

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMANS AND EDUCATION BASED ON THE PERSPECTIVE OF SYED MUHAMMAD NAQUIB AL-ATTAS

Agil Husain Abdullah<sup>1)\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia

\*Email: [agilhusainabdullah@unismuh.ac.id](mailto:agilhusainabdullah@unismuh.ac.id)

### Abstract

Humans are superior and better creatures than other creatures of Allah Ta'ala, and humans are the only creatures that can be educated. This study aims to analyze the relationship between humans and education based on the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas's thoughts. This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method through a review of relevant literature regarding Al-Attas's thoughts regarding the nature of humans, the nature of education, and the relationship between humans and education. While many studies explore Al-Attas' thoughts, most focus on Al-Attas' view on human being and education in general. However, little research examines Al-Attas' view on direct impact of education on humans. This study addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between humans and education, offering new insights into the positive impact of education on humans. The results of this study indicate that based on Al-Attas's perspective, humans have a dual nature and the potential for reflection and intelligence that make them special creatures. Al-Attas argues that the concept of ta'dib is the most appropriate concept for education. The relationship between humans and education from Al-Attas's perspective can be described into three points. First, education strengthens the dual nature of humans. Second, education leads humans to the purpose of their creation. Third, education improves the social order. The findings of this study highlight several areas requiring further attention, leading to the following recommendation for both future research and practical application; Future research should explore Al-Attas' view on the concept of humanity education, and the findings should be applied on education system.

**Keywords :** *Relationship; Humans; Education; Al-Attas.*

### Abstrak

Manusia adalah makhluk yang lebih unggul dan lebih baik daripada makhluk Allah Ta'ala lainnya, dan manusia adalah satu-satunya makhluk yang dapat dididik. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara manusia dan pendidikan berdasarkan perspektif pemikiran Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Studi ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi literatur melalui tinjauan literatur yang relevan mengenai pemikiran Al-Attas tentang sifat manusia, sifat pendidikan, dan hubungan antara manusia dan pendidikan. Meskipun banyak studi mengeksplorasi pemikiran Al-Attas, sebagian besar berfokus pada pandangan Al-Attas tentang manusia dan pendidikan secara umum. Namun, sedikit penelitian yang mengkaji pandangan Al-Attas tentang dampak langsung pendidikan pada manusia. Studi ini menjawab kesenjangan ini dengan menyelidiki hubungan antara manusia dan pendidikan, menawarkan wawasan baru tentang dampak positif pendidikan pada manusia. Hasil studi ini menunjukkan bahwa berdasarkan perspektif Al-Attas, manusia memiliki sifat ganda dan potensi refleksi serta kecerdasan yang menjadikan mereka makhluk istimewa. Al-Attas berpendapat bahwa konsep ta'dib adalah konsep yang paling tepat untuk pendidikan. Hubungan antara manusia dan pendidikan dari

perspektif Al-Attas dapat dideskripsikan dalam tiga poin. Pertama, pendidikan memperkuat sifat ganda manusia. Kedua, pendidikan mengarahkan manusia pada tujuan penciptaannya. Ketiga, pendidikan meningkatkan tatanan sosial. Temuan studi ini menyoroti beberapa area yang membutuhkan perhatian lebih lanjut, yang mengarah pada rekomendasi berikut untuk penelitian yang akan datang dan aplikasi praktis; Penelitian ke depannya harus mengeksplorasi pandangan Al-Attas tentang konsep pendidikan kemanusiaan, dan temuan tersebut harus diterapkan pada sistem pendidikan.

