Kata Kunci: *Fitrah, Tafsir, Ibnu Katsir, Pedagogis, Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*

Introduction

Experts have criticized the concept of Islamic education for a long time. Islamic education tends to be indoctrination-oriented¹ and far from the reality of life². Quoting Majid Irsan al-Kailany, the problem of Islamic education is not

¹ Mark Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," *Comparative Education* 40, no. 4 (November 1, 2004): 526, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006042000284510>.

² Mahmud Arif, *Pendidikan Islam Transformatif* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2008), 216.

only at the practical level but also the theoretical, conceptual³ study of Islamic education, on the one hand, adopts an adoptive pattern and relies on a western or centric view, which is caused by stagnation in the dialogue of Islamic education thought in the Islamic world⁴. On the other hand, it tends to be normative and salaf-centric with a more descriptive character⁵. Even from a western perspective, this concept of Islamic education is considered problematic⁶. Even more firmly, Niyozov and Memon emphasized Halstead's view by saying that Islamic Education as an independent scientific discipline can be considered as non-existent⁷. Muslim thinkers undoubtedly oppose the western rejection of the concept of Islamic education. One of them is Al-Attas, whose view is that Islamic education is real reality and has existed along with Islamic history itself. Furthermore, Al-Attas argues that the western rejection of the concept of Islamic education is based on differences in views and the epistemology used⁸.

In the context of this "discourse war," theoretical and conceptual studies are essential to be carried out to be able to provide a counter-discourse on western hegemony in the study of educational theory. One area that is dominated by western thought is in early childhood Islamic education. Early childhood Islamic education is slightly different from education at a higher level because early childhood Islamic education emphasizes child development, while western thinkers currently dominate developmental theories⁹. One of the significant debated themes in child development is the

³ Arif, 217.

⁴ Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," 526; Abdul Munir Mulkhan, "Filsafat Tarbiyah Berbasis Kecerdasan Makrifat," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2, no. 2 (2013): 219, <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2013.22.219-239>.

⁵ Arif, *Pendidikan Islam Transformatif*, 217.

⁶ Halstead, "An Islamic Concept of Education," 526.

⁷ Sarfaroz Niyozov and Nadeem Memon, "Islamic Education and Islamization: Evolution of Themes, Continuities and New Directions," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31, no. 1 (March 1, 2011): 6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2011.556886>.

⁸ Niyozov and Memon, 6.

⁹ The development of the developmental studies has led to developmental theories with different perspectives such as the theory of development from a Psychoanalytic perspective, with Freud as its prominent figure with the Psychosexual Development theory and Erikson with the Psychosocial theory. Ethological Theory with a biological approach also emerged, with Darwin, Lorenz-Tindbergen, and Bowlby, as its prominent figures There is also the theory of Ecology from Urie Bronfenbrenner. In addition, in specific themes also emerge cognitive development theory presented by Piaget and social cognitive theory from Vigotsky, there is also the theory of Moral Development from Kohlberg, and theory of language

factors that influence development, whether development is influenced by genetic factors, heredity (nature), or otherwise influenced by the environment (nurture)¹⁰. With the idea of *fitrah*, Islam has a bid, as in Q.S. When filling the space for dialogue and discourse on the existence and nurture controversy. Al-Ruum[30]: 30.

Fitrah is generally defined as the primary (innate) potential of humans¹¹. This concept of *fitrah* has more or fewer similarities with the western conception of education flow in certain aspects. An example is a role of innate factors in education as nativism adherents, or vice versa, emphasizing environmental factors (education) and streams that try to bridge the debate between the two streams, i.e., flow and convergence. However, some things distinguish the concept of *fitrah* in Islam, i.e., the theological and revelation aspects¹².

The Quran's discussion of the *fitrah* concept can be called a book of exceptional values that human beings maintain even in transition times. *Fitrah* in the Al-Qur'an can mean holy, pure, or even natural. This meaning is usually attached to the implementation of *zakat fitrah* by Muslims before the Eid prayer, which comes from the word 'ada, which means returning to *fitrah*. *Zakat fitrah* is a form of worship that is a symbol that indicates that a person has returned to his sacred human's *fitrah*¹³. Linguistically, the word "*fitrah*" means creation or innate nature (which exists from birth), nature, religion, and

development from Chomsky. See Christi Crosby Bergin and David Allen Bergin, *Child and Adolescent Development in Your Classroom*, 2nd edition (Stamford, CT, USA: Cengage Learning, 2014); compare with William Crain, *Teori Perkembangan Konsep and Aplikasi*, trans. Yudi Santoso (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2014).

¹⁰ Nature is a process in an organism that directs the organism to develop according to its genetic code. Meanwhile, nurture is an external process that maintains the development process of an organism according to its genetic code or otherwise causes organisms to develop incompatible with their genetic code due to programmed training. This means that environmental factors affect development. Spencer A. Rathus, *Childhood and Adolescence: Voyages in Development*, 6th edition (Boston, MA, USA: Cengage Learning, 2016), 30.

¹¹ Nadlifah, Suismanto, and Hafidh 'Aziz, *Pengantar Ke Arah Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* (Yogyakarta: Program Studi Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini Fakultas Ilmu Tarbiyah and Keguruan UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2018), 133; Karman, *Tafsir Ayat Ayat Pendidikan* (Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya, 2018), 36.

¹² Nadlifah, Suismanto, and 'Aziz, *Pengantar Ke Arah Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 135.

¹³ M. Dawam Rahardjo, *Ensiklopedi al-Qur'an: Tafsir Sosial Berdasarkan Konsep-Konsep Kunci* (Jakarta: Paramadina bekerjasama Jurnal Ulumul Qur'an, 1996), 39.

Sunnah¹⁴. According to Louis Ma'luf, the word *fitrah* means creating/making something that has never existed, which is a trait that has been characterized by it since its creation, or nature, religion, and Sunnah¹⁵.

