

Children's Character Education Values Based on Asy-Sya'rawi's Exegesis of Surah al-Qalam

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Abstract

This study aims to extract and analyze the values of character education in Surah al-Qalam based on the interpretation of Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli Asy-Sya'rawi, and to examine their relevance to contemporary character education, particularly in the context of parental roles. Employing a qualitative literature-based approach through thematic exegesis (tafsir maudhu'i), this research identifies core values such as patience, integrity, humility, and steadfastness, which align with the principles of akhlāq al-maḥbūbah (beloved character) and qudwah ḥasanah (good example) in Islamic pedagogy. Practically, this study formulates concrete guidelines for parents, including protecting children from harmful environments, fostering self-confidence, instilling moral principles, utilizing storytelling as a method of value education, nurturing the spirit of worship, and guiding patience in obedience and da'wah. The findings bridge a gap in the literature by providing an in-depth analysis of Surah al-Qalam from a contemporary exegetical perspective, offering an applicable model that connects Qur'anic values with real-world character-building strategies.

Keywords: Character Education; Asy-Sya'rawi's Exegesis; Parental Role; Islamic Values.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengekstraksi dan menganalisis nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter dalam Surah al-Qalam berdasarkan tafsir Syekh Asy-Sya'rawi, serta mengkaji relevansinya bagi pendidikan karakter kontemporer, khususnya dalam peran orang tua. Menggunakan metode kualitatif berbasis literatur dengan pendekatan tafsir tematik (maudhu'i), penelitian ini mengidentifikasi nilai inti seperti kesabaran, integritas, kerendahan hati, dan keteguhan, yang selaras dengan prinsip akhlāq al-maḥbūbah dan qudwah ḥasanah dalam pedagogi Islam. Secara praktis, penelitian ini merumuskan langkah konkret bagi orang tua, meliputi perlindungan anak dari lingkungan buruk, pembentukan kepercayaan diri, penanaman prinsip moral, penggunaan metode cerita untuk pendidikan nilai, penumbuhan semangat ibadah, serta pembimbingan kesabaran dalam ketaatan dan dakwah. Hasil kajian ini mengisi kesenjangan literatur dengan memberikan analisis mendalam Surah al-Qalam melalui perspektif tafsir kontemporer, sekaligus menawarkan model aplikatif yang menjembatani nilai-nilai Qur'ani dengan strategi pembinaan karakter di dunia nyata.

Kata kunci : Pendidikan Karakter; Tafsir Asy-Sya'rawi; Peran Orang Tua; Nilai-Nilai Islam.

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I. Introduction

The crisis of moral character affecting various segments of society today has become a serious concern in the field of education. This phenomenon stems from a shift in worldview and belief, in which human beings tend to distance themselves from religion as the primary foundation of life (Suhaedi, 2016), feeling self-sufficient with the technological advancements they have achieved (Andika, 2022). In fact, human intellect has its limitations and requires divine guidance to distinguish between right and wrong, lawful and unlawful, for true truth can only be determined through revelation (Aderus, 2024).

Modern educational institutions—particularly in the West—often rely solely on rational potential, leading to technological progress that is not always accompanied by adequate moral guidance (Mukarromah, 2017). The deeply rooted secularism in Western civilization has also affected both educational systems and family structures, resulting in imbalance due to an orientation toward material achievement without moral cultivation (Kania, 2013).

Although modern education emphasizes cognitive skills and professional competence, it frequently neglects ethical and spiritual dimensions (Lickona, 1991). Consequently, many educational institutions have begun reformulating learning approaches not merely to produce intellectually capable graduates but also morally and spiritually upright individuals. However, in practice, there is often tension between market demands that prioritize employability and the ideal of producing a generation of believers, knowledgeable individuals, and those of noble character. In this regard, the Qur'an offers a comprehensive moral framework (Kania, 2013).

Surah al-Qalam, for example, presents the noble character of the Prophet Muhammad as an exemplary model. Allah praises the Prophet in this surah for his sublime moral character (QS. Al-Qalam: 4), affirming that virtuous conduct is the foundation of human life; without it, human dignity may fall below that of animals (QS. Al-A'raf: 179). This moral excellence is rooted in the Qur'an itself, as narrated by Aisyah (may Allah be pleased with her), who said that the Prophet's character was the Qur'an personified (Ath-Thabari, 2000, Vol. 23, p. 529). Anas ibn Malik also reported the Prophet's noble manners—for instance, that he never questioned why something was done throughout the ten years Anas served him (Al-Maraghi, 1946, Vol. 29, p. 28).

