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THE CONCEPT OF FITRAH AND ITS CORRELATION WITH THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION

Andry Fitriyanto, M. Ud IAIN Pontianak andryfitriyanto@iainptk.ac.id

Abstract

This article aims to explain the concept of fitrah in the treasures of Islamic thought. This discussion cannot be released in the discourse of Islamic Education. The presence of the perspective of Muslim thinkers on this fitrah issue in order to fill the empty space created from the discussion about Islamic education. On the other hand, this article also discusses the correlation of the concept of fitrah with the theory of human knowledge development commonly used in the world of education in general, namely the theory of empirics, nativism, and convergence. As we know that the theories born in secular Western civilization is not entirely in accordance with the concept of fitrah which is the original concept of Islam that upholds divine values. The linking of the two variables seems forced in the discourse of Islamic education science so far. Therefore, efforts are needed to present the interpretation of the concept of fitrah and stages of development of human knowledge in the perspective of Islamic thought. This is to show the theory of the development of human knowledge in accordance with islamic teachings. Simply put, this article also wants to convey that human nature has two aspects, namely godliness and humanity. Where both natural potentials must be developed in the context of Islamic education.

Keywords: Fitrah, potential, Islamic education, empirism, nativism, convergence.

INTRODUCTION

In the discourse of Islamic education, the discussion of fitrah is inseparable. This is because the discussion of fitrah becomes the basis and reference of the field of education itself. Indeed, educational issues (including Islamic education) must be synchronised with adequate knowledge of the basic and natural potentials of human beings. None other than that a good understanding will produce a quality islamic *education* process and output.

Murtadha Muthahhari stated that a good education is an education that develops human nature. In the sense of human talent and natural potential must get the right channel through education to make an ideal human figure. He analogizes that educating people is not the same as having an inanimate object and can be formed at will. Educating people must pay attention to the natural potential it brings. Therefore, understanding the natural potential of human beings is needed for the success of the educational process. Even Muthahhari asserted that the only way to build knowledge, thought and philosophy is to accept the default principles that exist in man. Including education issues.

Based on the above thoughts, islamic education books always provide discussion of the concept of fitrah with the theory of human knowledge development. There are at least three theories of the development of human knowledge that are correlated with fitrah, namely empirism theory referring to John Locke (1632-1704 AD), nativism theory with his retainer Arthur Schopenhaeur (1788-1880 AD), and william

stern theory (1871-1938 AD).

Interesting phenomenon of the author observes, that not infrequently in the books of Islamic Education Science, the theories are justified by verses of the Qur'an and hadith. It seems that this is done as an effort *to bridging* the concept of fitrah which is the original term of Islam with theories that were initiated in Western civilization. Shows that there is indeed a gap deep enough dividing of the two variables so that the linking yang can be said to be quite forced. This is very unfortunate because it does not refer to the treasures of Islamic thought in the subdiscussion.

Whereas it is recognized that one of the differences between Islamic education and public education is that it lies in its purpose. The highest goal of Modern Western education is to achieve self-actualization. Meanwhile, according to Islam, the development of fitrah perfectly is one of the main aspects of Islamic education objectives. Islamic education has a theosentric foundation, while public education usually has only humanitarian orientation (anthroposentric). So it becomes a little ambiguous when we directly compare the concept of fitrah in Islam with the theories of development commonly used in the discussion of public education.

This is where the need arises to access the treasures of Islamic thought in bringing together the concept of fitrah and its relation to the theory of human knowledge development. Reopening the horizon of thought of Muslim leaders in discussing the correlation of fitrah and Islamic

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¹ Arief Sukino, *Islamic Education* (Pontianak: STAIN Pontianak Press, 2013), p. 23.

education. This is not only an attempt to lay down bridges that are relevant to the two variables, but also as a typical line-up of Muslims in this matter.