The translation related to *fitrah*, in the end, is not a single translation. Every attempt to explain the concept of *fitrah* always involves some subjective interpretation, even though the analysis comes from classical Islamic scholars based on both the Qur'an and the hadith. The discussion about *fitrah* has been open to various interpretations that have been presented by many classical Islamic scholars. The following explanation is one way that can be used to identify the defining characteristics of *fitrah* according to Ibn Katsir based on three large maps that are the mainstream in defining *fitrah*. Yasien Mohamed described the three typologies of the interpretation of *fitrah*: First, the view that defines *fitrah* with the meaning of positive nature is the opposite, seeing *fitrah* with negative (inherent) meaning third is neutral or dualism¹⁶.

The classification of Yasien Mohamed's is based on four criteria: 1) The description of the congenital state of the new-born; 2) The description of the level which is the tendency for having good or bad characteristics, which is the innate influence (merely) or the environmental influences that determine human nature; 3) The description of the crime as an external agent of heresy; 4) Prophetic imagery (*nubuwwah*) and revelation (*risalah*) as external agents of God's guidance¹⁷. In simple terms, the study is shown in Table 1. In his study, Yasien compared the three big maps that have become the mainstream in defining *fitrah*¹⁸.

¹⁴ Ahmad Warson Munawwir, *Kamus Arab-Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: PP al-Munawwir, 1984), 1142.

¹⁵ Louis Ma'luf, *Al-Munjid Fi al-Lugah Wa al-A'lam* (Beirut: Dar al-Masyriq, 1986), 588.

¹⁶ Yasien Mohamed, "The Interpretations of Faith," *Islamic Studies Journal* 34, no. 2 (1995): 129-51; see Yasien Mohamed, *Fitrah: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature* (Ta-Ha Publishers, 1996).

¹⁷ Mohamed, "The Interpretations of Faith," 70.

¹⁸ Mohamed, 71.

Table 1. Differences in the Meaning of *Fitrah* in the Views of Muslim Thinkers

No.	Criteria	Dualism	Neutral	Positive
1	Born	By bringing readiness to accept faith and kufr	In ignorance and without sin—there is no faith and kufr	In a state of faith and Islam by (bringing) a potential kufr
2	Trend/Tendency	The innate inclinations are equal to both right and wrong	There is no innate tendency toward right or wrong—humans in an empty state	Innately inclined to know Allah and do what is right
3	Crime	An external agent that complements the innate evil in humans	An external agent of heresy	An external agent of heresy
4	Prophethood and Revelation	External Divine agents for guidance which complements the good in human beings	External Divine agents for guidance	External Divine agents for guidance, complementing the innate tendencies

Source: Yasien Mohamed, *Fitra: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., 1996). 71.

In the search for the meaning of the concept of *fitrah* in the Qur'an, Ibn Katsir's Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim is used. The examination of the Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim by Ibn Katsir as study material is based on several reasons. First, Ibn Katsir studied various branches of Islamic science, which he studied in-depth, especially hadith, fiqh, history, and interpretation, so that he has several nicknames such as al-Hadith, al-Muhaddits, al-Faqih, and al-Mu'arrikh. Nevertheless, his history and perception study has best added to his name as an Islamic world scientist. With this, it is believed that the figure of Ibn Katsir is a scientist who has a broad understanding of Islamic scholarship, so that he deserves to be an authoritative reference in the realm of interpretation related to *fitrah*. Secondly, Ibn Katsir's explanation is one of the better explanations

alluded to by scholars. Many generations after that adopted his ideas, such as in the *Mahasib al-Ta'wil* and *al-Manar* books¹⁹. In terms of writing methodology, this *maudhu'i* (thematic) exegesis is also used as a reference by Rasyid Ridha, Ahmad Musthafa al-Maraghi, and Jamal ad-Din al-Qashimy²⁰. Likewise, Indonesian scholars such as Ahmad Hassan, T. M. Hasbi ash-Shiddieqy, and Hamka also refer to this commentary²¹. Third, this tafsir book becomes a reference in Islamic studies in Indonesia, such as Islamic boarding schools, schools/madrasas, or *majelis ta'lim*²². Ibn Katsir and his thoughts are quite popular in Indonesian Muslim society.

The concept of *fitrah* needs to be re-examined because until now, the meaning of *fitrah* is still a subject of discussion among Islamic experts. Ibn Katsir has an entirely different view from several other commentators regarding the concept of *fitrah*. Ibn Katsir defines *fitrah* by acknowledging the Oneness of Allah SWT or monotheism. As has been expressed by Ibn Katsir, since birth, humans have brought Tawheed, or they tend to believe in One God and try to continue to seek to achieve this Tawheed.

With Ibn Katsir's opinion, it is assumed that there is a link between the concept of *fitrah* and early childhood Islamic education. From the very beginning, it was understood that the child from the moment of their birth carried their inherent *fitrah*. On the other hand, development in the early stages of a child's age has various potentials and sensitivity to receive various stimuli from their environment. At an early age, children respond very quickly to a developmental stimulus. This theory also involves the adults surrounding the infant, from the outset, to be willing to provide a rich atmosphere for stimulation such that volatile, vulnerable times are not neglected without environmental stimulation, thus protecting their innocence.

The Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers states that pedagogical competence includes the ability, among other things, an understanding of students in-depth, the

¹⁹ Mani' Abd Halim Mahmud, *Metodologi Tafsir; Kajian Komperhensif Metode Para Ahli Tafsir*, trans. Faisal Saleh and Syahdianor (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2006), 62.

²⁰ Rosihan Anwar, *Melacak Unsur-Unsur Israiliyyat in Tafsir Ath-Thabari and Tafsir Ibn Katsir* (Bandung: Pustaka Setia, 1999), 72.

²¹ Muhammad Yusuf, *Studi Kitab Tafsir* (Yogyakarta: Penerbit Teras, 2004), 131.

²² Anwar, *Melacak Unsur-Unsur Israiliyyat in Tafsir Ath-Thabari and Tafsir Ibn Katsir*, 73; Yusuf, *Studi Kitab Tafsir*, 131.

implementation of educational learning, which includes the ability to design learning, implement learning, assess learning processes and outcomes, and make sustainable improvements.

With the background of the above explanation, this study seeks to examine the concept of *fitrah* further. Ibnu Katsir's Tafsir is used to develop early childhood Islamic education because this interpretation is an ordinary book to Islamic education institutions in Indonesia and the Indonesian Muslim community. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the concept of *fitrah* according to Ibn Katsir in the Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim and its implications for early childhood Islamic education goals.

