



## The Balance of Intellectuality and Spirituality in Islamic Education: A Pedagogical Interpretation Study of QS Al-'Alaq Verses 1-5 and QS Az-Zumar Verse 9

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the educational values contained in Surah Al-'Alaq (verses 1-5) and Surah Az-Zumar (verse 9) using the *tafsir tarbawi* approach. This approach interprets Qur'anic verses by emphasizing educational values that are applicable and contextual, particularly in addressing the contemporary challenges of Islamic education. The research employs a qualitative method with a library research design, gathering data from the Qur'an, classical and contemporary exegesis (tafsir) sources, and relevant Islamic educational literature. The findings indicate that Surah Al-'Alaq highlights the importance of scientific literacy rooted in *tawhid* (monotheism), while Surah Az-Zumar stresses that true knowledge is that which leads to *khasyyah* (reverent fear of God). These verses form a foundational framework for developing an Islamic education system that balances intellectual and spiritual aspects. The study is supported by the thoughts of scholars such as al-Ghazali and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, who emphasize the integration of knowledge, ethics, and *adab* (propriety). It is recommended that the *tafsir tarbawi* approach be strengthened in curriculum development, character education, and teacher training to shape *insan kamil* the ideal human being who embodies knowledge, faith, and noble character.

**Keywords:** Tafsir Tarbawi; Surah Al-'Alaq; Surah Az-Zumar; Islamic Education; Insan Kamil, Qur'anic Values.

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### Introduction

Islamic education aims to shape a complete human being, an individual who is capable of balancing intellectual, spiritual, and moral aspects. The objective of education in Islam is not limited to the transmission of knowledge, but also includes the cultivation of divine values that shape character and foster transcendental awareness in learners (Maimunah, M., & Maemunah, 2020; Rohman, 2021). Ideally, Islamic education produces *insan kamil*, a perfect human being who is faithful, knowledgeable, and possesses noble character (Fitriyah, 2023).

From a philosophical perspective, Islamic education views the human being not only as a rational creature but also as a spiritual being with inner potential. Therefore, Islamic education carries the mission of forming individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also spiritually deep and morally upright (Hasanah, U., 2021). This concept differs from the modern Western educational paradigm which tends to focus on the mastery of knowledge and technical skills alone.

One important aspect of Islamic education is the integration of knowledge and *adab* or proper conduct. According to Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the crisis of modern education does not lie merely in the weakness of knowledge transfer but in a deeper issue, which is the crisis of *adab* (Al-Attas, 2018). Education that does not instill awareness of proper values will produce a knowledgeable generation that lacks moral and spiritual direction. Therefore, Islamic education must prioritize the development of *adab* as the epistemological foundation of its system.

In this context, it is also necessary to reexamine the position of Islamic epistemology in education. Islamic epistemology does not place reason as the sole instrument in the search for truth but also recognizes the heart and divine revelation as valid sources of knowledge. Therefore, Islamic education should integrate rational, spiritual, and intuitive dimensions in its learning approaches (Zuhdi, Z., & Hasan, 2022). This holistic approach offers a solution to the spiritual emptiness found in modern education systems.

However, the reality of contemporary education reveals an imbalance in orientation. Modern education tends to emphasize cognitive development and technical skills, while the aspects of spiritual and ethical formation are often marginalized (Azra, 2019; Wahyudi, 2016). As a result, various social problems have emerged, such as moral crises, the misuse of knowledge, and the weakening of religious character among students (Nurfadhilah, N., 2021). This phenomenon indicates the need for a reorientation of Islamic education so that it is not merely a tool for intellectual reproduction but also a medium for spiritual and moral development (Amir, 2022).

Furthermore, the challenges of globalization, digitalization, and the secularization of education have brought new demands to Islamic education. On the one hand, learners are required to master advanced knowledge and technology, but on the other hand, they must remain firm in their religious values and ethics (Nata, A., 2024; Setiawan, S., 2023). Therefore, an educational approach that integrates cognitive and spiritual aspects is urgently needed.

In this regard, recent literature has emphasized the importance of transformative education based on prophetic values, which places spirituality at the center of social change (Fitriani, F., & Kholid, 2023). Education is no longer seen merely as a medium for delivering knowledge but as a process of developing awareness, responsibility, and devotion to God and society.

In addition, the relevance of the *tafsir tarbawi* or educational interpretation approach in the context of education is not only normative but also practical. Several contemporary Islamic educational institutions have implemented learning models that emphasize thematic, integrative, and applicable understandings of Qur'anic values. This indicates that *tafsir tarbawi* is not merely theoretical but has transformative power in educational practice (Rahmawati, 2022).