**Kata Kunci:** *Hubungan; Manusia; Pendidikan; Al-Attas.*

## INTRODUCTION

Allah Ta'ala created humans in the best form, as stated in the Qur'an, Surah At-Tin (95): 4: "*Indeed, We have created man in the best form.*" It is true that the human body is far superior to that of animals, *jinn*, and other creatures. For example, Allah designed the human hand in such a way that humans can use it for tasks that require precision, such as writing, and also for tasks that require strength, such as lifting objects and other physical labor. However, humans were not created only with physical perfection and appearance. Allah did not create humans in vain, but rather with various noble tasks. In fact, it is humans who declare themselves willing to carry out the mandate that Allah previously offered to His other creatures, as stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahzab (33): 72: "*Indeed, We have conveyed the mandate to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but all of them were reluctant to carry it and they were afraid of it, and the mandate was carried by humans. "Indeed, humans are very unjust and very stupid.*"

According to Al-Asyqar (n.d.), even the heavens, the earth, and the immense mountains feel burdened by the rewards and punishments inherent in the trust given by Allah. Despite all this, humans undertake to carry it out. This declaration of commitment by humans is actually a form of injustice to themselves and their documents regarding what they are entrusted with. On the other hand, several other opinions state that what is meant by carrying out this trust is that humans are prepared to carry it by nature, or that they undertake it when this trust is offered to them in the spiritual realm. Efforts to fulfill the duties of human life must be carried out to the maximum and optimal level. Humans are only given permission to strive, while the success or failure of these efforts rests solely in the hands of Allah Ta'ala. Therefore, there is truly no reason for humans to regret the failure of programs that have been well-planned, implemented, and evaluated.

It is certainly not surprising that ultimately, it is humans who receive this great trust from Allah. Humans are the most perfect creation of Allah Ta'ala. Allah further perfected human creation by appointing them as caliphs on earth, tasked with managing and utilizing nature. Furthermore, Allah also equipped humans with various potentials that can be developed to meet the needs of human life itself. Among these potentials are emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual. All of these human potentials must be developed in accordance with the functions and purposes given by Allah. There are various views and opinions regarding the

development of human potential, such as philosophical, chronological, functional, and social perspectives. In addition to possessing various potentials, humans also possess various characteristics or traits that distinguish them from animals, which are manifestations of human nature itself (Khasinah, 2013).

Among the characteristics that make humans unique compared to other creatures is their personality. Regarding aspects of human personality, humans can be viewed from various perspectives. One is that human personality can be considered a physical reality and another is a psychological reality. The Quran comprehensively explains everything related to human functions, roles, and responsibilities. Therefore, humans are obliged to read and understand the Quran to understand its functions, roles, and responsibilities. Their responsibility as humans is to live a meaningful life, namely the nature and purpose of human life. Nature, in relation to humans, is what God created within us, both physically, spiritually, and spiritually. Each determines the conditions and timing of their life (Jarbi & Ag, 2022).

The essence of human beings is essentially moral awareness (ethics), meaning they are able to understand social norms and act in accordance with the norms and ethical principles they believe in. Meanwhile, aesthetics refers to the understanding of human nature as beings with a sense of beauty and aesthetics. Human nature is the ability to recognize oneself as a being distinct from other beings. Furthermore, humans possess the capacity to exist, meaning they are able to penetrate and transcend the boundaries that bind them. They are also capable of developing a conscience, or the ability to make decisions about what is good and bad for them as human beings. They must also possess responsibility or a willingness to bear the consequences of actions that demand accountability. However, a sense of freedom also exists within humans, namely the freedom humans possess to be free from being bound by anything. Humans also have obligations and rights, which are manifestations of their status as social beings. Essentially, humans must be able to experience happiness, meaning within humans, there must be the ability to experience something with a calm soul and place it within a series of efforts, norms, and destiny (Yahya, 2020). Humans, with all their strengths and potential, naturally require something that can help them develop further. Based on this need for development, education emerged among humans. Education is a process of human interaction characterized by a balance between human sovereignty, in this case categorized as the student, and the authority of other humans who act as educators. In education, there must be a balance between human freedom of thought and the necessity of submitting to the various instructions given to them as educational tools. Furthermore, education is an effort to prepare individuals from an early age to face a rapidly changing environment. Furthermore, education plays a role in improving the quality of life of individuals and society (Haudi, 2020).