This type of research is qualitative research using a library research model (library research), i.e., research conducted by reading and examining its primary object²³. The approach used is descriptive-analytic, a method used to compile data collected, explained, and then analyzed²⁴. This research's primary data are the Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim by Ibn Katsir, while the secondary data are books or scientific papers that discuss the concept of *fitrah* and education in the Qur'an. The data collection method consists of collecting records, files, observations, transcripts, books, magazines, which are deemed relevant to the study object. The data analysis technique used the Creswell model data analysis technique²⁵.

The Concepts of *Fitrah* According to Ibn Katsir in the Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azhim

The word *fitrah* with all of its derivations appears 20 times in the Qur'an. However, there is only one specific use of the word *fitrah*, i.e., in the Q.S. al-Ruum (30) verse: 30. This verse will be the starting point and focus of the study of *fitrah*, which is supported in other related verses. It is essential to study all the verses that contain the word *fitrah* with all its derivations to get a complete picture of Ibn Katsir's exegesis. However, the emphasis remains on the conceptual idea of *fitrah*, which is specifically linked to the human object.

²³ Dudung Abdurahman, *Pengantar Metode Penelitian* (Yogyakarta: Karunia Kalam Semesta, 2003), 7–8.

²⁴ Winarno Surakhmad, *Pengantar Penelitian Ilmiah* (Bandung: Tarsito, 1982), 145.

²⁵ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, Dan Mixed* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2012), 247–77.

Thus, a conclusion can be drawn regarding the idea of *fitrah* put forward by Ibn Katsir in his exegesis.

Ibn Katsir interpreted the word *Fatara* in two significant terms. First, *al-khilqah* (creation). This meaning appears in the first two contexts of the creation of the heavens and the earth as in Q.S. al-An'am [6]: 79, QS Anbiya' [21]: 56, Q.S. asy-Shura [42]: 11, Q.S. al-An'am [6]: 14, QS Ibrahim [14]: 10, QS Fathir [35]: 1, QS Yusuf [12]: 101, and Q.S. al-Zumar [39]: 46. The word *Fatara* and its derivatives are always linked to the word *al-Samawati wa al-ardli* in these verses, both in the context of human creation, as in Q.S. al-Rum [30]: 30, Q.S. Hud [11]: 51, QS Yasin [36]: 22, QS Zukhruf [43]: 27, QS Thaha [20]: 72, Q.S. Isra' [17]: 51. Ibn Katsir interpreted the word *fatara* and its derivation with the force of creation. One of the opinions of Ibn Katsir is based on the history of Ibn Abbas. Where Ibn Abbas ra said, "In the past, I did not know what was meant by (فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ) creator of heaven and earth until two Bedouin Arabs came to me arguing about a well." One of them said to his friend, "I made it. I was the one who started it." Ibn 'Abbas ra. also interpreted the words of Allah Ta'ala, "Creator of heaven and earth," i.e., the one who started the creation of the heaven and the earth without any preceding example. Adh-Dhahhak said, "Everything that is in the Qur'an which reads: (فَاطِرِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ) then the meaning is the Creator of heaven and earth²⁶."

The second meaning of *Fatara* means *As-Syaqq* (broken/split). It appears in Surah Maryam [19]: 90, Q.S. ash-Shura [42]: 5, Q.S. al-Infithar [82]: 1, Q.S. al-Muzammil [73]: 18, Q.S. al-Mulk [67]: 3, where the meaning of *fitrah* and its derivation in verse refers to the same meaning, i.e., *as-shaqq* (broken/split)²⁷.

All of the above verses have a similar context, i.e., Allah is the one and only God, has no partner for Him, the Creator of Heaven, Earth, and their contents, as well as the signs of the greatness of Allah. In Q.S. al-An'am (6): 79, the verse's interpretation is related to the previous verse, i.e., starting from

²⁶ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim, Juz 6* (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), 532 See penafsiran Ibn Katsir Q. S. Anbiya' [21]: 56, Q. S. Asy-syura [42]: 11, Q. S. Al-an'am [6]: 14, Q. S. Ibrahim [14]: 10, Q. S. Al-An'am [6]: 79, Q. S. Yusuf [12]: 101, and Q. S. Al-zumar [39]: 46. Q. S. Al-rum [30]: 30, Q. S. Hud [11]: 51, Q. S. Yasin [36]: 22, Q. S. Zukhruf [43]: 27, Q. S. Thaha [20]: 72, Q. S. Isra' [17]: 51. Ibn Katsir interpreted this word *fatara* in the verses *khilqah*/creation.

²⁷ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim, Juz 7* (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), 190 See Ibn Katsir's exegesis on Q. S. Maryam [19]: 90, Q. S. Asy-Syura [42]: 5, Q. S. Al-Infithar [82]: 1, Q. S. Al-Muzammil [73]: 18, Q. S. Al-Mulk [67]: 3,.

verse 74 where Prophet Ibrahim (as) argued and tried to straighten out his people who were worshiping idols and buildings. The first thing that Prophet Ibrahim did was argue with his father and explain the mistakes of those who worship idols on this earth formed in Heavenly Angels. Prophet Ibrahim (as) debated these mistakes, including in him arguing the worship of seven bright stars, such as the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, by claiming that these stars circulated according to the decrees of Allah. Therefore, these stars are not worthy of worship²⁸.

When it became clear to him that all these objects were not worthy of being considered God and that their condition was merely a visible light, and Abraham could prove this through definite conclusions, Abraham resigned himself from the worship of his people preserved in Q.S. al-An'am [6]; 78. In other words, Ibrahim wanted to say that, in fact, he only worshiped the Creator of all things (who made them, who subdued them, who carried them out, and who controlled them). It is preserved in Q.S. Al-An'am [6]; 79²⁹.

Meanwhile, the meaning of As-Syaqq is related to the context of Allah's power and majesty, which can split (destroy) the sky and mountains because of Allah's majesty³⁰.

