# STRAINGHTENING CHARACTER THROUGH ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN MILLENNIAL ERA

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#### **Abstract**

The rapid progress of science and technology which has a serious impact on the community change is called as millennial era. The impact requires us to determine the right attitude and in accordance with the values of Islam by creating three balances; spirit, soul (ratio) and body. Surely it gives good impact for the children brains development. But in other sides the children tend to be lazy to study in the school and lazy to read a book which is the window of the world. This paper tries to describe how Islam educate Muslim students along period. Moreover, in millennial era how Islam establish the character to build a good civilization in this nation. The formulation concepts of Islamic character in this study is based on the Quran and Hadits. Here we offer a comprehensive and integrated learning method that will be a solid foundation to connect wisdom and blessings from God to students. The goal is that students have a good behavior in social life and fear of Allah. There are five implementations that Islam offer how to straighten the character; knowing the good, feeling and loving the good, acting the good, modelling and exemplary, the last is repentance.

Keywords: Straightening character, education, Millennial era.

#### Introduction

A Millennial era is signed by the rapid progress of science and technology which has a serious impact on various aspects of life. The impact requires us to determine the right attitude and in accordance with the values of Islam by creating three balances; spirit, soul (ratio) and body. These three elements are intact integrity (one set of bundles) that rejects dichotomy. If it is true that the dichotomy occurs, then the characteristics of science will be present which are increasingly questioned by the scale of the commitment; scientific commitment, moral commitment and spiritual commitment.

In this developing technology, everything is running instantly and efficiently. Our children tend to be lazy people. They always play on gadget, play guessing colors, guessing pictures, guessing number, and seeing variety of many videos and games on mobile such tom and jerry, Bernard bear, Masa and the bear and any other

cartoons having a thousand of colors that were instantly exist on mobile. This is one of effects in a millennial era.

Surely it gives good impact for the children brains development. But in other sides the children tend to be lazy to study in the school and lazy to read a book which is the window of the world. While our school still use board marker, white board, table, and chair in which these are not so interesting for them in comparing with the many tools existing in the mobile full of colors. While studying in the school provides only two colors (black and white) whereas there are thousand colors in mobiles. Moreover, many apps on mobile are far from the educational character that is the main soul as Muslim. For further impact, it will bring a bad character for our next generation. Where we hope that in 2045 Indonesia will be one of the most developed country in the world.

For many times, education was tested to provide difficult answers, i.e. between legitimizing the existing social systems in the bad character of our youths, or education must play a critical role in making social changes how to make a great change in building character through Islamic education system towards millennialism era.

A comprehensive and integrated learning method will be a solid foundation in character building in the millennial era, the need for teacher is to connect wisdom and blessings from God to students. The goal is that students have a good behavior in social life and fear Allah S.W.T. Education is a help to awaken, arouse, grow, enable and empower students about their natural potential. Efforts to develop the ability to read, the method of recollection was developed so that children have fluency in speech and sensitivity in seeing phenomena, especially in the era of the millennial generation.<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, after reformation era, the big hope was expected to bring the education sector in straightening character, but now many scholars see that education is directed towards commercialist project and commodity. Education is also considered as capitalist product that is expected to generate maximum profits for the interests of the capital owner.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Iswan, Iswan, dan Herwina Bahar. "Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam dalam Era Millenial" Ir. 4.0." *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (16 Juli 2018). https://jurnal.umj.ac.id/index.php/SNP/article/view/2756

Hence, there are many cases of moral violations that occur to students, because they are not properly embedded in which morality must be made a character and which are forbidden morality. Even though someone will be said to have the right faith and according to Islamic law if he has good moral character. So, good character is a sign of perfection of faith. If moral education is built based on the correct worldview, the right method, and integral practices in every educational process, the building of the character of students will be easy to form, especially in the school environment.<sup>2</sup>

By this paper we hope that the institutions of education will focus more in building character. The expectation is they are not only having competition how to get many pupils but also how to create the good generation having good morals. They are not only having competition in creating the qualified students in technology but also how to planted the morality and Islamic character in their deep hearts to the millennial era on going to millennial civilization.by formulating good education.

### **Character Education**

Character literally means "mental or moral quality, moral strength, or reputation". According to the Complete Indonesian Dictionary, "the characters are psychological characteristics, morals or character that distinguish one person from another. It can be concluded that character is the quality or strength of mental and moral, character or individual character which is a special personality that distinguishes from other individuals.