While the urgency of moral education has been widely discussed, literature that specifically integrates Islamic character education based on Qur'anic exegesis into contemporary educational frameworks remains scarce. Thematic studies on particular surahs—such as Surah Luqman, which emphasizes values of steadfastness (*istiqāmah*), coherence between words and deeds, gratitude, faith, filial piety, honesty, and avoidance of hypocrisy (Mardiah & Napratilora, 2021), or surahs highlighting social concern as part

of worship such as prayer (Sumarni, 2024)—have been conducted. Similarly, studies on the application of noble morals in daily life, such as greetings, the etiquette of sneezing, and other social ethics (Rambe, Waharjani, & Perawironegoro, 2023), have contributed valuable insights. However, Surah al-Qalam has not received comparable scholarly attention.

Furthermore, most existing models of character education have not yet succeeded in fully integrating moral and spiritual dimensions into modern pedagogy, both in Indonesia and globally (Zuchdi, 2011). Studies based on Asy-Sya'rawi's exegesis of Surah al-Qalam are still limited (Malkan, 2012). His tafsir harmonizes rhetorical eloquence (*balāghah*) with profound, logical, and emotionally engaging explanations, simplifying classical interpretations into accessible insights (Malkan, 2012).

Previous research has highlighted Islamic educational values as foundational elements of character formation—such as justice, honesty, responsibility, and compassion—instilled through moral education based on the Qur'an and Prophetic examples (Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*). Some studies have examined Qur'anic character education through thematic interpretation of particular surahs, such as Surah Luqman (verses 12–19), emphasizing storytelling, modeling (*qudwah ḥasanah*), and counsel as key pedagogical methods (As-Sa'di, *Taisir al-Karim al-Rahman*).

However, a review of existing literature reveals a research gap: Surah al-Qalam has not been deeply explored through a thematic exegesis framework. Moreover, the interpretive insights of Shaykh Asy-Sya'rawi have rarely been utilized, despite their potential to provide contemporary moral insights into Surah al-Qalam (Malkan, 2012). The integration of thematic exegesis with the relevance of parental roles in character education remains underdeveloped, although it represents a crucial practical dimension (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

This study is grounded in the framework of Islamic character formation, emphasizing the internalization of virtues such as *akhlāq* (ethical behavior), *adab* (courtesy), and spiritual development (Al-Attas, 1991). Education is viewed as a process of holistic moral cultivation rather than mere knowledge transfer. The thematic exegesis method (*tafsir maudhu'i*)—as developed by Egyptian scholars such as Amin al-Khuli and Mahmud Shaltut, and adapted within Indonesian scholarship—provides a systematic approach to exploring moral themes across Qur'anic verses (Shaltut, 1966).

Asy-Sya'rawi's tafsir, as one of the major works of contemporary exegesis, serves as a primary reference due to its integration of linguistic depth (*balāghah*) with practical relevance for modern education (Malkan, 2012).

This article seeks to fill this gap by focusing on Surah al-Qalam through a thematic-exegetical approach based on Asy-Sya'rawi's interpretation, linking its findings to contemporary character education—particularly the parental role. This integrative

approach bridges textual analysis and educational application, connecting theoretical inquiry with practical implementation.

Relevant research trends highlight the use of qualitative literature-based approaches—such as content analysis and thematic exegesis—to identify Qur’anic character values and develop context-aware exegesis that considers socio-historical consciousness (Abu-Rabi’, 2003).

Based on the conceptual framework and background outlined above, this study addresses two main research questions: First, what character education values are contained in Surah al-Qalam according to Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli Asy-Sya’rawi’s interpretation? And second, how are these values relevant to the development of contemporary character education, particularly in the context of parental roles in child upbringing?

Accordingly, this study aims to (1) identify and analyze the character education values present in Surah al-Qalam as interpreted by Asy-Sya’rawi, and (2) explain their relevance and implications for modern character education—especially within the family, where parents serve as the primary educators.

The problem statement and objectives are designed to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic education studies based on Qur’anic exegesis, while also offering an applicable model for contextual and sustainable character-building practices among children.

II. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research method with a library-based approach, which involves systematic examination and analysis of relevant primary and secondary literature (Zed, 2014). The primary focus of this research is the thematic interpretation (tafsir maudhu’i) of Surah al-Qalam as elucidated by Asy-Sya’rawi (2003). The research data are qualitative and descriptive in nature. The primary data source is Asy-Sya’rawi’s Tafsir on Surah al-Qalam, while secondary sources include other exegetical works such as Tafsir al-Maraghi (Al-Maraghi, 1946) and At-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir (Ibn ‘Ashur, 1984), literature on Islamic character education, and other relevant thematic studies.

The conceptual framework of this research refers to Islamic character values encompassing honesty, patience, responsibility, integrity, and social concern (Lickona, 1991; Zuhdi, 2019). These values are then analyzed in light of Asy-Sya’rawi’s perspectives (2003) to assess their relevance and application within the context of contemporary education.

The data analysis in this study is conducted through four stages:

1. Thematic Identification: collecting relevant verses from Surah al-Qalam that contain moral and character values.
2. Thematic Interpretation: analyzing those verses through Asy-Sya'rawi's exegesis while considering his rhetorical approach (*balāghah*) and distinctive interpretative style.
3. Character Value Categorization: classifying the interpreted results into value categories according to the Islamic conceptual framework of character.
4. Educational Conceptualization: linking each identified character value to practical educational applications, particularly in relation to the parental role and institutional education based on exegetical insights.

To ensure data validity, cross-referencing was performed with classical and contemporary tafsir works such as Tafsir al-Maraghi (Al-Maraghi, 1946) and At-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir (Ibn 'Ashur, 1984). The study also consulted academic literature on character education to avoid interpretive bias from relying solely on one source (Samani & Hariyanto, 2012). The selection of Asy-Sya'rawi's Tafsir as the primary reference is based on its communicative, contextual, and socially relevant characteristics, which make it easily comprehensible and rich in analogies applicable to education. Furthermore, the tafsir provides in-depth rhetorical insights (*balāghah*), enriching the interpretation of verses related to moral and character education (Malkan, 2012).

III. Result and Discussion

A. The Noble Character of The Prophet Muhammad

The second verse of Surah al-Qalam explicitly affirms that the Prophet Muhammad was not insane, as alleged by the polytheists, "By the grace of your Lord, you are not mad" (QS. Al-Qalam: 2). According to Asy-Sya'rawi (2010, Vol. 19, p. 57), this verse represents Allah's direct defense of the Prophet's noble character, confirming that moral excellence—not political power or military strength—is the foundation of prophethood. This divine declaration not only vindicates the Prophet's honor but also prevents his opponents from undermining the credibility of the Islamic message.

Allah's oath by the pen (*al-qalam*) in the first verse does not merely highlight the pen as one of His magnificent signs (Ibn Kathir, 1999), but also serves as an introduction to refute the accusation of madness. Asy-Sya'rawi (2010, Vol. 19, p. 57) explains that the pen signifies divine knowledge and intellect, which contrasts directly with the baseless claim of insanity. The accusation was grave because it aimed to weaken public trust in the Prophet's message. If revelation were obstructed, moral and social corruption would inevitably spread—a pattern observed in nearly every prophetic mission throughout history, where communities rejected divine truth by labeling their prophets as mad or foolish (Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, pp. 57–58).

Asy-Sya'rawi further argues that it is inconceivable for a madman to utter words that are orderly, wise, and morally profound. Madness is associated with irrationality and moral decay, whereas the Prophet's speech embodies wisdom and virtue. As-Sa'di (2000, p. 878) adds that every utterance of the Prophet reflects perfect intellect and divine guidance—the Qur'an itself being the ultimate evidence that cannot originate from one devoid of reason. The placement of this rebuttal at the beginning of the surah emphasizes that noble character (*khuluq 'azhīm*) is the very foundation of prophethood (Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, p. 57). Without moral integrity, human life loses its direction and meaning. This corresponds with the Prophet's own statement, "Indeed, I was sent only to perfect noble character." (Musnad Ahmad, No. 8952).