Furthermore, to understand how Ibn Katsir interprets the *Fitrah* verse, the discussion focuses on Q.S. al-Ruum [30]: 30, where the word *fitrah* is specifically mentioned. Ibn Katsir interpreted this verse as follows. Ibn Katsir explained in his interpretation that Allah Ta'ala said, "So straighten your face and stay in the religion that Allah revealed to you, among the straight religions, namely the religion of Prophet Abraham, which Allah has shown you, which He has perfected for you so perfectly, and you together with it have fulfilled it your straight and safe *fitrah*, which Allah has created His creatures according to that nature." Allah Ta'ala has created His creatures with the nature of knowing and believing Him as One, that there is no God who has the right to be worshiped but Allah, as stated in the words of Allah Ta'ala, Q.S. al-A'raf [7]: 172³¹. In a Qudsi hadith quoted by Ibn Katsir from Muslim (2865/63) and Ahmad (4.162), it is stated that Allah Ta'ala said: "Verily I have created My

²⁸ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 3 (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), 292.

²⁹ Katsir, 293.

³⁰ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 7, 190.

³¹ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 6, 313.

servants in a straight state and then the demons keep these servants away from their religion."

On the other hand, Ibn Katsir also explained that Allah created His creatures in a state of *fitrah*, but suddenly corrupted religions came to affect them, namely Judaism, Christianity, and Magi. When discussing God's word: (لَا تَبْدِيلَ لَخَلْقِ اللَّهِ), some Islamic scholars say, "the meaning does not change the creation (*fitrah*) of Allah, so that you change humans from their nature that Allah has created in this state. Therefore, this verse's message means a request, as Allah says in Q.S. Ali Imran [3]: 97. It is a good and valid meaning."

In his explanation, Ibn Katsir emphasized that the scholars interpret the *fitrah* because the news sentence remained in its portion. Allah likens the creation of all creatures in a state of nature to a straight character. No one is born but in such a state, nor are there any human levels in that matter. Therefore, Ibn Abbas, Ibrahim an-Nakha'i, Said bin Jubair, Mujahid, Ikrimah, and Qatadah interpret Allah's words: "There is no change in God's creation" with the religion of Allah. Al-Bukhari also translated the same thing. Only these related details were added (خلق الاولين) which mean the religion of the first peoples and the words (الدين) and (الفطرة) which mean Islam. Besides, Ibn Katsir gave an additional explanation by quoting a hadith from Abu Hurairah, which said that the Messenger of Allah said that the point is that no one is born but is in a state of *fitrah*. Abu Hurairah then explained that "It is the *fitrah* of Allah who has created humans according to that nature. there is no change in God's creation. (That is) a straight religion", as quoted by Ibn Katsir from Al-Bukhari and Muslim and several other traditions.

When interpreting (ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَوِيمُ), Ibn Katsir explained that he meant he was adhering to the law and true nature, that was a straight religion. These verse fragments (وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ) mean that for this most humans do not know. They threw it away and spoiled it, as Allah said in Q.S. Yusuf [12]: 03, and it was clarified again with other words of Allah, i.e. Q.S. al-An'am [6]: 116³².

Based on the description above, it can be seen that Ibn Katsir understands *Fitrah* as *Fitrah* Tawheed, a recognition of the Oneness of Allah as God the Creator of Heaven and Earth. This interpretation relies on, among

³² Katsir, 313-14.

other things, other verses explaining that in the process of human creation, Allah has asked for a testimony that Allah is the One and Only God³³. Ibn Katsir also linked this verse with Q.S. al-An'am [6]: 79, where Allah's recognition as God who created Heaven and Earth is human nature³⁴.

Fitrah, as understood by Ibn Katsir, applies to all humans in the sense that every human being is born carrying this *fitrah*. However, Ibn Katsir also said that in their journey, humans might deviate from their nature. It is due to external interference, i.e., Satan. Satan, who is affirmed as an enemy, can be either human or jinn, including in Satan, which is not visible from view³⁵. Then, Ibn Katsir explained that humans must fulfill their nature, with the command not to change God's creation so that humans do not deviate from their nature. Therefore, this is the straight and right path (religion).

When referring to the *fitrah* indicators of Yasien Mohamed, which include the child's natural state at birth, trends/tendencies, external agents, and God's Guidance (Revelation and Prophet), then Ibn Katsir's views can be described as follows:

Description of the Innate State of a New Born Child

The first begins with a description of the congenital state of the new child. Ibn Katsir, in his interpretation, explains that children are born with a state of faith in Allah SWT, which is often referred to as faith in the Hanif. It can be seen from his explanation when Ibn Katsir quoted a Qudsi hadith in which Allah SWT has created His servants in a straight state³⁶. Apart from explaining that the birth of a child is in a hanif state, Ibn Katsir also explained that Allah SWT created His creatures in a state of nature³⁷. Ibn Katsir also complements it by quoting a hadith from Abu Hurairah, which explains that “the nature of Allah who has created humans according to that nature³⁸.”

The following explanations have shown that human nature at birth is to have intrinsic faith/goodness inherent in them. However, the concept of

³³ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Azim*. Jilid 2 (Beirut: Dar Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2006), 249.

³⁴ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 3, 292.

³⁵ Katsir, 160.

³⁶ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 6, 313.

³⁷ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 4 (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), 350.

³⁸ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 6, 570.

human/childbirth that brings intrinsic faith/goodness does not stop there. Humans have free will to deny this faith/intrinsic goodness that is in themselves. It can be seen from the explanation of Ibn Katsir that the news in this verse means a request, which means do not change Allah's creation (*fitrah*) to change humans from their nature that Allah has created in such a state³⁹. In his explanation, Ibn Katsir emphasized that the news sentence remains in its portion when interpreting the verses related to *fitrah*. It means that Allah equates all creatures' creation in a state of nature to a straight character. No one is born, but in this state, neither are there human levels in the matter⁴⁰. In other words, "there is no change in God's creation. (That is) a straight religion," as quoted by Ibn Katsir from Al-Bukhari and Muslim and several other hadiths. Ibn Katsir's idea still provides a role/emphasis on the element of individual will, a proactive drive that consciously strives to realize Islamic faith and practice.