A. The Concept of Fitrah in the Treasures of Islamic Thought

Historically, the word fitrah is the original term used in the Qur'an. In this sense the word was not found in the Arabic vocabulary before the Qur'an was revealed. This word has never been used in a context other than human beings. ² This shows the originality and peculiarities of term a fitrah in the Islamic world. Therefore, this term must be seen in the perspective of the dynamics of the Muslim thinkers themselves.

One of the Muslim thinkers, Murthada Muthahhari stated that something fitrah is a thing that comes from within the human being. He is the All-knowing, the All-important. ³That is, the concept of fitrah in the review of Islam is a kind of basic nature inherent in man when he was born. This trait is the default thing and inherent in human beings.

According to him, fitrah study is divided into two branches, namely fitrah studies related to godhead problems and fitrah studies related to humanitarian issues. The first study stated that humans have a natural innate to god or religion. While the second study states that humans also have natural innate human values that distinguish it from animals and other inanimate objects. These values are rooted in the process of human

creation.

Fitrah problems related to the problem of godliness rest on QS. Al-Rum verse 30: "Then set your face straight to the religion of Allah, the nature of Allah who created man according to his nature. There is no change in God's nature. That is the right religion, but most people do not know."

The word fitrah in this verse follows the pattern of fi'lah which refers to mashdar in Arabic rules which means "circumstances or types of deeds". So the word fitrah is related to the circumstances and the relationship of the situation with religion. Allah created man in a specific state. That is the fitrah.⁴

There is also a hadith that is usually used as a refference about human nature, namely hadith Shahih Muslim no. 4803: "Every child is born in a fitrah state, Yahudi both parents are the jews, Christians or Majusi."

In connection with the hadith, Muthahhari narrated the opinion of Ibn Atsir in his book *al-Nihayah*, that indeed man was born with a character and character who is ready to accept religion. Had he been left behind, he would have come to him in the fire unless there were outside factors that affected him.⁵

According to Jalaludin in the book Islamic Education Science by Arief Sukino, stated that there are three potentials that human beings have, namely the potential of spirit, physical (physical), and spiritual. The first contains the potential of

² View: Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 1 and 10.

³ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 27.

⁴ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 7.

⁵ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 9.

man to worship, which is the tendency to devote himself to the Creator. The second includes biocomia concomia that are materially contained in the body. And thirdly in the form of non-material connotations integrated in the soul, including in sensing instincts, intuition, talent, personality, intellect, feelings, reason, and other mental elements.⁶

In the Qur'an itself there are three meaningsrelated to religion(al-din) namely al-Fitrah, al-Shibghah, and al-Hanif. These three words mean religion(al-din)or religious(al-tadayyun).). ("Shibghah (dip) of God, and who is better shibghahnya than shibghah Allah? And to him weworship." (QS. Al Baqarah: 138)

He *is* the All-mighty, the *All-mighty*, the *All-the-all-grateful*. yang berartu sejenis celupan warna (What is *meant by God's shibghah* is the coloring of the dyeing done by God. While the first coloring of God's doing to humans is "the giving of religious colors". This is the color ketuhanan given by God when man was first created.⁷

"Abraham was not a Jew, nor a Christian, but he was a hanif and surrendered." (QS. Ali Imran: 67)

He is the *All-bee*, the All-wise. Thus, hanifism(*al-hanifiyyah*) is a collection often denies contained in human nature. That is, the nature of man is a set of tendencies to the truth and to (religion) of God.⁸

In the view of Nurcholish Madjid who refers to the opinion of Ibn Taymiyyah stated that the religious fitrah is divided into two, namely fitrah that already exist in human beings naturally (fitrah*majbulah*)and the revealed fitrah (fitrah*munazzalah*)). The second fitrah serves as an amplifier for the first fitrah. This means that religion is a continuation of human "nature" in an effort to find the truth. In this context he continued that the value of humanity is unlikely to be contrary to religious values. ⁹In line with this opinion with Muthahhari who divided the language fitrah in the aspect of godliness and humanity.

