

Humans as Subjects and Objects of Education: Reflection from Surah At-Tin Verses 4-6

Titin Yuniartin¹, Donna Aprilia², Nita Nihayatus Sholihah³

^a Islamic Education, Islamic University Darussalam Ciamis, West Java, Indonesia

^{bc} Postgraduate Program, Cyber Islamic University Sheikh Nurjati Cirebon Indonesia
titin_yuniar80@uidc.ac.id¹, donnaaprilia@gmail.com², nihayatushalihah@gmail.com³

Manuscript received : 04-11-2024; revised : 13-12-2024; accepted : 15-12-2024. Date of publication : 15-01-2025

Abstract— This study aims to examine the role of humans as subjects and objects in education based on the reflection of Surah At-Tin verses 4-6. This Surah portrays humans as beings created in the best form (*ahsani taqwim*) with the potential to fall to the lowest state (*asfala safilin*) if they fail to maintain faith and righteous deeds. The research method used is library research with a descriptive-qualitative approach, analyzing the meaning of the verses from the Qur'an and linking them to Islamic education theory. The results of the study show that as subjects of education, humans are responsible for developing themselves through the pursuit of knowledge, while as objects, humans require guidance to achieve their full potential. Islamic education, based on Qur'anic values, plays a vital role in maintaining the balance between physical and spiritual dimensions, as well as in shaping the moral and spiritual character of individuals. In conclusion, education based on religious values and the Qur'an plays a strategic role in guiding humans to fulfill their roles as active subjects and as objects requiring guidance to achieve the ultimate goal of life as *khalifah* on earth.

Keywords— Humans, Educational Subject, Educational Object, Qur'an, Hadith. semicolon.

Copyright © 2025, Author

This is an open-access article under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of education significantly influences the success of educational implementation. The subject of education refers to individuals or groups responsible for delivering education, ensuring that the material taught or conveyed is comprehensible to the object of education. As an educational subject, humans play an active role in their development to fulfill their duty as stewards (*khalifah*) on earth. Humans are expected to actively participate in the learning process, enhance themselves, and improve their surrounding environment. They must take an active role in acquiring knowledge and personal growth. However, humans also require guidance and direction, which demonstrates that humans are also objects in education.

The Qur'an describes humans as beings created in a state of weakness and in need of guidance to achieve their highest potential. As objects of education, humans are nurtured to develop in line with predetermined educational goals—achieving better understanding, higher skills, and improved morality. This perspective highlights humans as recipients of educational efforts.

In Islam, humans are viewed as beings created in the best form (**ahsani taqwim**), as stated in Surah At-Tin, verse 4. However, humans also have the potential to fall to the lowest state (**asfala safilin**), as mentioned in verse 5, if they fail to maintain faith and good deeds. Verse 6 complements this message by affirming that only those who have faith and perform good deeds will receive an everlasting reward. Education, in this context, serves as a tool to guide humans to remain on the best path and fulfill their purpose as stewards on earth.

Research on humans in Islamic education has been extensively conducted. Gumati (2020) explains that humans are active subjects who develop their potential while also being objects requiring educational guidance. Albina and Aziz (2021) emphasize the importance of physical, spiritual, and social dimensions as the foundation of Islamic education. Amir (2018) discusses the integration of Islamic values into the education system to create ideal human beings. Irwandi (2020) expands the discourse by stating that education in the Qur'anic perspective shapes not only individuals but also communities. Khasinah (2020) links the essence of humanity to holistic character formation through Islamic

education. Additionally, Widow, Syar'i, and Muslim (2019) highlight the importance of the relationship between humans and education, encompassing theological and philosophical aspects. Maryadi (2019) mentions that education in the Qur'an aims to maintain harmony between humans' physical and spiritual dimensions. Gumati (2018) emphasizes education as a tool to preserve social harmony in a pluralistic context. Nawangsih and Achmad (2020) discuss the significance of value-based Islamic education in shaping ideal human beings. Zahroh (2020) connects the concept of humans in the Qur'an with individual character formation.

Furthermore, Saudah and Nusyirwan (2019) analyze the concept of the ideal human in Islamic education, focusing on the development of individuals with integrity. Hidayat (2018) explores the relationship between human psychology and education from a Qur'anic perspective. Fajri (2020) studies Islamic educational philosophy as a foundation for cultivating responsible individuals. Gumati (2019) adds that education in the Qur'an emphasizes harmony between spiritual and social aspects. Lastly, Irwandi (2020) asserts that education based on Qur'anic values can address human moral challenges.