On the other hand, when talking about a straight religion (Hanif), there is a connection with Ibn Katsir's interpretation of Q.S. al-An'am [6]; 79, i.e., when Ibn Katsir quoted a verse far ahead (Q.S. al-An'am [6]; 161) to be associated with this verse (Q.S. al-An'am [6]; 78-79), which is related to the designation/direction by God to the straight path/right religion/the religion of Prophet Abraham. Ibn Katsir finally concluded that this verse's broad meaning is the same as the meaning of Q.S. al-Rum [30]: 30, so that Prophet Ibrahim (as) was the foremost person to obtain a healthy and a straight *fitrah* after Rasulullah SAW⁴¹. However, people after that could follow Prophet Ibrahim's Hanif by way of worshiping only to Allah SWT because He had no partner. Letting go of worship other than Him by making the sentence *Laa Ilaaha illallaah* remain eternal in his descendants, as when Ibn Katsir interpreted Q.S. Zukhruf [43]: 27⁴².

On the other hand, Ibn Katsir also believed that human nature changes might occur due to external agents that are not within them (extrinsic). These agents can take the form of (1) demons keeping people away from their religion (Hanif)⁴³ and (2) the sudden arrival of corrupted religions that affected them

³⁹ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 5 (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), 85.

⁴⁰ Katsir, 265.

⁴¹ Katsir, 265.

⁴² Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 7, 190.

⁴³ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 8 (Riyadh: Dar Thayyibah, 2007), 341.

(humans), i.e., Judaism, Christianity, and Magi⁴⁴. Even so, human nature, which is intrinsic in itself, is never lost or damaged. It can be seen from the explanation of Ibn Katsir in his interpretation when quoting the opinions of scholars such as Ibn 'Abbas, Ibrahim an-Nakha'i, Said bin Jubair, Mujahid, Ikrimah, and Qatada, interpreting the words of Allah "There is no change in Allah's creation" which means on the religion of Allah. The intrinsic nature that exists in humans (*fitrah*) given by Allah SWT is still there even if a person commits a crime caused by external agents influencing themselves. It is seen when Ibn Katsir explained Q.S. Thaha [20]: 72. Although it is not directly related to the conceptual idea of *fitrah*, this verse teaches a lesson that when Pharaoh threatened the witches who had believed, they remained steadfast in their faith (hanif religion) for a reason, i.e., the touch of a small button (on an electric current) so that it emitted a light that immediately disturbed the darkness. It is a touch of faith in the human heart that diverts it instantly from kufr to faith. Because of this event's importance, Ibn Katsir even wrote that Ibn Abbas and others of the Salaf said that "they become magicians in the morning and become martyrs in the evening⁴⁵."

Apart from the religious instincts in every human being, *fitrah* also cannot be separated from free will and the role of reason to make humans able to maximize the potential for good in the accompaniment and overcome the harmful effects of the environment, and reach the highest level in psycho-spiritual development, an-nafs al-muthma'innah⁴⁶ (peaceful soul). At this point, human reason also chooses and differentiates between true and false faiths, true or false religions. Thus, by nature, humans need a religion that can fulfill their instinctive needs (*gharizah al-tadayyun*) and true religion, reassuring feelings, and satisfying reason. It is in line with Ibn Katsir's explanation when interpreting (ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ). Ibn Katsir explained that he meant he was adhering to the law and true nature, a straight religion.

⁴⁴ Katsir, 257.

⁴⁵ Katsir, 177.

⁴⁶ The super human personality due to the domination of al-qalb, which is identified as the third (highest) level in the conception of personality after the al-nafs al-ammarah personality, i.e. the pre-human personality due to the domination of al-nafs, and the al-nafs al-lawwamah personality, i.e. the human personality due to the domination of al-'aql. Abdul Mujib, *Fitrah Dan Kepribadian Islam: Sebuah Pendekatan Psikologis* (Jakarta: Darul Falah, 1999), 6.

When discussing the basic ideas of *fitrah*, rejecting Islam for humans is much more complicated than accepting it. It is a logical consequence that nature (1) is an intrinsic goodness/faith that Allah SWT instills in humans and becomes a necessary fundamental trait for all humans/children when they were born, and (2) *fitrah* that can never be damaged or lost in the human self. Therefore, it is easier for anything to retain its original character and identity than to change it even if external agencies persuaded the author.

Trends/Tendencies Overview

When it comes to innate tendencies towards both right and wrong, Ibn Katsir explained that Allah had perfected humans entirely to fulfill straight and safe human nature. Allah Ta'ala has also created His creatures with the nature of knowing Him and believing His Oneness, that there is no God who has the right to be worshiped but Allah, as stated in the words of Allah Ta'ala, namely Q.S. al-A'raf [7]: 72. Based on this explanation innately, humans tend to know/make Allah Tawheed and do everything right/upright/Hanif and safe⁴⁷.

The human tendency to know Allah and do what is right is strengthened by the interpretation of Ibn Katsir in the form of quoting a Qudsi hadith from Muslim (2865/63) and Ahmad (4.162), which states that Allah Ta'ala said, "in fact, I have created my servants in a straight state⁴⁸." On the other hand, Ibn Katsir also explained that (ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ) is to hold fast to the true Sharia and nature, that is a straight religion⁴⁹. He again explained by quoting al-Bukhari that (خلق الاولين) means the religion of the first peoples and the words (الدين) and (الفطرة) mean Islam⁵⁰.

Overview of Destructive External Agents

In Ibn Katsir's view, human nature changes can occur due to external agents that are not within them (extrinsic). These agents can be in the forms of (1) demons keeping people away from their religion (Hanif) and (2) the sudden arrival of corrupted religions that affect them (humans), i.e., Judaism,

⁴⁷ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 6, 82.

⁴⁸ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 3, 364.

⁴⁹ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 4, 378.

⁵⁰ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 6, 224.

Christianity, and Magi⁵¹. Human sensual qualities (*nafs*) are naturally very sensitive to stimuli from the environment and are prone to fall astray. Of course, this does not mean that lust (*nafs*) itself is evil by nature because evil is independent of human lust.

However, what is interesting about this translation is that these external agents work independently, which means that these external agents do not complement the innate evil/heresy in humans as the polar dualism interpretation in the realm of the interpretation of *fitrah*. At this point, the view of *fitrah* refers more to the knowledge of religion in general. That is why this type of knowledge is not present when a child is born into a Jewish, Christian, or Magi family. It means that *fitrah* is an innate tendency to know Allah, monotheism, and al-Din al-Islam.