Related to this fitrah, the question arises that if the tendency to godliness is fitrah but why in reality there are people who choose not to religionin karenakan not recognize the existence of God. In answering this reality, Nurcholish stated that people who reject the Madjid godhead and religion are eventually stuck into a circle called quasi religion or religion equivalent, even caught up in the ersatz religion. (agama palsu). It also departs from the fact that although these people do not recognize God and religion, but in his life there must be something that he makes his life orientation (to be oriented) such as material, spouse, ideology, science and others. They also unknowingly created a kind of rules to the rites that must be done in an effort to live the orientation of life as contained in religion in general.

B. Knowledge Development Theory

In addition to discussing a kind of knowledge of godliness tendencies that are basic

⁶ Arief Sukino, *Islamic Education* (Pontianak: STAIN Pontianak Press, 2013), p. 21.

⁷ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 12.

⁸ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 16.

⁹ View: Nurcholish Madjid, *Islamic Doctrine* and Civilization (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995), p. xvi.

human nature, Muthahhari also discusses human nature related to *knowledge that is muktasabah* (knowledge obtained through effort). It refers to QS. Al-Nahl verse 78 which reads "And Allah brought you out of the wombs of your mothers while you knew nothing, and gave you *hearing*, *sight*, *and hearts so that you may give thanks."*

Qs. Al-Rum verse 30 and QS. Al-Nahl verse 78 is two verses that are often used in the discourse of Islamic Education in order to justify the theory of human development (nativism theory and empirism theory) that are conflicting. Here we will discuss the dialectics of these theories.

The three theories of human knowledge development commonly adopted in the discourse of Islamic Education are empirism theory, nativism theory, and convergence theory. As originally intended, this theory speaks of what factors most dominantly influence human development, especially the development of its knowledge. The first theory contradicts the second theory, while the third theory is recognized as a synthesis of the two previous theories.

Empirical theory refers to John Locke (1632-1704). The theory is known as *tabularasa* (candle table), which states that the child is born into the world like a clean white paper. The white paper will have a pattern and writing scratched by the environment. Empirism comes from the

Greek word¹⁰"*empirical*" which means sensory experience, therefore empirism is derived from understanding that has experience as the main source of recognition. The flow ini only recognizes that external influences or factors only affect the develop mentor growth of children, while factors from within that are codrati are considered to have no effect on it.¹¹

The theory of Nativism comes from *the* word nativus meaning birth. This theory arises from the philosophy of nativism (born) of the word as a form of idealistic philosophy and results in the view that the development of the child is determined by the heredity of carrying from birth, and the codrati natural factor. The pioneer of nativism was Arthur Schopenhauer, a German philosopher who lived from 1788 to 1880.¹²¹³

The convergence was pioneered by William Stern (1871-1938 AD),a Germanpsyche expert who argued that carrying and the environment both determined human development, so that it was a compromise or combination of nativism with empirism. Convergence argues that in the development of the individual both basic or carrying and the environment plays an important role.¹⁴

Usually in the discourse of Islamic Education Science, empirism theory is justification with QS. An-Nahl verse 78. Where this verse seems to be in line with John Locke's

¹⁰ Ana Rosilawati, *Islamic Education* (Pontianak: STAIN Pontianak Press, 2013), p. 118.

¹¹ Syamsul Kurniawan, *Islamic Education* (Yogyakarta: Ombak, 2016), p. 71.

¹² The philosophy of idealism itself was first raised by Plato (427-347 BC). Although not directly related to the theory of nativism, Plato's theory of knowledge is important to explain to see an overview

of the founding of the idealism school in the concept of knowledge.

¹³ Ana Rosilawati, *Islamic Education* (Pontianak: STAIN Pontianak Press, 2013), p. 119.