Character is related to several terms. These are: goodness, truth, approved, equilibrium and justice, righteousness, equity, and piety. However, the term which is most closely related to the character in the Quran is akhlaq, an Arabic term which refers to the practice of virtue and morality in the theology and philosophy of Islam. It is most commonly translated in many dictionaries as disposition, nature, temper, manners, character, or morals.<sup>3</sup>

Word education is derived from Latin language means *educate*, which can be interpreted to lead continuously. If expanded in etymological meaning it reflects the existence of education that goes on from generation to generation throughout the existence of human life. The term education comes from the Greek, *Paedagogy*,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ulil Amri, *Pendidikan Karakter Berbasis Al-Our'an* (Depok: PT Rajagrafindo Persada, 2014), 1-7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Al-Aidaros A. H., Shamsudin F.M., Idris. "Ethics and ethical theories from an Islamic perspective. *International Journal of Islamic Thought.*" (2013): 4

which means a child who goes to school and goes home from school accompanied by a servant. While the servant who picks up is called *paedagogos*. In Roman, education is termed *to educate* which means removing something that is inside. While in English, education is termed *to educate* which means improving morals and training intellectuals. <sup>4</sup>

While Russell Williams, as quoted by Megawangi in his writings, *Can We Improve the Moral Conditions of the Nation?* illustrated that character is like a muscle, where the muscles of the character will become soft and weak when they are never trained, and will be strong and sturdy when it is used frequently. According to Megawangi, character education is: An effort to educate children to be able to make decisions wisely and to fix them in their daily lives, so that they can contribute positively to their environment. Character education includes two aspects that humans have, namely the internal aspect and external aspects. An internal aspects or potential aspects include cognitive aspects (brain though), affective (heart though), and psychomotor (exercise). Each aspect has a space that contains the values of character education.<sup>5</sup>

While Character Education According to the Qur'an and Hadith from the various interpretations of the Qur'an and hadith generally there are many steps to conduct character education, namely pre-conception education, post-conception education, pre-natal education and post-natal education.

### 1. Pre-conception education

This education is an effort to prepare education by a person since he begins to choose and or seek a mate until the moment of conception in a mother's womb. In this case, various preparations need; the first is choosing a mate. In choosing a mate, someone is recommended to choose a good partner that willingly has attention to be invited to live a household, as the word of Allah in the Qur'an.<sup>6</sup>

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُوْمِنَّ وَلَأَمَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَثُكُمْ وَلَا تُنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّى يُوْمِنَهُ لِمُؤْمِنَةً بَوْنُهِ يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُولَئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ أَيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Depiyanti, Oci Melisa. "Model Pendidikan Karakter di Islamic Full Day School (Studi Deskriptif pada SD Cendekia Leadership School, Bandung)." *Tarbawy: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education* 1, no. 2 (5 November 2014): 132–41. https://doi.org/10.17509/t.v1i2.3769

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Megawangi, R. *Pendidikan Karakter Solusi yang Tepat untuk Membangun Bangsa.* (Jakarta: Bp. Migas dan Star Energi, 2004).67

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ramayulis, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam*, (Jakarta, Kalam Mulia, 2011), 303.

## 2. Post-Conception Education

After getting a good mate and getting married, someone must give his wife the halal food and drink, because what is consumed by the family also indirectly affects the child, both physically and mentally. As the word of Allah in the Qur'an said:

### 3. Pre-natal education

Pre-natal education is an effort to prepare education by both parents when the child is still in the mother's womb. In the Al-Qur'an there are many examples of interactions that show pre-natal education, namely education conducted by Hannah for nursing Maryam and Zakariya against Yahya. The education of Hannah for nursing Maryam was found in Surah Ali Imran verses 33-37. The author will describe the verse one by one.

## 4. Post-natal education

This stage of education consists of various stages of education which are also contained in many stories in the Qur'an. On this occasion, the author will not specify the stories one by one, but will discuss in general stages of education that exist in each story and combined with relevant verses both physical, spiritual, and aqidah education. This stage of education is in the story of Ayesha, Aryakha and Moses which is contained in the Qur'an Q.S. 28: 7 and Q.S. 28: 10.