This hadith explicitly defines the purpose of the Islamic message: that all aspects of religion—ritual, social, and spiritual—are ultimately aimed at cultivating moral virtue. Achievements in science, politics, or economics hold no real value unless accompanied by righteous character (Lickona, 1991; Ramadan, 2009). The verse "Wa innaka la 'alā khuluqin 'azhīm" ("And indeed, you are of a great moral character") — QS. Al-Qalam: 4 — stands as an irrefutable divine testimony to the Prophet's moral excellence. The word 'azhīm denotes a superlative degree, indicating that this moral excellence is of the highest and divinely granted order (Ibn Kathir, 1999). This interpretation is reinforced by the testimony of Aisyah (may Allah be pleased with her), who said, "His character was the Qur'an" (HR. Muslim, No. 746).

Asy-Sya'rawi (2010, Vol. 19, pp. 58–59) emphasizes that the Prophet's character encompassed patience, gentleness, firmness in principle, and universal compassion—even toward his adversaries. His moral traits serve as an ethical model for all Muslims, transcending time and place (Ramadan, 2009). Based on the divine defense of the Prophet (QS. Al-Qalam: 2) and the affirmation of his moral excellence (QS. Al-Qalam: 4), several practical implications can be drawn for parents in shaping children's character:

1. Protecting Children from Negative Environments and Bullying

Parents must ensure that children are shielded from harmful environments that normalize deviant or abusive behavior. Constant exposure to such environments forces children into self-defense rather than moral growth (Lickona, 1991; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

2. Defending Children Against Injustice

Just as Allah defended His Prophet from false accusations, parents should advocate for their children when they face humiliation or unfair treatment. Such defense fosters self-worth and moral courage (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

3. Providing Consistent Attention

The consistent presence of a parent—even for a brief moment—has a lasting impact on a child's confidence and emotional well-being. Direct engagement builds strong emotional bonds (Brooks, 2011).

4. Offering Praise to Build Optimism

Just as Allah praised the Prophet for his noble character, sincere parental praise can nurture a child's optimism and motivation to sustain virtuous behavior (Dweck, 2006).

B. The Prohibition Against Following the Immortal

In Surah al-Qalam (verses 8–13), Allah firmly warns the Prophet Muhammad not to follow the deniers (*mukadzhibīn*) and sinners who attempt to weaken the faith of the believers so they can be more easily subdued, “They wish that you would compromise so they would (also) compromise” (QS. Al-Qalam: 9). This passage extends the prohibition to those of destructive character, described in the Qur'an as excessive in swearing (*hallāf*), morally despicable (*mahīn*), slanderous (*hammāz*), spreaders of gossip (*masyā' bi-namīm*), obstructers of good (*mannā' lil-khayr*), transgressors and sinners (*'utull* and *athīm*), and those notoriously evil in reputation (*zanīm*) (Ibn Kathir, 1999; Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, pp. 64–70).

Asy-Sya'rawi (2010, Vol. 19, pp. 64–70) notes that these traits are presented using the *mubālaghah* (intensified or superlative) form—*hallāf*, *mahīn*, *hammāz*, *masyā' bi-namīm*, *mannā' lil-khayr*, *athīm*, *'utull*, *zanīm*—to emphasize the extreme persistence of these individuals in wrongdoing. They are fully committed to immorality, even to the extent of sacrificing their wealth to oppose righteousness, including their claim that the Qur'an is nothing but *asāṭīr al-awwalīn* (“legends of the ancients”). According to Asy-Sya'rawi, this description exemplifies deliberate and sustained moral corruption. Such individuals not only reject truth but actively hinder others from performing good deeds, such as donating to the poor who support the Prophet's mission (see QS. Al-Munāfiqūn: 7). The Qur'an's reference to Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughirah provides a concrete historical example: despite his wealth and prestige, he denied the Qur'an's authenticity, called it mere myths, and withheld aid from impoverished believers, even as he generously spent on the pagan pilgrims (Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, pp. 66, 68; Al-Tabari, 2000).

The moral implication of this divine prohibition is clear: steadfastness and moral integrity are indispensable in character education. Educational institutions must not compromise moral standards for worldly gain—such as facilitating graduation or awarding credentials merely for financial profit. When education becomes commercialized, it produces individuals who may be intellectually competent but morally bankrupt (Lickona, 1991; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, p. 64).