In Islamic scholarly tradition, knowledge and faith are two inseparable components. The Qur'an explicitly states that true knowledge is that which (Rifa'i, 2019) brings about *khasyyah* or fear and humility before God (Qur'an, Az-Zumar, verse 9). Therefore, the integration of knowledge and piety becomes a vital pillar in the Islamic education system (Rahmah, R., & Arifin, 2021). In this context, the *tafsir tarbawi* approach, which interprets Qur'anic verses with an educational orientation, becomes highly relevant in extracting Qur'anic values as the philosophical, theological, and pedagogical foundations of Islamic education (Rifa'i, 2019; Rohman, 2021).

*Tafsir tarbawi* does not only explore the linguistic and historical dimensions of the Qur'an but also focuses on the educational values contained in its verses. This approach allows for the integration of Qur'anic teachings with contemporary educational practices in order to develop the character of learners based on Islamic values (Faisal.f, 2023; Setiawan, S., 2023).

Moreover, the integration of *tafsir tarbawi* values into the Islamic education curriculum can strengthen the development of character and spirituality from an early age. Studies have shown that applying *tafsir tarbawi* values in early childhood education contributes to the formation of strong and virtuous character, (Abdullah, M., & Mirza, 2025). This approach is also relevant in addressing the challenges of the disruption era or industry 4.0, where Islamic education must remain relevant while preserving its moral and spiritual integrity (Nata, A., 2024).

In conclusion, the study of Qur'anic verses through the *tafsir tarbawi* approach is essential in the effort to integrate intellectual and spiritual values in Islamic education. This research aims to analyze the educational values contained in Surah Al-Alaq verses 1 to 5 and Surah Az-Zumar verse 9, and their implications for shaping learners' character that balances intellectual and spiritual dimensions.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a type of library research, focusing on the examination and analysis of Qur'anic texts, classical and contemporary *tafsir* literature, as well as Islamic references relevant to the theme of Islamic education. This approach was chosen as it aligns with the main objective of the research, namely to explore and interpret the educational values contained in two Qur'anic verses: Surah Al-Alaq verses 1 to 5 and Surah Az-Zumar verse 9. To achieve this objective, the study applies the *tafsir tarbawi* approach, an interpretive method in Qur'anic exegesis oriented toward the pedagogical values within the verses.

The *tafsir tarbawi* approach emphasizes the exploration of both explicit and implicit educational messages in the Qur'an. It does not limit itself to linguistic interpretation or historical context but also includes the analysis of values, norms, and educational principles that are applicable to contemporary life, particularly in the development of Islamic education that balances intellectual and spiritual aspects.

The primary data sources in this study are the Qur'an, specifically Surah Al-Alaq verses 1 to 5, which represent the first revelation and highlight the importance of reading within a framework of faith, and Surah Az-Zumar verse 9, which affirms the virtue of knowledge that leads to reverence for God. These two verses were selected because they contain profound messages regarding the relationship between knowledge, faith, and character formation in the context of Islamic education.

Secondary data sources include several classical and contemporary tafsir works such as *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, *Tafsir al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, and *Tafsir al-Maraghi*. In addition, other supporting literature in the form of books and scholarly articles on Islamic education, as well as the thoughts of prominent figures such as Imam al-Ghazali and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, were utilized for their significant contributions to the philosophy and practice of Islamic education.

Data collection was carried out through documentation techniques, involving the review and note-taking of the content from both primary and secondary texts. This process included filtering information relevant to the study's focus, which is the balance between intellectuality and spirituality in education. The collected data were then analyzed to identify and organize the educational values embedded within the two selected verses.

The data analysis was conducted in three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The first stage, data reduction, involved selecting and filtering information directly related to the research objectives. The second stage was data presentation in thematic form, allowing the interconnection between knowledge and faith values to be systematically illustrated. The third stage involved drawing conclusions, where the results of the analysis were formulated to demonstrate the contribution of the educational values in the Qur'anic verses to the development of an integral and transformative Islamic education system.

Through this approach, the study is expected to present a deep understanding of the meanings embedded in the Qur'anic verses within the context of education and to offer a meaningful contribution to the development of curricula and practices in Islamic education that harmoniously integrate the rational and spiritual potentials of learners.