## **Straightening Character**

Straightening character is not a new program. It has been being part of human life since many centuries ago. Indeed, education is a media to build a character and wisdom to create excellent life to be human. Related to character education, education terminologically is called as a process of accumulating good knowledge, attitude, behavior and action. Education begins with building the awareness, feeling, caring, intension, knowledge, believes and habits formation. Therefore, the concept of straightening character in education are 1). Straightening Character is not taught but it is an integrated formation by internalizing values, choosing good choice, doing

them as habits, and providing models. 2). Straightening character to youth has to involve them in situation and condition they are. 3). In Straightening character some issues should be considered such learning situation, learning process, learning materials, and learning evaluation. 4). Straightening character education will be never ending process it must use continuously.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore, to straighten the character especially Islamic character, schools and universities must act an integrated education how to internalize Islamic character in every single lesson. Islam as a law of life must give a solution in giving good education. By presenting the variety teaching and learning, and anticipating the addict of many games etc. Islam must have a new approach in strengthening learning, by applying the learning model in strengthening character education, to fortify the flow of globalization in the Millennial era, through the integration of the learning process, with integration concepts and ability; reading, education, and straightening Islamic character. Reading is related to the development of intellectual quotient; straightening Islamic character is related to the development of emotional intelligence (emotional quotients); purifying (tazkiyah) is related to the development of spiritual intelligence (spiritual quotient); and mental exercise (tadlrib) is related to skill intelligence. <sup>8</sup>

If educational system had succeeded in straightening character, this nation will be a great nation, because the great nation is not seen from the strength of the army, the sum of war ships, the war jets or its wealthy. But, it also can be seen from the character of generations as said by Morgenthau. By this statements we can capture that character is the most powerful element in creating the big nation. <sup>9</sup>

For educators including parents and teachers, straightening character is teaching children with various educational materials concerning Islamic character with modelling. Teachers and parents have to become a model and plenary example for their students. Because it is something very difficult for children to follow the guidance when he sees people who provide guidance to him but himself is doing nothing. That is why one of the successes of the Prophet Muhammad in delivering his

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Rokhman, Fathur, M. Hum, Ahmad Syaifudin, dan Yuliati. "Character Education for Golden Generation 2045 (National Character Building for Indonesian Golden Years)." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 4th World Conference on Learning Teaching and Educational Leadership (WCLTA-2013), 141 (25 Agustus 2014): 1161–65. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.197

<sup>8 &</sup>quot;Tantangan Pendidikan Islam dan Budaya Lokal Pada Era Globalisasi di Indonesia | Tarbawiyah Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan." Diakses 27 September 2018. http://e-journal.metrouniv.ac.id/index.php/tarbawiyah/article/view/955

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Algosaibi, Ghazi A. R. "The Theory of International Relations: Hans J. Morgenthau and His Critics." *Background* 8, no. 4 (1965): 221–56. https://doi.org/10.2307/3013729.

treatise was because he himself became a plenary example for his people. Like what is contained in Qur'an verse al-Ahzab: ayah 21 mentioned

## **Concept of Islamic Character**

The formulation concepts of Islamic character in this study is universal which are based on the Quran and Hadits. The Quran take plays as the foundation of charasteristical concepts. And the life way of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH contains the actual practice of concepts. The Qur'an taught charasteristical concepts which are embodied in the life way of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. Both Quran and Hadits are the sources of Islamic character. Various Quranic verses and a number of Prophetic narrations provide a code of character, which covers the dimensions of human behavior. Islamic character is grounded in the Quran and Hadits or Sunnah. Especially on Quranic concepts like faith, pietyness, and obedience, and the Quran and Sunnah are always quoted in supporting the moral and religious ideas of a Muslim. <sup>10</sup>

Conceptually, Islamic character include two important interpretations: *the first* interpretation is the 'science' that deals with the standards of the right and wrong of human doing, particularly "what humans have to do". Character as science refers to the study of the charasteristical conduct and behavior; and in this case, character means the human effort of learning moral standards and conducts to ensure that a person possesses the true understanding of moral behavior. *The second* interpretation means 'good character' or good behavior. In this understanding, character is the human behavior that prescribes refraining from immoral action such as cheating, stealing, murder, assault, slander, corruption, lying, rape, and fraud, and enjoins the virtues of honesty, compassion, sincerity, and loyalty. As such, Islamic character are those universal standards about right and wrong that determine what humans being have to do. And was taught by the Quran and Hadits demonstrated in the exemplary lives (actions and words) of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.<sup>11</sup>