Asy-Sya'rawi highlights that the repetition of the negative particle *lā* (do not) throughout these verses signifies the seriousness of the warning and functions as both a moral reinforcement and a divine threat to those engaged in such wickedness (Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, p. 64). From these verses, several pedagogical insights emerge that are highly relevant for parents in nurturing moral awareness in their children:

1. Teaching Clear Moral Differentiation

Children must be trained to distinguish right from wrong. The Qur'anic prohibition illustrates that not all acts done by others—no matter how common—are worthy of imitation. Effective moral education teaches not only what is right but also why something is wrong (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008; Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, pp. 64–70).

2. Providing Consistent Moral Boundaries

Just as the Qur'an repeatedly uses prohibitive expressions to emphasize caution, parents should consistently set boundaries to help children understand that immoral actions never lead to genuine benefit (Shihab, 2002; Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, p. 64).

3. Using Reinforcing Language (Superlative Emphasis)

The Qur'an's use of *mubālaghah* forms provides an effective pedagogical method: exaggerating moral dangers to heighten awareness. Parents can apply similar rhetorical strategies to emphasize the severity of vice and inspire virtue (Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, pp. 64–70).

4. Explaining Worldly and Spiritual Consequences

Children should be taught that immoral behavior carries both worldly consequences (e.g., damaged reputation, loss of trust) and spiritual consequences (divine punishment and loss in the Hereafter), as portrayed in Surah al-Qalam (Ibn Kathir, 1999; Asy-Sya'rawi, 2010, Vol. 19, pp. 64–70).

C. Lessons from the Parable of The Garden Owners

Verses 17–33 of Surah al-Qalam recount the parable of “The Burned Garden” (Ashab al-Jannah), which, according to Shaykh Asy-Sya'rawi (2010), symbolizes the disbelievers of Makkah who lived in luxury and abundance yet failed to show gratitude to Allah. The term *balawnā* (“We tested them”) indicates that their prosperity was in fact a divine test. Their wealth, instead of drawing them closer to gratitude, led to arrogance and neglect of social responsibility, particularly the duty to share their harvest with the poor and orphans (see QS. Adz-Dzāriyāt: 19; Ibn Kathir, 1999).

Asy-Sya'rawi interprets *al-balā'* in this context not merely as “trial” but as *imhal*—a divine act of “extending the rope” or delaying punishment—whereby God allows immoral individuals to continue in ease until they forget their obligation of gratitude and generosity (Asy-Sya'rawi, Vol. 19, pp. 74–75).

He locates the story geographically near Sana'a in Yemen, in a region historically referred to as *ardh al-jannatayn* ("the land of two gardens"). Asy-Sya'rawi reports that the soil in this area was described as blackened and scorched, resembling charcoal—consistent with the Qur'anic narrative of a once-fertile garden destroyed by fire (Asy-Sya'rawi, Vol. 19, pp. 74–75). He also suggests that this event occurred after the era of Prophet 'Isa ('alayhi al-salām) and subsequent to the Abyssinian invasion led by Abraha (the event of the Year of the Elephant).

The narrative begins with the death of the generous patriarch who had consistently shared his harvest with the needy. Ibn 'Ashur (1984) notes that the father used to distribute part of the fruit yield to the poor during harvest season. However, after his death, his sons became arrogant and decided to deny the poor their share. They conspired to harvest the garden early in the morning before the poor could arrive, intending to prevent charity altogether. This collective decision reflected their greed and moral blindness, which, according to Asy-Sya'rawi, inevitably led to both moral and material destruction (Asy-Sya'rawi, Vol. 19, p. 80).

In the midst of their plot, one among them—the "most just of them" (*awsathuhum*)—admonished, "Did I not tell you to glorify Allah?" (QS. Al-Qalam: 28). Asy-Sya'rawi (Vol. 19, p. 75) explains that this was a final call to repentance before their intention materialized into action, but they ignored the warning. As a result, Allah sent a calamity: their garden was destroyed by fire overnight. When they discovered the ruin, they confessed, "Glory be to our Lord! Indeed, we were wrongdoers." (QS. Al-Qalam: 29; Zuhaili, 1998, Vol. 29, p. 57).