Ana Rosilawati, Islamic Education (Pontianak: STAIN Pontianak Press, 2013), p. 126-127.

tabularasa theory that makes man born like an empty white paper. It doesn't carry any knowledge or inclination. So it is only the environment that forms him and his knowledge. Usually this theory is also associated with the hadith "Every child is born in a fitrah state, both parents who make him Jewish, Christian or Majusi"

While the theory of nativism is usually justified with QS. Al-Rum verse 30. As the theory of nativism is at odds with empirism theory, this verse is inevitably placed contrary to the previous verse. Justifies the theory of nativism that human beings are born carrying certain tendencies that greatly determine the development of life and its knowledge.

In convergence theory that the innate talent of nature and the environment both affect the development of life in human knowledge. The verses and hadiths above are also used as justification. By drawing a conclusion that in man there are actually things that are fitrah, namely godly or religious tendencies. But on the other hand, there is also knowledge gained through the environment that affects the development.

C. Philosophical Debate About Default Knowledge

If we look at the history of philosophical debate, the theory of empirism with one of his characters John Locke, actually appeared as the most vexed reaction of the views of previous rationalist philosophers in modern Western philosophical civilization. The lox of intellectual dynamics is the question of whether human beings have innate knowledge when humans are born into the world. This problem brings the thinkers to split into two poles that confirm each other.

Rationalists such as Rene Descartes state that human beings are born with innate ideas. This innate knowledge is the foundation and plays an important role for human development. This is close to the view of nativism theorists, that man is born with an innate set of abilities that determine his way of life. While the adherents of empirism take the opposite stance, stating that human beings are born like blank paper(tabularasa). All his knowledge is obtained from the environment through the five human senses.

John Locke states that innate ideas are assumptions that are not proven in reality. ¹⁵More so, he stated, in his work An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, that the human mind at first was like a tabularasa, namely blank paper without writing tohim. Through the abstraction of sensing then our minds gradually reach for concepts or knowledge. ¹⁶

The two opposing opinions were then synthesized by the later philosopher, Immanuel Kant. He does not reject experience as one source

¹⁵ John Locke's opposition to the innate idea he expressed in his work *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* written before the revolution of 1688. This was his most important work, so he was considered the founder of empirism in the theory of knowledge. See: Betrand Russell *History of Western Philosophy* (Yogyakarta: Student Library, 2007), p. 793-800.

¹⁶ Paul K Moser and Arnold Vander Nat (ed), *Human Knowledge Classical and Contemporary Approaches* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 112th thing. The book includes a collection of works by several philosophers, including *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* by John Locke.

of knowledge, but he also argues that not all knowledge is gained through experience. Kant sees knowledge as a synthesis between a *priori element* and *a posteriori element* that each plays a role as a form (*apriori*)and material(*aposteriori*).). ¹⁷The path taken by Kant seems to illustrate the theory of convergence that diseases empirism and nativism, that innate abilities and environments both play an important role in human life.

In talking about the theory of knowledge, there is another interesting theory to be presented, namely Plato's theory. Indeed, if a human being is born, he knows all things, without there is nothing that is missed. This can be explained as follows. Before it was housed in the body, the human spirit was in another realm, namely the nature of ideas. Ideas are the essence of everything in the universe. The Spirit knows it and discovers the nature of them. Then, when he coincided with the body, a hijab appeared that separated the spirit from the knowledge of the idea. The condition is like a person who has known something, but for some time becomes forgotten, and then remembers again. Every baby born, according to Plato'stheory, knows everything. Teaching and learning are just an attempt to recall something forgotten.. Teachers are reminded. When He says to his people, "Be reminded of what is in it, and do not be one of those who believe."18

D. The Theory of Muslim Philosophers

One of the potential aspects of fitrah is the ability to think human beings, where the ratio becomes the center of its development. The potential of reason is characteristic of man as a creature that has the ability to choose (good and bad) and man has the potential to determine his way of life.¹⁹

In relation human knowledge, Muthahhari stated that what is meant by fitrah is the principle of thinking. While the knowledge of conception and its variants are obtained through the efforts of the fivesenses (muktasabah). However, he asserted that the concept of fitrah is not the same as the concept of Plato's knowledge. This means that the building of human intellectuality is designed so sophisticated that it is enough for him to know certain things without the need for complicated evidence and evidence, and without assumptions already known before. This theory is what the Muslim philosophers believe.