A charasteristical system was offered by Islam. In Islam, religion and character are derived to ancient human nature which is pure and good, unless it will

<sup>11</sup> Haneef, S. S. "Ethics and Fiqh for everyday life: An Islamic outline. (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: International Islamic University Malaysia), 2005.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Hashi, A.A., "Islamic ethics: An outline of its principles and scope. *Revelation and Science*, 122 to 130."

be corrupted. Seemly, character, religion, and law are completing each other and not contradicted each other. In this case, what is morally wrong is also illegal, and the law permits only what is moral. Likewise, in Islam, both morality and law are derived from religious sources and religious teachings are practiced through morality and law. Second, the Islamic charasteristical system is unique, because its value transcend all worldly gains, relativistic interpretations, universalism, and normative character. 12

The sources of Islamic character in this study were from Qur'an and Hadits (the actions and words transmitted from the Prophet Muhammad PBUH). Islamic character is one of the cornerstones of Islam and is one of the fundamental sources of a community strength. Islam has established universal fundamental in character that have provided not only legal protection, but also a very effective characteristic system. Thus, whatever leads to the welfare of the individual or the society and does not oppose any maxims of the religion is characteristically good in Islam, and whatever is dangerous is characteristically bad. The importance in a healthy society, Islam supports a characteristically way of life and matters which lead to it, and is the path followed by the best Muslims along with all matters which lead to it. The "Virtuous Deeds" is the guiding principle for the behavior of a Muslim. This term covers all deeds, not only acts of worship. The Guardian and Judge of all deeds is Allah Himself. The most fundamental characteristics of a Muslim are godliness, compassion and humility. A Muslim must be humble with Allah and with other people in social life.<sup>13</sup>

## a. Straightening Character

Straightening character needs a real action that can produce a strong and positive character. To realize it, the school need to form the foundation of character education fully and continuously, including: <sup>14</sup>

First: Knowing the good, it can be easily taught, because knowledge is cognitive. Teaching the good, fair, and valuable can provide a clear understanding to the learner what is goodness, justice, honesty, tolerance, value

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Kaypan, A, "States of problems and inculcation of Islamic ethics and morals in students at secondary school in Satun province (Unpublished master's thesis). (2012) Prince of Songkla University, Pattani."

Latif, K., "Morality and ethics in Islam. Taken from http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/1943/morality-and-ethics-in-islam." (Diakses agustus 2018)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Iswan, Iswan, dan Herwina Bahar. "Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Islam Dalam Era Millenial IR. 4.0." *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan* 1, no. 1 (16 Juli 2018). https://jurnal.umj.ac.id/index.php/SNP/article/view/2756

and so on. Someone must behave good, fair, tolerates, without realizing it even though does not know conceptually and does not realize what is good behavior, or what is justice, or what is honesty. In Islam, an action is asked the responsibility if the doer did it in awareness. An action that is not realized and not guided by a certain understanding, it will not have meaning for the individual, because he or she does not realize and does not know the meaning and the effect of the action he did.

Second: Feeling and loving the good. After knowing the good, will grow a feeling and loving the good, that is how to feel and love kindness become a power and engine that can make you happy to accustome in doing good. So that it grows awareness that people want to do virtuous behavior because he is in love with the good behavior.

Third: Acting the good, after going through the process of understanding and loving the good that involves a congruent and affective dimension. Through this act of experience of goodness is positive. The habit acts in doing good is emphasized in Islamic education. In the Al-Hakim Hadith is stated, command your children to perform sholat if they are seven years old. The secret is that children are accustomed to doing and being educated to obey Allah, perform His rights, give thanks to Him, return to Him, hold fast to Him, awaken to Him and surrender to Him.

Fourth: Model and exemplary, the aspects of knowing the good, feeling and loving the good and acting the good need an exemplary from the surrounding environment. Humans learn more and imitate what they see and experience. The most influencing teaching is modelling which has closest approach to learning. Parents, close relatives, community leaders and anyone who is often associated with learning, especially learning idols, is determining the process of forming strong characters.