Asy-Sya'rawi quotes the famous maxim of Ibn 'Ata'illah as-Sakandari, "Whoever fails to show gratitude for a blessing has exposed himself to its removal". He emphasizes that their punishment came as a direct consequence of their corrupted hearts. Although their sinful act was not yet physically executed, their firm intention to deny charity already carried moral accountability. Imam Al-Ghazali (2004) similarly warns against associating with the greedy, for such companionship fosters attachment to materialism, while befriending the pious promotes detachment from worldly excess.

This parable parallels the moral themes found in other Qur'anic passages, such as Surah al-Isra' (verses 23–38), which underscores religious devotion, humility, responsibility, and integrity (Shihab, 2002). Contemporary research also highlights that values such as humility, patience, and integrity can be internalized through thematic learning, role modeling, and value-based extracurricular activities (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

Shaykh Asy-Sya'rawi draws several educational insights from this parable, particularly relevant to parenting and character formation:

1. Avoiding a Preaching or Authoritarian Approach

Not every child responds positively to direct moralizing or commanding tones.

Excessive authoritarianism can provoke resistance and hinder genuine moral growth (Dweck, 2006).

2. Using Parables as a Teaching Tool

Similar to how the Qur'an delivers this story through parables, parents can employ analogies and metaphors to simplify abstract moral lessons and make them intellectually accessible (Asy-Sya'rawi, Vol. 19, pp. 74–75).

3. Teaching Through Storytelling

Stories possess greater emotional appeal than direct instructions. Storytelling has long been a pedagogical method in Islamic education, as seen in the prophetic narratives within the Qur'an (Ramadan, 2009).

4. Encouraging Reflection and Moral Learning ('Ibrah)

Parents should habituate children to derive lessons ('ibrah) from stories. Reflective comparison between narratives and real-life situations fosters deep moral reasoning and critical thought (Lickona, 1991).

Asy-Sya'rawi concludes that this parable teaches that moral education must focus not only on outward discipline and achievement but also on purifying the heart from greed and arrogance (Asy-Sya'rawi, Vol. 19, p. 80). The essence of gratitude is not verbal acknowledgment but behavioral sincerity—expressed through generosity, humility, and a sense of responsibility toward others.

D. The Impotence of Morality Toward Allah

Asy-Sya'rawi (2010, Vol. 19, pp. 91–92) interprets the verse, “On the Day the shin shall be uncovered, and they will be called to prostrate, but they will not be able to.” (*QS. Al-Qalam: 42*). He explains that this verse portrays a profoundly terrifying moment on the Day of Resurrection. On that day, those who were accustomed to prostration (*sujūd*) in the world will find it easy to do so, while those who never performed it sincerely will be prevented, even though they are physically sound. The *Hadith* narrated by Muslim (No. 183) elucidates this verse: the Prophet ﷺ stated that those who prostrated for Allah in sincerity will be allowed to do so in the Hereafter, whereas those who did so merely for display (*riyā'*) will be restrained.

According to Asy-Sya'rawi (2010, Vol. 19, p. 93), the term *sālimūn* (“sound”) in *QS. Al-Qalam: 43* indicates that their inability to prostrate is not due to physical incapacity but spiritual arrogance. This interpretation aligns with *QS. Fussilat: 37*, which attributes refusal to prostrate to the arrogance of the heart—either that of the disbelievers who deny divine dependence or of the hypocrites who worship only for human approval (Ibn Kathir, 1999; Al-Tabari, 2001).

Beyond the lesson of sincere worship, *QS. Al-Qalam: 48* conveys another vital moral principle, “So be patient for the decree of your Lord.” Asy-Sya'rawi (2010, Vol. 19, p. 98) interprets this command as a call for steadfastness amid the Prophet's trials, including accusations of madness and claims that the Qur'an was mere myth. Here, *ṣabr* (patience)

signifies active endurance—maintaining consistency in da‘wah (propagation), confidence in divine justice, and perseverance without hastily demanding outcomes.

The following admonition—“*Do not be like the companion of the fish*” (*ṣāhib al-ḥūt*, i.e., Prophet Yunus, ‘alayhi as-salām)—serves as a reminder for the Prophet to remain patient and not abandon his mission prematurely. This echoes the divine instruction in *Surah al-Muddaththir* (QS. 74:2–3, 7), which intertwines the commands to proclaim, purify, and persevere. Ramadan (2009) refers to this as *proactive patience*—a dynamic endurance that sustains moral and spiritual conviction until divine success is realized.