This theory says that the principles of human thought (fitrah) are not teaching (formed through learning) nor *are they istidlaliah* (obtained through the preparation of evidences). But at the same time, they also do not view it as a characteristic of the origin of human. This is in contrast to Plato and Kant, who regard it as innate in human origin. Muslim philosophers say that when a human being is born, he knows nothing, including these principles of thinking. Although they said that the formation of these

¹⁷ Rodliyah Khuza'i, *Epistemological Dialogue of Muhammad Iqbal and Charles S. Pierce* (Bandung: Refika Aditama, 2007), p. 25-26.

¹⁸ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 30.

¹⁹ Arief Sukino, *Islamic Education* (Pontianak: STAIN Pontianak Press, 2013), p. 22.

principles se already it does not require experience, preparation of evidence, or teachers. Once a person thinks about two sides of things, the subject matter and the possibilities, he also came to the conclusion between the subject matter and its possibilities.²⁰

For example, if we say "the whole is greater in itsparts", Plato must have said that man knew it from *azali* (in the realm of ideas), as well as his knowledge of everything in *the*) itu, Kant also stated that all is bigger that apart is a set from universe. This means that some of the knowledge is obtained from outside and some of it is related to reason from the beginning.²¹

Muslim philosophers say no. A newborn does not know anything about the concept that the whole is greater than its parts. For it has no conception of "whole" and "parts". However, once he has a conception of both, and one of them applies to the other, at the same time he can decide -- without the need for evidence, teachers, or experimentation - that the whole thing is larger than the parts.²²

Muthahhari also responded to several verses and hadiths commonly used to justify the theory of empirism and nativism that became ostensibly contradictory. According to him, the problem of fitrah contained in the Qur'an is not a kind of innate idea of Rene Descartes, *knowledge a priori* Kant, or the forgotten idea plato. Indeed, the Qur'an mentions the potential of fitri owned by every human being. In the sense of human

vilify is the potential that he brought from birth and did not exist at that time. However, along with the development of his physical and mind, man will come to the phase of being able to conceptualize various things. When the various conceptions are duplicated, it will give rise to a new conception. The inevitability to do this new conception with the principles of thinking is fitrah. The author translates this with the term ability or axiomical thinking skills. This skill can be actualized because it already has potential in every human being at birth.

From this view of course we can already see the difference in the treasures of Islamic thought about fitrah with the theory of empirism and nativism. Then what about the convergence theory that recognizes that carrying and the environment are both inseparable factors in the development of human knowledge. Is Islamic education feasible to adopt such a theory. Before going any further we should look at the meaning of carrying in the field of psychology as william stern's field of science.

Carrying is the whole possibility or ability (potential) that there is an individual and during the period of development can really be realized (realized). ²³However, usually in the realm of psychological studies, congenital pem is usually identified with things of a physical or genetic nature. In fact, the concept of fitrah in Islam is a ruhaniah thing.

Interesting if we look at the description of

²⁰ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 32.

²¹ Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 32.

²² Murtadha Muthahhari, *Complete Surgical Fitrah; Knowing Who We Are, Our Nature and Potential* (Jakarta: Citra Publisher, 2011), p. 33.

²³ Ngalim Purwanto, *Educational Psychology* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2007), p. 21.

Siti Fauziyah in her article entitled *The Concept* of Fitrah and the Difference From Nativism. Empirism, and Convergence, says that convergence theory is born in a secular environment that has the view that the talent or potential referred to in this school is something empty of ruhaniah or religious values. ²⁴This suggests that the theory of convergence can not completely be translated into the concept of human nature in Islamic glasses.