## Result and Discussion

The verses in QS Al-'Alaq 1-5 and QS Az-Zumar 9 hold rich educational values when interpreted through a tarbawi (educational) lens. These two surahs serve as essential foundations for Islamic education, both in terms of content and orientation. Through the tarbawi interpretation method, one can uncover meaningful reflections on the principles, goals, and methods of Islamic education that are relevant to the contemporary context.

QS Al-'Alaq 1-5 explicitly mentions reading, teaching, and knowledge three central themes in education. This surah opens with the command "Read in the name of your Lord who created" a call that emphasizes that education in Islam is not merely cognitive or pragmatic but should be oriented toward divine consciousness and servitude (*ubudiyah*). The command to read here is not just about acquiring information, but also about building awareness, spiritual sensitivity, and purpose in learning (Sholihin, M., & Yusuf, 2021). Reading must be done in the name of Allah, meaning that education must be guided by divine values. In modern terms, this challenges secular educational systems that tend to separate knowledge from ethics and spirituality.

Then, the phrase "Who taught by the pen" (QS Al-'Alaq: 4) underscores the importance of tools and media of knowledge. The pen symbolizes documentation, transmission, and civilizational continuity. Education is not a one-time process but a relay from one generation to another. This affirms the urgency of literacy a crucial issue in the Muslim world. Even in the 21st century, the challenges of illiteracy and lack of reading culture remain real (Yusuf, 2021).

QS Az-Zumar verse 9 adds a moral and epistemological dimension to Islamic education. The rhetorical question "Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" affirms that knowledge elevates human dignity. Knowledge in Islam is not merely a collection of facts but must lead to understanding, humility, and fear of

Allah. Therefore, this verse reinforces the idea that the goal of education is not just to produce skilled individuals, but moral, wise, and God-conscious human beings (Yusuf, 2021).

This verse is also relevant to the issue of educational equity. In many societies, access to knowledge is still limited by class, gender, or geography. Islam views knowledge as a universal right and responsibility. Thus, an Islamic educational framework must guarantee inclusive and transformative access to learning opportunities.

Contemporary Islamic education often becomes trapped in two extremes: either dogmatic indoctrination or secular utilitarianism. Both are contrary to the messages of these verses. The former ignores critical and dynamic aspects of education, while the latter forgets its spiritual purpose. The first revelation (QS Al-'Alaq) shows that revelation and reason are not contradictory but must be integrated. Meanwhile, QS Az-Zumar shows that knowledge is only meaningful when it leads to taqwa (God-consciousness).

Therefore, in today's context, Islamic education must return to the Quranic values of education. The process of learning must instill a love for knowledge, encourage reading and research, but all of this must be guided by ethics and divine values. The goal is not just to create a generation that is smart and critical but also humble, grateful, and responsible before Allah.

These two verses also teach us that the teacher student relationship must be built on respect, not authoritarianism. Allah is described as the first teacher, and humans as His learners. This implies that a teacher is a facilitator of divine knowledge, not an absolute authority. In practice, this can be reflected in dialogic and participatory learning models, not merely top-down lectures.

Finally, these verses remind us that the core of education is transformation not just information transfer. As (Sholihin, M., & Yusuf, 2021) put it, education must lead to the formation of character and worldview, not just the accumulation of diplomas.

## Conclusion

This study shows that QS Al-'Alaq verses 1–5 and QS Az-Zumar verse 9 contain fundamental educational values essential for developing a holistic and transformative Islamic education system. QS Al-'Alaq emphasizes that the educational process must begin with a consciousness of tawhid—that all forms of knowledge-seeking must be carried out within the framework of faith in Allah SWT. Meanwhile, QS Az-Zumar verse 9 highlights that true knowledge is the kind that produces *khasyyah* a deep spiritual awareness and reverence for Allah not merely information or cognitive skills. These Qur'anic values serve as both a critique and a correction of the direction of modern education, which is often overly focused on academic and technical achievements while neglecting spiritual and moral aspects. Islamic education, when explored through the *tafsir tarbawi* (educational interpretation) approach, underscores the urgency of integrating intellectual and spiritual dimensions as the foundation for forming *insan kamil* a complete human being in terms of intellect, soul, and character. The thoughts of scholars such as Imam al-Ghazali and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas reinforce the idea that education without ethics and *adab* can potentially lead to moral and epistemological crises. Therefore, Islamic education must be directed not only toward producing intelligent individuals but also those who possess divine consciousness, *adab*, and social responsibility. The values derived from QS Al-'Alaq and QS Az-Zumar provide a solid foundation for reconstructing the Islamic education system to remain relevant amidst complex global challenges.

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