Fifth: Repentance or regret (taubat), in his bond back to Allah after making a mistake in life. Nasuha Repentance is to repent of the sins / mistakes that he committed at this time and regret (muhaasabah) or reflection for the sins committed in the past and promise not to do them again in the future and

determined to do good in the future. The Messenger of Allah was asked by a Sahabah, Is regret repentance?, "Yes," said Rasulullah (H.R. Ibn Majah). 15

# b. Empowering Morality of Character

The character's moral values serve as suggestions for purification, holiness and human values that truly comes from the bottom of heart. There are some aspects in seeing positive energy power to straighten the character:

First, spiritual power. Spiritual power is in the form of faith, Islam, ihsan and taqwa which serves to guide and give strength to humans to reach majesty and glory / the rise of human values which truly comes from the conscience. <sup>16</sup>

Second, the potential strength of positive human, it is the aqlus salim (healthy sense), returned heart (qalbun salim), clean, and pure from sin, and a calm soul (nafsul mutmainnah), all of those are implementations of the power of human personality which later gave birth to the normative concepts about cultural characteristic values. These good attitudes and behaviors include: istiqamah, integrity, sincerity, jihad and pious deeds. The energy in the individual perspective will give birth to people with character, namely people who are devoted, have the integrity of the nafs al-mutmainnah and do good deeds. The macro context in this case is national characteristic which includes planning concepts and national stakeholders which begins from an awareness, not a little interest as illustrated with the following:

The actualization of qualified people in life will give birth to noble character morals because they have an integrated personality, commitment and dedication, capacity skills, strong and professional competence. The opposite of positive energy is negative energy. The actualization of such this person will give birth to despicable behavior, namely people who are not hypocritical, traitors and cowards, and people who are unable to utilize the ownership. In this sense education, the goal is the formation of students who have far-sighted thinking, creative and innovative.

## Conclusion

This paper is meant to show to the world how good Islam is in straightening character. Islam requires many education engagements in character education. Islam

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Iswan dan Bahar.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Iswan dan Bahar.

is not what media says about Islam but Islam is Rahmatan lil Alamiin, grace for all creatures. Here the writer tries to explain how Islam gives very good education in straightening the good character. Moreover in this millennials era which consists all deeds being instantly.

In straightening character, education in accordance with this era, needs a good concept and strategy in touch with character building or straightening character. So a comprehensive and integrated learning method will be a solid foundation in straightening character in the millennial era, the need for teacher is to connect wisdom and blessings from God to students. The goal is that students have a good behavior in social life and fear of Allah S.W.T. Education is a help to awaken, arouse, grow, enable and empower students natural potential in having good character,

Therefore, the character education must be started from many phases to get good result: *first is pre-conception*; This education is an effort to prepare education by a person since he begins to choose and or seek a mate until the moment of conception in a mother's womb. *Second is post-conception education*; in this education someone must give his wife the halal food and drink, because what is consumed by the family also indirectly affects the child, both physically and mentally. *Third is pre-natal education*; is an effort to prepare education by both parents when the child is still in the mother's womb. In the Al-Qur'an there are many examples of interactions that show pre-natal education, namely education conducted by Hannah for nursing Maryam and Zakariya against Yahya. *And the fourth is post-natal education*; This stage of education consists of various stages of education which are also contained in many stories in the Qur'an. Where the education is combined with relevant verses both physical, spiritual, and aqidah education such story of Musa, Ibrahim, and Isma'il peace be upon them.

For educators including parents and teachers, straightening character is teaching children with various educational materials concerning Islamic character with modelling. Teachers and parents have to become a model and plenary example for their students. Because it is something very difficult for children to follow the guidance when he sees people who provide guidance to him but himself is doing nothing. That is why one of the successes of the Prophet Muhammad in delivering his treatise was because he himself became a plenary example for his people.

There are five recommendations that Islam offer how to straighten the character i.e. knowing the good feeling and loving the good, acting the good, modelling and exemplary, the last is repentance or regret. If these steps would be realized by the Islamic institution, I believe the ambition to create balancing in technology development and straightening character will be reached towards millennial era.

Therefore, the concept of straightening character in education are 1). Straightening Character is not taught but it is an integrated formation by internalizing values, choosing good choice, doing them as habits, and providing models. 2). Straightening character to youth has to involve them in situation and condition they are. 3). In Straightening character some issues should be considered such learning situation, learning process, learning materials, and learning evaluation. 4). Straightening character education will be never ending process it must use continuously

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