Overview of External Agents of God's Guidance

Previously, it was explained that external agents destroy *fitrah*. On the other hand, there is no evil urge in humans. Humans can do good and acknowledge the oneness of Allah. It means that human nature has more than just an inherent knowledge of Allah and a love for Him, and a desire to practice religion sincerely as a true hanif. This sincerity in servitude can be called *gharizah al-tadayyun*. *Gharizah al-tadayyun* can be interpreted simply by the feelings of humans who are naturally weak, need others, have many shortcomings, as well as a tendency to the Perfect Substance that is beyond one's control.

Ibn Katsir's view, which states that humans need guidance from the outside, implies an ability to receive instinctively and soul to complement the intrinsic goodness. Al-Din al-Islam is a good stimulant for this guidance and direction. It is why Allah also gives guidance in fulfilling human rights. Therefore, the Qur'an, the Prophets, and the Messengers were sent as a guide to humans. Due to humans' limited senses and that human reason has limitations, the Prophets can become role models for humans in following their nature.

It indicates that external Divine agents, such as revelations, function as clues to complement humans' innate tendencies. At this point, humans are

⁵¹ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Juz 8, 341.

active and dynamic participants in objective reality. Unity is the fundamental human nature, which is the *fitrah* in the form of intrinsic goodness in humans⁵², equipped with external divine agents, i.e., prophethood (*nubuwwah*). Then, this treatise forms a complementary human identity related to personality in Islam (*syakhsiyah Islamiyah*).

Based on the analysis efforts that have been made, it can be seen that Ibn Katsir in the Tafsir of the Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim is one of the "positive" thinkers in interpreting things related to *fitrah*. In simple terms, this positive interpretation can be interpreted as a thought that defines having the nature of good and bad exclusively. The good and the bad are both understandable and must be guided by the same external factors. If this fundamental nature is guided more by external factors that lead to divine attributes, an excellent human identity is formed, and vice versa. The positive interpretation of *fitrah* represents the foremost Muslim scholars' collective voice in the realm of Islamic civilization. These Muslim scholars speak of the substance of human nature. This view is not entirely a development of intellectual and religious thought in Islamic history but also reflects contemporary orthodox interpretations.

Scholars, such as Ibn Taimiyah, Ibn Qayyim, Imam Nawawi, Qurtubi, Sabuni, Faruqi, al-Attas, were represented by this interpretation, Jawhari, Asad, Shah Wali Allah Dihlawi, and Mufti Muhammad Shafi. Although the views of the scholars who fall into this category cannot be said to be identical in every aspect, certain general principles underlie their interpretation of the verses of the Al-Qur'an and passages of the hadith. An obvious criterion for distinguishing one view from another is the degree to which both right and wrong (individually and collectively) are described as new or external influences from the environment. Another criterion is the role of prophecy, revelation, and right and wrong as external agents of counterpart and heresy, respectively. The classification is evaluative as it demonstrates to what extent

⁵² The meaning of *fitrah* is a natural tendency from birth, a creation that causes something to exist for the first time or a natural belief about God and the tendency to *tawheed*. Rokhmat S. Labib, *Tafsir Ayat Pilihan Al-Wa'ie* (Bogor: al-Azhar Fresh Zone Publishing, 2013), 572; Baharudin, *Paradigma Psikologi Islam; Studi Tentang Elemen Psikologi Dari Al-Qur'an* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001), 148.

goodness is described from each interpretation as a characteristic of human nature⁵³.

Pedagogical Implications of the Concept of *Fitrah* According to Ibn Katsir in Early Childhood Islamic Education

The conceptual idea of *fitrah* in Ibn Katsir's view that has been described above certainly raises logical education implications. The determination of *fitrah* as a foundation in educational development is always interesting to study. It is because the concept of *fitrah* has always been the basis for the development of education. *Fitrah*, which is generally defined as human potential (innate), is a heredity factor in the education process. Therefore, it is essential to study it in filling the discussion gap in a prolonged debate about child development, whether it is influenced by heredity (nature) or influenced by the environment (nurture), including education⁵⁴.

This debate between nature and nurture raises a holistic idea in development. However, it does not mean the debate is over but instead switches between adherents that development is a holistic process and argues that development is a separate process⁵⁵. Then, where is the position of Islam in this debate? When referring to Ibn Katsir's interpretation of the verses related to *fitrah*, Islam views that humans have the raw potential (innate) and humans can be educated (influenced by the environment). Thus, in this concept of *fitrah*, Islam's view is similar to the view which holds the opinion that development is a holistic process. However, there are quite significant differences. In the Islamic view, human development is due to intrinsic and environmental factors and theological factors, i.e., the Guidance and Will of Allah⁵⁶. This factor also distinguishes the Islamic scientific paradigm from western science.

⁵³ Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 77.

⁵⁴ David R. Shaffer and Katherine Kipp, *Developmental Psychology: Childhood and Adolescence* (Cengage Learning, 2013), 37–38; see, Rathus, *Childhood and Adolescence*; Bergin and Bergin, *Child and Adolescent Development in Your Classroom*, 13–14.

⁵⁵ Shaffer and Kipp, *Developmental Psychology*, 39.

⁵⁶ Nadlifah, Suismanto, and 'Aziz, *Pengantar Ke Arah Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 132–33; see, Abdur Rahman Assegaf, *Filsafat Pendidikan Islam: Paradigma Baru Pendidikan Hadhari Berbasis Integratif-Interkonektif* (Rajawali Pers, 2011), 47–48.

Islamic scholarship is integral and departs from religion, while western science is secular, which departs from anthropocentrism⁵⁷. Thus, in Islam's view, as conveyed by an-Nahlawy, the essence of education is to maintain, develop, and direct human nature (potential)⁵⁸. The *fitrah* interpreted by Ibn Katsir as *Fitrah* Tawheed is the belief in the Oneness of Allah as God the Almighty Creator as previously explained. Therefore, automatically Tawheed becomes the axis in human life. In Kuntowijoyo, it is called Innate Structuring Capacity, which means that Tawheed has the power to form the most resonant structures⁵⁹. Thus, forming a human being in harmony with their nature is the goal of Islamic education. Furthermore, this educational process is a continuous process because the goal is the endpoint of business (education) and giving direction to the business⁶⁰.