The concept of Islamic education basically tries to create a good or universal human being (*al-Insan al-Kamil*), which is in accordance with the function of human creation which carries 2 missions, namely: 1) as a servant of Allah (*Abdullah*), 2) as a representative of God on earth (*Khulafatullah fi al-ardh*). The insan kamil in question, namely: 1) a balanced human being, having an integration of two dimensions of personality: first, the vertical isoteric dimension (submitting and obeying Allah Ta'ala), second, the exoteric, dialectical, horizontal dimension (bringing safety to the natural social environment), 2) a balanced human being in the quality of thought, dhikr, and deeds. To produce the intended human being, Islamic education must present and teach not only religious knowledge, but also other knowledge (Putri, et al., 2023).

Because education is one of the most valuable products of human civilization, it is crucial for us to understand the relationship between humans and education. One scholar who can serve as a strong reference to further explain this relationship is Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas is a prominent Muslim philosopher and thinker from Malaysia. He is one of the few contemporary scholars firmly rooted in traditional Islamic sciences and also competent in theology, philosophy, metaphysics, history, and literature. He is considered a pioneer in proposing the idea of the Islamization of knowledge. Al-Attas's educational philosophy and methodology have a single goal, which is the Islamization of the mind, body, and soul, and its impact on the personal and collective lives of Muslims and their fellow human beings, including the spiritual and non-human worlds. His family background positively shaped Al-Attas's basic education. Al-Attas is considered a versatile figure. He is competent in various academic fields, including theology, philosophy and mysticism, history, and literature, and has contributed significant original and authoritative works, particularly on Islamic and Malay civilization (Foyajul Islam, 2017). The first problem facing Islamic education is the modernization brought by Western civilization into Islamic education, causing it to lose its original purpose. Al-Attas, with his master's and doctoral studies in Canada, inspires us to understand the Western framework for understanding everything, especially Islam. Therefore, in his introduction to his thought, he consistently explains comprehensively how Western civilization has mastered all aspects and dimensions of knowledge, leaving many Muslims unaware that their understanding has been based on Western teachings (Usiono, 2023).

Based on the nature of humanity and the nature of education, as well as the brief biography of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, it is deemed necessary to further examine the extent of the relationship between humanity and education from Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas's perspective. Previous studies have not yet fully explored immediate impact of education on humans, so this study tries to analyze the positive impact of education on humans as a manifestation of the relationship between them.

## METHOD

This research is library research. Library research is research that uses library sources as the primary data source, and researchers must identify important literature sources for the research through research reading.

This research uses a qualitative approach. Sidiq and Choiri (2019) state that qualitative research findings cannot be obtained through statistical or quantitative methods. Pradoko (2017) states that the purpose of qualitative research is to explain the significance of different phenomena within the subject under investigation.

Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely by reading, taking notes, and in-depth review of relevant texts and literature, such as works written by Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, supported by various other literature as secondary and supporting references. Each data point is classified into specific themes, namely the nature of humankind, the nature of education, and the relationship between humans and education from the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas.

**Table 1. Primary and Secondary Literatures Used in Research**

No	Title	Author(s)	Type of Reference
1	The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education	Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas	Primary Reference
2	Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education	Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas	Primary Reference
3	Secularism and Moral Education: A Study of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' Thoughts on the Concept of Moral Education	Anugrah, D. S. & Syahidin	Secondary Reference
4	The Contribution of Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Naqib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqui to the Islamization of Knowledge	Foyajul Islam, S. K.	Secondary Reference
5	Pemikiran Pendidikan Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas	Hendratno, A., et al.	Secondary Reference
6	Al-Attas's View on the Importance of Man in Our Understanding of the Cosmos	Khayrurrijal	Secondary Reference
7	Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas on Human Origin	Risallah, F. & Denisova, T.	Secondary Reference
8	Naquib al-Attas Educational Thought in Contemporary Islamic Education	Sapri, et al.	Secondary Reference

Data were analyzed using content analysis, a method for identifying, organizing, and interpreting important meanings within a text. The analysis process

involved data reduction where relevant sections of the text is sorted. Next is data categorization where data is grouped into themes, then data interpretation where meanings are interpreted based on theory and context, and conclusion where generalizations and conceptual findings are developed.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### FINDINGS