The concluding verses of *Surah al-Qalam* provide profound guidance for educators and parents, especially regarding spiritual and moral formation. These can be translated into several key principles:

1. Cultivating the Habit of Worship from an Early Age

The verse illustrating that those accustomed to prostration in this world will easily prostrate in the Hereafter signifies the importance of habituation. Children should be trained to worship sincerely—not out of compulsion or performance—but as a natural expression of faith and devotion (Lickona, 1991).

2. Instilling Sincerity (*Ikhhlās*) in Actions

Education must emphasize the purity of intention (*niyyah*). Children should understand that their acts of worship, study, and good deeds are performed solely for Allah, not for praise or social recognition (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

3. Developing Humility

Arrogance is depicted as the primary barrier preventing prostration in the Hereafter, even for the physically able. Thus, humility before Allah and others must be cultivated as a core virtue.

4. Training Active Patience (*Ṣabr Fā‘il*)

The command “*Faṣbir li-ḥukmi rabbika*” teaches that patience entails resilience in adversity and consistency in principle. Children must learn to persevere through challenges with faith and optimism (Ramadan, 2009).

5. Encouraging Perseverance in Da‘wah and Learning

The reminder not to emulate Prophet Yunus’s haste teaches the importance of perseverance. Parents and educators must guide children to remain steadfast in learning and in doing good, trusting that divine reward is certain (QS. *Āli ‘Imrān*: 9).

In Asy-Sya’rawi’s view, moral conduct toward Allah encompasses both obedience in worship and spiritual discipline in patience, humility, and sincerity. These internal virtues serve as the foundation for external behavior and, therefore, are indispensable in any model of Islamic character education.

E. Discussion

The findings of this study align with the broader pattern found in Qur'an-based character education literature, particularly in its emphasis on the noble character (*akhlāq karīmah*) of the Prophet Muhammad. Surah al-Qalam underscores key virtues such as patience (*ṣabr*), integrity (*istiqāmah*), and steadfastness in the face of adversity. These values are encapsulated in the verse, "And indeed, you are of a great moral character" (QS. Al-Qalam: 4).

This divine statement serves as an ethical foundation for human conduct and represents a universal principle for moral education (Ibn Kathir, 1999; Shihab, 2002). Comparable themes are also found in Surah al-Isrā' (verses 23–38), which emphasizes piety, humility, compassion, social responsibility, honesty, and self-confidence—key components in contemporary moral and character education frameworks (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008). Most prior studies on Islamic character education employ qualitative, literature-based methodologies, often integrating thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhu'i*) with hermeneutical or philosophical analysis. Common research procedures typically involve three stages:

1. Identifying Qur'anic verses containing moral values,
2. Categorizing these values into specific ethical domains, and
3. Conducting inductive analysis to synthesize educational principles (Abu-Rabi', 2003).

However, despite this methodological consistency, Surah al-Qalam remains relatively underexplored as a primary subject of character education. Scholarly attention has tended to focus on more frequently discussed surahs—such as Surah Luqmān and Surah al-Ḥujurāt—leaving the rich moral and pedagogical insights of Surah al-Qalam largely untapped (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Zuchdi, 2011). This study contributes to filling that gap by integrating two major analytical approaches:

1. Thematic Exploration of Qur'anic Moral Values — identifying moral themes in Surah al-Qalam through Asy-Sya'rawi's exegesis, and
2. Practical Translation into Educational Contexts — applying those values to parental roles and child character formation.

Through this dual approach, the research not only enriches the theoretical discourse on Qur'an-based moral education but also proposes an applicable framework for parenting and pedagogy grounded in Islamic ethics.

1. Synthesis of Identified Core Values

The study identifies four fundamental values that recur throughout Surah al-Qalam:

- a) *Ṣabr* (Patience): Reflecting perseverance in adversity, active resilience, and spiritual endurance. This aligns with modern pedagogical frameworks emphasizing emotional regulation and long-term moral consistency.

- b) Istiqāmah (Integrity): Refers to moral steadfastness and unwavering commitment to truth. In educational terms, this parallels ethical coherence and resistance to moral relativism.
- c) Tawāḍu' (Humility): The foundation of all moral behavior in Islam. It regulates the ego and fosters gratitude, aligning with Lickona's (1991) emphasis on modesty as a civic virtue.
- d) Thabāt (Moral Steadfastness): Denotes constancy in ethical and spiritual practice, especially under pressure or temptation. This reflects the concept of character resilience in contemporary moral psychology.