Al-Attas operationally explain the purpose of this education that education must emphasize the individual. Al-Attas uses the analogy of a good citizen and human being. He explained that good citizens in a secular state are not the same as good humans. A good human being is a good citizen because he is fully aware of his responsibility to the Righteous God, who understand and deliver justice to themselves and others in society. They continue to strive to improve every aspect of themselves toward perfection as a civilized human⁶¹.

What are the implications of Ibn Katsir's view of human's *fitrah*, which is the ultimate goal of education? As stated by Ibn Katsir, human *Fitrah* is Tawheed, i.e., recognizing the Oneness of Allah. Besides, education (environment) becomes an external agent to maintain this nature⁶². Thus, pedagogy in the Islamic tradition is not merely an art of teaching through interaction and assistance in the classroom, but more than that, Islamic pedagogy is a spiritual process. This transcendental spiritual aspect distinguishes Islamic education from secular western education, where each pedagogical interpretation is closely related to the definition of the goal to be

⁵⁷ Kuntowijoyo, *Islam Sebagai Ilmu: Epistemologi, Metodologi, dan Etika* (Teraju, 2004), 51-54.

⁵⁸ Abdurrahman an-Nahlawy, *Usul At-Tarbiyah Al-Islamiyah Wa Asalibiha Fil Baiti Wal Madrasati Wal Mujtama* (Damaskus: Dar-al-Fikr, 2010), 17.

⁵⁹ Kuntowijoyo, *Muslim tanpa Masjid* (IRCiSoD, 2018), 33.

⁶⁰ Ahmad D. Marimba, *Pengantar Filsafat Pendidikan Islam* (Bandung: Alma'arif, 1980), 45-46.

⁶¹ Mohd Nor Wan Daud (Wan), *Filsafat dan praktik pendidikan Islam Syed M. Naquib Al-Attas* (Penerbit Mizan, 2003), 168.

⁶² Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim, Juz 6*, 313.

achieved and its application in the learning process⁶³. Islamic education is the core and source of knowledge, the Qur'an, and foundation for all scientific disciplines, according to Husain and Ashraf, as cited by Hilgendarf⁶⁴. Meanwhile, *fitrah* (tawheed) as a transcendental dimension is an integral part of the prophetic mission described by Kuntowijoyo, that the prophetic mission includes three aspects, humanization, liberation, and transcendence⁶⁵.

In the context of Early Childhood, education is directed to keep children uphold their nature, remembering that children at this age are still pure and clean, as Ibn Katsir's view who quoted Imam Ahmad who quoted a narration from Aswad bin Sari', where the Prophet forbade killing (polytheists) children in war and said every child is born in a state of *fitrah*⁶⁶. Therefore, educators must first prevent children from the destructive influence of external agents that can interfere with human's *fitrah*. Although this *fitrah* is still innate, it can also be disturbed by external agents⁶⁷. One way is to instill strong faith and will in children because only a person who has faith and strong will can avoid these external agents' interference⁶⁸. It is also considering that children at an early age are still in a hanif condition until adulthood and bear the legal burden. The condition of a child who is still pure in early childhood is vital to maintain and to be directed so as not to be tempted and influenced by external agents that damage the child's *fitrah*.

The verses of *fitrah* are closely related to the evidence of Allah's power, such as the heavens and the earth, as well as humans themselves, so it is crucial to apply empirical exploration to the signs of Allah's power in this universe. For this, Allah has provided human tools that are useful for capturing Allah's guidance. These tools include al-sam' (hearing), al-Abshar (vision), and al-Afidah. Ibn Katsir interpreted Afidah as a reason which correlates with the

⁶³ S. Farquhar and E. J. White, "Philosophy and Pedagogy of Early Childhood," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 46, no. 8 (July 3, 2014): 825, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2013.783964>.

⁶⁴ Eric Hilgendorf, "Islamic Education: History and Tendency," *Peabody Journal of Education* 78, no. 2 (April 1, 2003): 65, https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327930PJE7802_04.

⁶⁵ Humanization is a representation of amar ma'ruf, liberation is Kuntowijoyo's language for Nahi Munkar, while transcendence is for Iman to Allah. See Kuntowijoyo, *Muslim tanpa Masjid*, 107.

⁶⁶ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Azim. Jilid 3* (Beirut: Dar Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 2006), 403.

⁶⁷ Fazlur Rahman, *Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an*, trans. Anas Mahyudin (Bandung: Pustaka, 1996), 28.

⁶⁸ Rahman, 28.

heart (al-Qalb)⁶⁹. However, all early childhood learners' activities need to consider the child's abilities because the above devices' abilities develop gradually until a person is an adult⁷⁰. Therefore, in this exploration process, children need to be accompanied by an adult (teacher) to explain what they perceive, given their limited development of intellect, so that children can capture correct knowledge⁷¹.

Furthermore, Allah in the Qur'an provides a general description of ways to call upon Allah, which can be adopted in early childhood Islamic education, first is with Hikmah, Mau'idhoh Hasanah, and Mujadalah bi al-Ihsan⁷². Ibn Katsir interpreted the word Hikmah by quoting Ibn Jarir's opinion with the al-Kitab (Al-Qur'an) and the Sunnah⁷³. It is the core of literacy to realize how the Prophet was sent to teach the scriptures of the Qur'an⁷⁴. This reading includes meditation, studying, researching revelation (holy book), and historical empirical phenomena⁷⁵. In the Islamic tradition, this method is generally applied in reading, memorizing, asking, and responding⁷⁶. The outline idea of this method is a way of internalizing knowledge whose process is described by Starret as quoted by Sabki and Hardaker. Naturally, this method occurs when passed on to the child after parents memorize (Al-Qur'an)⁷⁷. In the process of memorizing, there is also a spiritual dimension and the process of transmitting and internationalizing knowledge⁷⁸. Thus, this process includes the modeling process, so some interpret this wisdom by modeling.

The concept of human nature is unique and different from other creatures. If Allah's creation, other than humans, automatically fulfills their characteristics, humans must comply with their characteristics (*fitrah*).

⁶⁹ Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Azim*. Jilid 2, 549.

⁷⁰ Katsir, 549.