Muslim thinker Muhammad Bâqir Al-Śadr in his famous work Falsafatuna admits that by the time humans began their existence on earth, they had no idea whatsoever, regardless of how clear and general the idea was in the human mind.²⁵

Related to QS. An Nahl verse 78, he concludes that ideas are born in the soul potentially, and they gain the true nature with the development of mental integration of the soul. So the innate conceptions of birth are not produced by the senses. Instead, she conceived it without taking care of it. However, with the integration of the soul, these conceptions become knowledge and information that we recall and, hence, rise once again, after pent-up and potential.²⁶

E. Resourceful Potential Development

Muthahhari stated that in addition to the development of scientific studies, in education also pays attention to the development of the potential of reason and the potential of creative thinking that is human nature. So the role of

educators is one of them is to transfer knowledge and the spirit of diversity of thinking in order to develop these potentials.

The above thinking departs from the scientific concept referring to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib in the Book of *Nahj al-Bâlaghah*. Where science is categorized into two parts, namely potential science and acquisition science. The second type of science would not be useful without the first type of science. ²⁷The science that we learn formally is actually the fruit of potential science which is an innate talent obtained without learning from a person.

As explained earlier that the principle of thinking is fitrah that man brings once he is born into the world. This type of science is more essential in terms of developing one's thought and creative processes. It is the root of the ability to analyze, critique and research every knowledge it acquires. Therefore, the knowledge we learn (which is a collection of knowledge), will not be so useful without involving the development of the principles of thinking that are potential human sciences. This is also what needs to be emphasized in the development of Islamic education science, namely developing the maximum potential of students' thinking.

In addition, in Islamic education must also develop the potential of godhead that is fitrah in human beings. It is acknowledged that human beings are godly beings(homo religious). Channeling the need to worship the Almighty

²⁴ Siti Fauziyah, *The Concept of Fitrah And the Difference From Nativism. Empirism, And Convergence* (Aqlania, Vol. 08. No. 01 (January-June) 2017 ISSN: 2087-8613), p. 98.

²⁵ View: Mu<u>h</u>ammad Bâqir Al-Śadr, *Our Philosophy* (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 2000), thing. 43.

²⁶ View: Mu<u>h</u>ammad Bâqir Al-Śadr, *Our Philosophy* (Qum: Ansariyan Publications, 2000), thing. 43.

²⁷ See: Murtadha Muthahhari, *The Basics of Islamic Education Epistemology* (Jakarta: Sadra press, 2011), p. 8.

Substance. Good collaboration on the development of godhead potential, thinking potential and physical potential must be balanced in the context of Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the concept of fitrah can be divided into two, namely fitrah related to godliness and fitrah related to humanity. Fitrah is a natural thing that is found in man fundamentally and naturally carried from the time he was born.

In the context of Islamic education, QS. Al-Rum verse 30, QS. Al-Nahl verse 78 and hadith Shahih Muslim no. 4803 can not be directly used to justify the theory of empirism, nativism, or convergence. Empirism theory says that human knowledge is fully obtained through experience, whereas in the treasures of Islamic thought recognizes the existence of potential knowledge of the godhead in every human being.

The theory of nativism recognizes human innate knowledge by ignoring the knowledge of acquisition. While the concept of fitrah states that there is a lot of knowledge that is also obtained through the sensing of man who determines his way of life.

Convergence theory does recognize innate knowledge and sensory knowledge. But the theory is very anthroposent because it does not recognize the tendency of the godhead in man. While Islamic education has a *theosentric* basis.

The concept of fitrah in the treasures of Islamic thought states that in human beings there is a tendency of the godhead and the potential of thought principles that will be actualized along with the physical and psychological development of human beings. These two potentials are the basis for human beings to achieve and assemble other knowledge that is sensory and analytical. These are the things that distinguish people from other beings. Understanding of these concepts must be considered in carrying out Islamic education.

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