#### The Nature of Human based on the Perspective of Al-Attas

According to Al-Attas, the human being possesses a dual ontological constitution that distinguishes him from all other created entities. In his view, the human person is simultaneously *jism* (body) and *rūh* (spirit), a composite reality in which the physical and the metaphysical dimensions are inextricably intertwined. This duality, however, should not be understood as two independent substances merely coexisting, but rather as an integrated unity that forms the essence of *insān*. Al-Attas emphasizes that the Qur'anic narrative of human creation clearly affirms this dual nature. In Surah al-Hijr (15:29), Allah declares: "*So when I have fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down in prostration before him.*" This verse, as interpreted by Al-Attas, signifies that the dignity, capacity for knowledge, and moral responsibility of humankind are rooted in the divine infusion of the spirit. It is this spiritual dimension that elevates the human being above other creatures and situates him as a vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth. Complementing this metaphysical account, Al-Attas also refers to the detailed physical description of human formation in Surah al-Mu'minūn (23:12–14).

In this passage, the Qur'an outlines the sequential biological stages through which the human body is formed from an extract of clay, to a drop of seminal fluid, to a clot, a lump of flesh, bones, and finally the enfleshment of those bones, before concluding with the phrase, "*Then We produced him as another creation.*" Al-Attas interprets this final statement as a crucial indication that, beyond the biological process, there occurs a transformative ontological event, which is the human being becomes a creature endowed with spiritual consciousness, moral agency, and intellectual capacity. Thus, the Qur'anic account presents humanity as both material and immaterial, temporal and eternal in potential, reflecting the harmonious synthesis of body and soul ordained by God. Through these scriptural references, Al-Attas underscores that any adequate understanding of the human condition, whether in education, ethics, or metaphysics, must recognize this dual yet unified nature. It is only by appreciating this holistic conception that one can properly grasp the purpose, responsibilities, and ultimate destiny of the human being. (Al-Attas, 1979).

The physical dimension of the human being constitutes the most immediately observable and empirically accessible aspect of human existence. It is this corporeal reality that allows humans to interact with the material environment and to perform various biological, mechanical, and sensory functions necessary for survival. Because the body is visible, measurable, and subject to scientific scrutiny, many

philosophical and anthropological perspectives, particularly those influenced by materialism or naturalism, tend to prioritize the physical dimension in their conception of human nature. Consequently, physical appearance, bodily health, and functional capacity often become central determinants of how individuals perceive their own worth and how society evaluates the quality of a person's life. In many cultural contexts, this emphasis on physicality shapes social norms, interpersonal relationships, and even perceptions of success and failure. From an ontological standpoint, the physical aspect of the human being belongs to the domain of material entities governed by the immutable laws of nature. These laws, such as gravity, entropy, biological growth, and cellular degeneration, operate consistently across the universe and apply equally to all physical bodies, including the human body. Thus, the body is not exempt from processes of change, deterioration, and eventual dissolution.

Human beings originate from the physical elements of the universe, in accordance with the Qur'anic description of creation from clay or earthly matter, and therefore they remain subject to the constraints and limitations inherent in the material world. Within this framework, human life in its physical form is inherently finite and temporally bounded. The human lifespan unfolds once in the worldly realm, and each individual experiences a continuous movement toward maturity, aging, and ultimately physical death. This reality illustrates that despite human advancement in science and technology, the natural laws governing the body cannot be entirely resisted or overturned. For instance, aging is a universal biological process that reflects the gradual decline of cellular regeneration, metabolic efficiency, and overall physiological resilience. No human being, regardless of status, wealth, or power, can escape this natural progression toward physical weakening. Islamic teachings further affirm this temporality of bodily existence. Human mortality is framed not merely as a biological phenomenon but as a divine decree.

The Qur'an repeatedly reminds believers that "every soul shall taste death" and that the duration of one's life is determined by Allah's will. Thus, the inevitability of aging and death is not merely a natural law but also a manifestation of divine wisdom. The body, therefore, should be understood as a trust (*amānah*) granted temporarily to the human being and destined to return to the earth from which it came. In this sense, the physical body undergoes a series of transformations marked by growth, vigor, decline, and eventual dissolution. Over time, individuals witness a reduction in physical strength, a decrease in sensory acuity, changes in appearance, and the weakening of bodily structures. These processes culminate in the cessation of biological function and the physical decomposition of the body. Although this trajectory may appear bleak from a purely materialistic perspective, within the Islamic worldview it serves as a reminder of the transient nature of worldly life (*al-hayāh al-dunyā*) and the necessity to orient oneself toward the eternal and spiritual dimensions of existence. Ultimately, acknowledging the limitations and temporality

of the physical body enables a more balanced and holistic understanding of the human being. Rather than overemphasizing physicality, one is guided to recognize the complementary relationship between the body and the spiritual essence that gives meaning, purpose, and direction to human life. (Firmansyah, et al., 2024).