⁷¹ Explanations like these are useful for children. Grusec and Sherman's research as quoted by Rathus shows that 4 year olds are able to accept explanations. See in Rathus, *Childhood and Adolescence*, 313.

⁷² QS. An.Nahl [16]: 125, See Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Azim*. Jilid 2, 561.

⁷³ Katsir, 561.

⁷⁴ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azim Jilid 1* (Beirut: Dar Kutub al-Ilmiyah, 2006), 190.

⁷⁵ Karman, *Tafsir Ayat Ayat Pendidikan*, 266.

⁷⁶ A'ishah Ahmad Sabki and Glenn Hardaker, "The Madrasah Concept of Islamic Pedagogy," *Educational Review* 65, no. 3 (August 1, 2013): 374, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2012.668873>.

⁷⁷ Sabki and Hardaker, 374.

⁷⁸ Sabki and Hardaker, 374.

Human nature's conception is a transformation from *fitrah* as human existence to *fitrah* as a necessity for humans⁷⁹. These implications of the pedagogical concept of *fitrah* in early childhood Islamic education can be illustrated in Figure 1. Children are born with positive potential (*fitrah*). Children are also given the tools to stay in their *fitrah*: Senses, Intellects, and Revelations.

Any external actors may play a double function, on the other hand. This agent can hold the child to remain in his nature on the one hand. This agent, on the other hand, can also interfere with the nature of the child. The second one should be avoided. The way that can be applied is by literacy revelation in reading to memorize, ask questions, and respond to questions and oral transmission (*mau'idhoh hasanah*), including the reasoning process in children to their capacity. Finally, it can also be done through a debate (*mujadalah*) if needed.

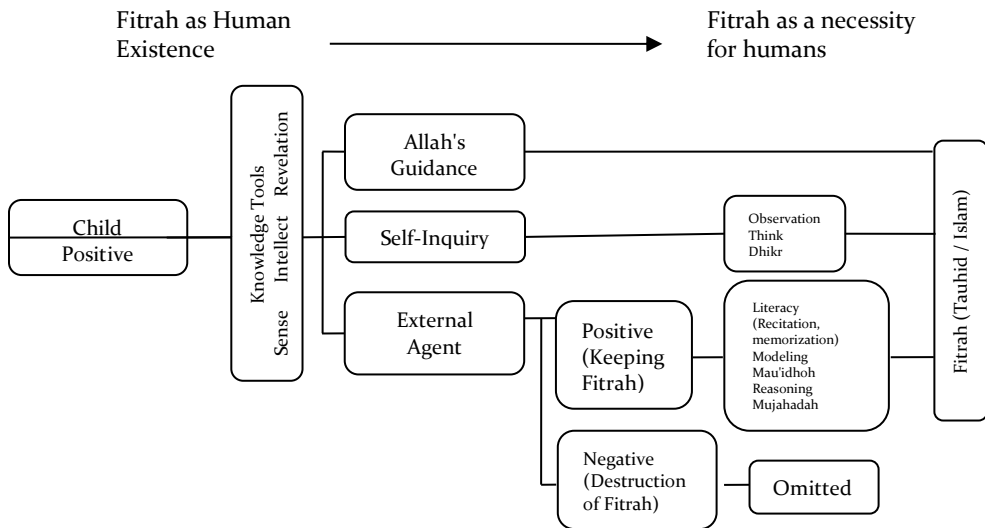


Figure 1. Pedagogic Implications of the *Fitrah* Concept

Human's *fitrah* is a privilege, as well as a challenge for humans so that humans do not deviate from their nature. Therefore, humans can fulfill the

⁷⁹ Rahman, Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an, 36; Compare with Ali Yousof, that human's *fitrah* has two meanings which arenatu the meaning of the essence of the human self as well as that *fitrah* is a form of policy which is a commandment of Allah. Md Yousuf Ali, "Human Nature and His Potentialities Attributes towards Virtue and Morality," *Journal of Education and Social Sciences (JESOC)* 5 (October 2016): 118-27.

"Primordial Pledge," which they have uttered as recorded in the Q.S. al-A'raf [7]: 172-173. Humans need to cling to Allah's instructions and their conscience to avoid the influence of adverse external agents that damage human's *fitrah*⁸⁰. Then, by fulfilling their *fitrah*, a human will become what Allah says as ahsani taqvim and deserves to be pinned the title of Caliph of Allah.

Conclusion

This study shows that the concept of human nature according to Ibn Katsir in the Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim consists of four components, namely (1) the child born brings faith in Allah SWT, which is also called faith in the Hanif; (2) humans have an innate tendency to know/monotheism Allah and do everything that is right/upright/Hanif and safe; (3) external agents that destroy human nature (4) some external agents can maintain human nature. From these four components, it is understood that human goodness, which is inherent within itself, needs to be guided by external factors. Therefore, goodness will always exist because the factors that can influence it also come from external factors. Thus, Ibn Katsir's view of this *fitrah* is close and even identical with a view that defines *fitrah* as a positive tendency.

This conception also carries pedagogical implications in early childhood Islamic education, where *fitrah* is not only a human's innate (positive) potential, it is also a goal that humans must fulfill. Therefore, education must be a positive external agent by embodying God's instructions to maintain a hanif human nature. It can be done by encouraging individuals to maximize their existing knowledge tools to capture God's guidance toward their nature. In the educational process, these efforts can be made by applying the following methods: 1) Hikmah/Wisdom—which can be interpreted as literacy and modeling. Activities can be in the form of memorization, recitation, with modeling from adults or teachers; 2) Mau'idhoh—the oral transmission method to convey messages, reasoning, and even warnings; and 3) if necessary, an excellent Jidal method can also be used. Everything is tailored to the needs and considers the child's capacity because it is still developing as they get older and mature. It is in line with the mandate of Law No. 14 of 2005 that an educator must have pedagogical competence, which includes the ability to understand students in-depth, the implementation of educational learning, which includes

⁸⁰ Rahman, *Tema Pokok Al-Qur'an*, 37.

the ability to design learning, implement learning, assess learning processes, and outcomes, and conduct continuous improvement.

This research only provides theoretical and conceptual contributions to implementing Islamic early childhood education based on document studies. Therefore, future research needs to be carried out more comprehensively with contextualization in the field of practice.

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