These virtues collectively represent the essence of akhlāq al-maḥbūbah (beloved character traits) and correspond to the Qur'anic concept of qudwah ḥasanah (exemplary modeling), which underpins Islamic pedagogy (Al-Attas, 1991; Nasr, 2007).

2. Integration with Parental Roles in Education

Within the Islamic educational paradigm, the family is the primary locus of moral transmission. The Prophet Muhammad exemplified this through his pedagogical balance of compassion, firmness, and consistency. Parental qudwah ḥasanah—the act of leading through example—thus becomes a central mechanism for moral internalization (Ramadan, 2009).

The findings of this study reinforce that parental modeling, consistent moral dialogue, and spiritual habituation are essential for effective character formation. The role of parents, therefore, transcends mere behavioral correction; it involves cultivating an environment of sincerity (ikhlās), gratitude (shukr), and self-accountability (muhāsabah). By situating Asy-Sya'rawi's interpretive insights within this pedagogical framework, the study bridges exegetical theology and applied moral education—an integration rarely achieved in existing literature.

3. Relevance to Contemporary Character Education

In the context of modern education, moral formation must confront global challenges such as secularism, moral relativism, and technological individualism (Hunter, 2000; Lickona, 1991). The Qur'anic framework, as demonstrated in Surah al-Qalam, provides a timeless response by grounding morality in divine revelation rather than subjective human reason.

This theological grounding is not merely dogmatic but profoundly humanistic—it emphasizes the integration of intellect, emotion, and spirituality. Asy-Sya'rawi's exegesis exemplifies this synthesis: his rhetorical approach (balāghah) transforms textual interpretation into moral psychology, offering practical wisdom for both educators and parents.

The educational implications of this study, therefore, extend beyond theoretical analysis. It calls for the revitalization of Islamic pedagogy—one that unites knowledge (*‘ilm*), action (*‘amal*), and moral consciousness (*taqwā*). When these elements harmonize, education ceases to be merely an intellectual pursuit and becomes a transformative process of spiritual and ethical development

IV. Conclusion

This study explored the values of character education found in Surah al-Qalam through the exegetical perspective of Shaykh Muhammad Mutawalli Asy-Sya’rawi and analyzed their relevance to contemporary approaches to character formation in Islamic education. By employing a qualitative, literature-based methodology and a thematic exegesis (*tafsir maudhu’i*) approach, this research identified four central values—patience (*ṣabr*), integrity (*istiqāmah*), humility (*tawāḍu’*), and moral steadfastness (*thabāt*)—which together constitute the core principles of Qur’anic moral pedagogy. These virtues are consistent with the concepts of *akhlāq al-maḥbūbah* (beloved character traits) and *qudwah ḥasanah* (exemplary modeling), both of which form the foundation of Islamic moral education. The findings demonstrate that these values can be effectively implemented through the role of parents as primary educators in nurturing self-confidence, instilling moral discipline, cultivating sincerity and worship, and guiding children toward patience and ethical resilience in the face of life’s challenges.

The significance of this research lies in its effort to bridge classical Qur’anic exegesis with the modern discourse on character education. Theoretically, it enriches the field of thematic exegesis by incorporating Asy-Sya’rawi’s contemporary insights, particularly his focus on the rhetorical, moral, and psychological dimensions of the Qur’an. Practically, it proposes a conceptual model for integrating Qur’anic moral values into Islamic educational curricula and family-based pedagogy, emphasizing harmony between intellect (*‘aql*), heart (*qalb*), and conduct (*‘amal*). Nevertheless, this study acknowledges its limitations, being entirely literature-based and restricted to Asy-Sya’rawi’s interpretive framework, thus requiring further empirical and comparative research to validate and expand its applicability across different educational contexts.

In conclusion, Surah al-Qalam, as interpreted by Shaykh Asy-Sya’rawi, offers a holistic and timeless framework for moral and character education. It integrates revelation and reason, faith and practice, as well as personal virtue and social ethics, providing a comprehensive paradigm that remains deeply relevant to contemporary challenges in education and parenting within the Islamic world.

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