The spirit or soul is one of the essential components that determine human characteristics. Allah Ta'ala breathed the spirit into the human body. into the human body after the physical creation process is complete. The nature of the soul is a great mystery faced by humans. The Qur'an, Surah Al-Isra' (17): 85 clearly states the following: And they ask you about the soul. Say: "*The soul is from the affair of my Lord, and you have not been given knowledge of it but a little.*" Only Allah knows the true nature of the soul. This proves the limitations of human knowledge, because no one will ever be able to reveal the true nature of the human soul (Azzahro, et al., 2023). On the other hand, Al-Ghazali and Ibnu'l Qayyim (in Zahrah, 2025) also provide their views on the soul. According to Al-Ghazali, the soul is a subtle entity bestowed by Allah Ta'ala upon humans. The soul functions as a source of consciousness, life, and spiritual strength. Then, in Ibn Qayyim's view, the soul is an element that is always connected with morality, faith, and good deeds. The soul has the ability to develop and it also Purified through an approach to God. Thus, the spirit is a fundamental potential that equips humans to fulfill their role as 'Abdullah (servants of God). The spirit serves as the center of spiritual orientation and the primary guide in shaping the Islamic personality.

Al-Attas added that all human senses are coordinated and ultimately governed by intelligence, namely practical and theoretical reason, which is unique to humans. Thus, humans are essentially noble creatures of God. Al-Attas's a priori knowledge, derived from revelation, led him to conclude that humans were originally created with a noble lineage. Through this nobility, humans are endowed with special qualities that distinguish them from other creatures, especially animals. The ability to speak is what makes humans a special creation among other creatures, because they possess the ability to understand what is communicated by knowledge and communicate what they understand. This understanding stands in stark contrast to the assumption of evolutionary theory that humans are the result of a natural biological selection process (Risallah & Denisova, 2019).

Al-Attas also stated that a human who seriously contemplates his origins will realize that he did not exist a few decades ago, and that all of humanity in existence today neither existed nor knew of the possibility of their current existence. Such contemplation on one's origins is more suited to ordinary intelligence. Contemplation on the works of God should be considered clearer to the mind of the questioner. Based on this fact, we understand that humans are the only creatures capable of asking questions about many things, including their own existence. In addition to biological origins, humans also understand origins through their own experiences in the activity of making or creating things, both tangible and intangible. Humans' ability to create is due to their verbal attribute (*nāṭiq*), meaning the ability to create symbols that can be manifested into tangible and technological artifacts,

all of which constitute their culture. This discussion can be called the cultural meaning of origins (Khayrurrijal, 2021).

According to Al-Attas, whose views resonate with several distinguished scholars of Islamic metaphysics and philosophical anthropology, the human being is constituted by a dual essence that encompasses both the gross (*al-jism*) and the subtle (*al-rūh*). This dual constitution signifies that human nature cannot be reduced solely to material or biological components, nor can it be understood exclusively through metaphysical speculation. Rather, it is the harmonious integration of these two dimensions that forms the holistic reality of *insān*. The gross dimension refers to the physical body, a tangible and measurable entity composed of material substances originating from the earth. Because it belongs to the realm of physical existence, the body is bound by the natural laws established by Allah Ta'ala, laws that govern birth, growth, development, aging, and eventual physical dissolution.