Although these studies provide valuable insights, none explicitly integrate the message of Surah At-Tin, verses 4-6, as a theological foundation for understanding the dual role of humans as active subjects and objects requiring guidance in education. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by delving deeper into the dual role of humans as active subjects and guided objects, based on reflections on these verses. This study is expected to contribute significantly to the development of holistic and Qur'an-based Islamic education.

II. METHOD

This research employs a library research method, aimed at analyzing the concept of humans as subjects and objects of education based on reflections from Surah At-Tin, verses 4-6. Research data is sourced from primary references such as the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as secondary literature, including journals, books, and relevant scholarly articles. The collected literature is classified according to the main themes: humans as subjects of education, humans as objects of education, and the educational implications of these verses.

The analysis is conducted using a descriptive-qualitative approach, interpreting the meanings of the Qur'anic verses and linking them to Islamic educational theories. Findings are synthesized to produce comprehensive conclusions that provide conceptual contributions to the development of holistic Islamic education. This approach not only delves deeply into existing theories but also seeks to integrate the moral and theological messages of Surah At-Tin as a foundation for education.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Humans as Beings Created in the Best Form (*Ahsani Taqwim*)

- A. In Islamic thought, humans are regarded as beings created by Allah in the best form, or *ahsani taqwim*, as stated in Surah At-Tin verse 4. This verse highlights the perfection of humans in terms of their physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects, which form the foundation for fulfilling their role as stewards (*khalifah*) on Earth. This perfection also encompasses the innate disposition (*fitrah*) of humans, which, according to Albina and Aziz (2021), serves as an essential basis in Islamic education for fostering faith, morality, and intellectual capability.
- B. Ibn Kathir interprets *ahsani taqwim* as referring to the most perfect physical form and the intellectual capacity to discern between right and wrong, which distinguishes humans from other creatures. In the context of education, this concept implies a responsibility to develop one's best potential through directed learning and education. Islamic education plays a significant role in guiding humans to utilize this perfection to fulfill their stewardship duties and maintain a balance between physical and spiritual dimensions (Amir, 2018). With this understanding, education becomes a strategic tool for ensuring that humans live in alignment with their purpose of creation.

The Potential for Humans to Fall to the Lowest Depths (*Asfala Safilin*)

- A. The Qur'an acknowledges the potential of humans to fall to the lowest depths (*asfala safilin*), as mentioned in Surah At-Tin verse 5. This potential arises when humans fail to maintain their faith and righteous deeds, which are vital in preserving their best qualities as Allah's creation (Irwandi, 2020). Ibn Kathir explains *asfala safilin* as referring to a state of moral and spiritual degradation when individuals stray from Allah's guidance. This condition occurs when humans fail to utilize their best potential and succumb to their desires or an environment lacking value-based education (Saudah and Nusyirwan, 2019).
- B. Islamic education is crucial in preventing such a downfall by guiding individuals toward the righteous path through moral and ethical learning (Hidayat, 2018). As objects of education, humans

require guidance to reach their optimal potential, while as subjects, they must actively engage in learning to enhance their understanding and behavior. Education based on the Qur'an and Hadith is key to building individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also possess high moral integrity (Fajri, 2020).

Faith and Righteous Deeds as the Solution

- A. Faith and righteous deeds are the primary solutions highlighted in Surah At-Tin verse 6 for preserving human dignity and preventing degradation. This verse emphasizes that only those who believe and perform righteous acts will receive an eternal reward, underscoring the importance of these elements in guiding humans toward their purpose as stewards of the Earth (Zahroh, 2020). Islamic education plays a strategic role in instilling faith and righteous deeds through a learning process integrated with the values of the Qur'an and Hadith. Education rooted in religious values fosters individuals with strong moral and spiritual character, which is the essence of faith and righteous deeds (Gimri, 2020).
- B. Hidayat (2018) further asserts that education focusing on character formation encourages learners to not only understand religious teachings but also apply them in daily life. Thus, righteous deeds become not only personal obligations but also social contributions that sustain a moral community. Faith and righteous deeds also equip humans to face various moral and spiritual challenges in modern life (Fajri, 2020). Consequently, value-based education is essential for developing individuals who are intellectually capable, firmly rooted in faith, and productive in their actions.