These processes underscore the temporality and vulnerability of the human physical form, reminding individuals of their dependence on divine decree and the natural order. In contrast, the subtle dimension refers to the human spirit (*al-rūh*), which transcends material measurement and empirical evaluation. The Qur'an itself affirms the limited nature of human knowledge regarding the spirit, stating that humankind has been given "*but little knowledge*" of its reality. This indicates that the spirit occupies a metaphysical domain inaccessible to scientific quantification or rational reductionism. Nonetheless, it is this spiritual essence that grants the human being consciousness, intentionality, moral awareness, and the capacity for transcendence. Without the animating force of the spirit, the physical body would be inert and devoid of meaning; similarly, the spirit requires the body as its vessel and medium of expression in the earthly realm.

Thus, the physical and spiritual dimensions are not antagonistic entities but complementary aspects designed to work in unity toward the fulfillment of human purpose. Among the unique privileges bestowed upon humankind, privileges that distinguish humans from all other creatures, is the capacity for knowledge and communication. Humans possess the intellectual ability to comprehend meanings, acquire knowledge, articulate understanding, and convey abstract concepts through language. Furthermore, humans have the reflective capacity to contemplate their own origins, existential purpose, and ultimate destiny. This capacity for introspection and self-awareness forms a central component of human nobility within the Islamic worldview. Al-Attas emphasizes that these qualities are not accidental but intentionally endowed by Allah Ta'ala to elevate humankind to the status of *ashraf al-makhlūqāt* (the noblest of all His creations). Through the integration of body and spirit, and through the distinctive intellectual and moral capacities embedded within this dual essence, the human being is positioned to fulfill the responsibilities of vicegerency (*khilāfah*) on earth and to pursue the higher aims of knowledge, virtue, and worship.

### The Nature of Education based on the Perspective of Al-Attas

Al-Attas stated that education is the process of instilling something into humans. In this answer, "*the process of instilling*" refers to the method and system by which what is called "*education*" is gradually instilled. First, "*something*" refers to the content of what is instilled. Second, "*human*" refers to the recipient of the process and content. According to Al-Attas, this description encompasses the three fundamental elements that constitute education: process, content, and recipient. However, this cannot yet be a definition because these elements are still vague. Furthermore, the way the sentence intended to be developed into a definition, as given above, gives the impression that the emphasis is on the process. Al-Attas then attempted to reformulate his answer as "*Education is something progressively instilled into humans.*" Here, he still encompasses the three fundamental elements inherent in education, but the priority order regarding the important elements that constitute education is now content, not process (Al-Attas, 1980).

The goal of education in Islam is to produce good human beings, namely civilized human beings. A fundamental element inherent in the concept of education in Islam is the instilling of *adab* (ethics), as *adab*, in its inclusive sense, encompasses both the spiritual and material life of a person, instilling the desired qualities of goodness. According to Al-Attas, education is what the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) meant by *adab* when he said: "*My Lord has educated (addaba) me and has made my education (ta'dib) the best.*" Currently, the minds of Muslims are experiencing cultural and intellectual infiltration alien to Islam, but this is not the only cause. The fundamental problem, which constitutes a real crisis, is confusion and misunderstanding in understanding knowledge, which ultimately leads to the loss of *adab* in society. This condition then results in the emergence of leaders who are unqualified to be legitimate leaders of the Muslim community, who lack the high moral, intellectual, and spiritual standards required for Islamic leadership (Al-Attas, 1979).

Al-Attas begins his essay with a thorough exposition of the dangers of secularism for Muslim societies themselves, and in particular the separation of religious and secular knowledge in Muslim higher education. For al-Attas, this separation results in a loss of meaning and thus impacts the very existence of a Muslim scholar or academic. He then discusses the mistake made by newly independent Muslim states; emulating secular colonial powers, they viewed education as a civic education, rather than a holistic human education. Al-Attas' solution was to devise a neo-Ghazali approach to ontology and epistemology to construct an Islamic metaphysics that recognizes non-empirical and non-rational existence and knowledge. He was also influenced by al-Farabi and Ibn Qutayba, thus drawing on the diverse and rich tradition of classical Islamic scholarship.