Education as a Tool for Guiding Humans

- A. Education serves as the primary tool for guiding humans to maintain their position as the best beings (*ahsani taqwim*) and avoid degradation (*asfala safilin*). It helps direct human potential toward positive outcomes in intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects (Albina and Aziz, 2021). As subjects of education, humans are responsible for actively engaging in learning, seeking knowledge, and developing their abilities. In this regard, education acts as a facilitator, enabling humans to achieve a deeper understanding of their responsibilities as stewards.
- B. As objects of education, humans require directed guidance to maximize their innate potential (*fitrah*) bestowed by Allah. Education based on Islamic values aims to create a balance between the physical and spiritual dimensions of humans, enabling them to contribute constructively to society (Gimri, 2020). Islamic education emphasizes not only intellectual development but also character building rooted in faith (Fajri, 2020). Thus, education plays a strategic role in guiding humans to fulfill their role as responsible subjects and as objects needing guidance to reach their full potential.

Theological Reflection on Surah At-Tin Verses 4-6

- A. Theological reflections on Surah At-Tin verses 4-6 provide profound insights into the dual role of humans as subjects and objects in education. As beings created in the best form (*ahsani taqwim*), humans have the potential to actively develop themselves through educational processes. The role of humans as subjects of education emphasizes individual responsibility in seeking knowledge and optimizing self-potential (Albina and Aziz, 2021). However, humans also act as objects of education, requiring guidance and direction to achieve educational objectives (Gumati, 2020).
- B. In the Islamic educational context, humans are viewed as multidimensional beings encompassing physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, and moral aspects. Islamic education aims to develop these dimensions harmoniously so that humans can fulfill their role as stewards on Earth optimally (Amir, 2012). This concept underscores that education must address intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects to ensure that humans perform their roles holistically (Usman et al., 2023).
- C. Islamic education not only serves as a medium for transferring knowledge but also for shaping human character in alignment with faith-based values. Jarbi (2022) highlights that Islamic education aims to transform moral and cultural values into human life, enabling them to become devout servants of Allah and responsible stewards. Thus, theological reflections on Surah At-Tin verses 4-6 provide both theoretical foundations and practical guidance for shaping holistic humans as subjects and objects of education.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Surah At-Tin verses 4-6 provide essential insights into the dual role of humans as subjects and objects in education. As subjects of education, humans are responsible for self-development through active learning, while as objects, they require guidance to reach their full potential. Islamic education serves as a tool to direct humans toward the best path, maintaining a balance between physical and spiritual dimensions while fostering moral and spiritual development. Therefore, education rooted in Islamic values is key to shaping morally and spiritually strong individuals who contribute constructively to society.

V. REFERENCES

- [1] Albina, M., & Aziz, M. (2021). Hakikat manusia dalam Al-Qur'an dan filsafat pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Studi Islam*, 10(1), 15-30.
- [2] Amir, D. (2018). Konsep manusia dalam sistem pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 5(2), 112-123.
- [3] Fajri, M. (2020). Filsafat pendidikan Islam: Landasan teologis pendidikan. *Jurnal Filsafat Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 95-108.
- [4] Gimri, F. D., Dewianti, A. F., Rahmasari, R., & Purwanto, H. (2020). Konsep untuk menciptakan keseimbangan hidup manusia dalam sistem pendidikan Islam. *Academia*.
- [5] Gumati, R. W. (2018). Pendidikan sebagai alat untuk memelihara harmoni sosial dalam konteks kebhinekaan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 1(1), 20-30.
- [6] Gumati, R. W. (2020). Manusia sebagai subjek dan objek pendidikan (Analisis semantik manusia dalam filsafat pendidikan Islam). *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 1(2), 127-136.
- [7] Hidayat, A. (2018). Psikologi dan kepribadian manusia dalam perspektif Al-Qur'an. *Jurnal Psikologi Islam*, 5(1), 45-59.
- [8] Ibnu Katsir. (n.d.). *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* (Vol. 1). Darul Fikr.
- [9] Jarbi, M. A. (2022). Hakikat manusia dalam perspektif pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7(3), 56-68.
- [10] Usman, U., Sumaila, M., & Nurhilalayah, N. (2023). Manusia dalam perspektif pendidikan Islam. Bantul: Lembaga Ladang Kata.
- [11] Widow, H., Syar'i, M., & Muslim, A. (2019). Pentingnya hubungan manusia dengan pendidikan yang mencakup aspek teologis dan filosofis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 6(2), 101-110.
- [12] Zahroh, S. (2020). Konsep manusia dalam Al-Qur'an dan pembentukan karakter individu. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 11(1), 125-137.