Al-Attas draws on the widely accepted Islamic definition of human beings as beings possessing a set of interdependent faculties, combining '*aql* (intellect), *nutq* (speech/reason), *nafs* (self), *qalb* (heart), and *ruh* (spirit). For al-Attas, these are interdependent strands of a holistic understanding of humankind. However, he

argues that the spiritual dimension of human self-awareness and knowledge is lost in the Greek separation of reason and intellect. Thus, al-Attas frames his metaphysics in opposition to secularism and in accordance with al-Ghazali's classical Sufism, which sees humans as possessing a capacity for spiritual cognition that shapes their understanding of meaning, and their self-awareness as beings whose goal is to return to God. Ultimately, for al-Attas, all knowledge comes from God, and humans are active recipients and interpreters of this knowledge (Ahmed, 2018).

*Adab* is knowledge that prevents humans from errors of judgment. *Adab* means recognizing and acknowledging the reality that knowledge and existence are hierarchically ordered according to their various levels and degrees of existence and one's proper place in relation to that reality and to one's physical, intellectual, and spiritual capacities and potentials. Knowing one's place in the order of humanity must be understood as hierarchically ordered based on the Quran regarding reason, knowledge, goodness, and acting in accordance with knowledge in a positive, praiseworthy, and commendable manner. There are two types of knowledge that must be understood: first, given by God to humans, this knowledge can be received through acts of worship and obedience, acts of devotion to God (*ibadah*). Humans receive it directly (*basirah*) and through spiritual enjoyment (*dhawq*), and their spiritual insight (*kashf*). This knowledge relates to the self or soul. Second, humans acquire it through discursive and deductive experience and observation that refer to objects of pragmatic value. Knowledge is acquired through conscious action (*'amal*), because no knowledge is useful without the *amal* that arises from it, and no *amal* is meaningful without knowledge. The emphasis on *adab* encompasses *amal* in education and the educational process is to ensure that knowledge is used well in society (Putri, et al., 2023).

In the concept of adab, charity is included in education, because the goal to be achieved is that the knowledge gained from education is put into good practice when living in society. In applying science to society, of course you must use good manners, ethics and morals, without judging or even blaming society. Therefore, previous Muslim scholars and thinkers, especially Al-Attas, were of the view that the combination of faith, knowledge, charity and adab was a harmonious combination. In this concept of ta'dib an analysis can be given that the realization of faith is based on knowledge, knowledge must be based on faith as control in seeking knowledge. Thus, faith and knowledge cannot be beneficial individually or socially without practice, and the practice of faith and knowledge must be accompanied by adab so that it can be well received by others. Therefore, An-Naquib Al-Attas really emphasizes the concept of ta'dib for Islamic education, with the analysis that it is true that Islamic education must always instill manners, morals, manners and ethics in the next generation. If the instilling of manners is not carried out, the consequence is the damage of manners and perhaps students only master various sciences and

when practicing them do not know the place and do not know the correct way, which results in errors in how to practice their knowledge. Even with the intention to practice their knowledge, if it is not accompanied by manners, it cannot be well received by society and the social environment. Science even all has its categories and levels, and every human being has its own portion such as potential, creative, intellectual and spiritual abilities of each person are different, one of the functions of instilling manners in education is to provide explanations, introductions and even expressions of gratitude (Septoyadi & Akbar, 2023).

In the world of education, there are three sets of terms often used to refer to Islamic education as a whole, encompassing the connotations of *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, and *ta'dib*. The Arabic term *tarbiyah*, or "education," which refers to the term education according to Al-Attas is actually still inaccurate. The term *tarbiyah* essentially means to nurture, give birth, feed, develop, and produce a mature product. Its application in Arabic is not limited to humans, but its semantic field extends to all types of animals or other species such as minerals, plants, and so on. Thus, according to al-Attas, the word *tarbiyah* as a term and concept that can be applied to various species is actually inappropriate to indicate education in the Islamic sense, because education in Islam is intended for humans only (Sapri, et al., 2022). Therefore, Al-Attas argues that the concept of *ta'dib* is the most appropriate concept for Islamic education, not *tarbiyah* or *ta'lim*. He stated that the concept of *ta'dib* already encompasses the elements of knowledge ('ilm), teaching (*ta'lim*), and good guidance (*tarbiyah*), so it is no longer necessary to say that the concept of Islamic education is as contained in these three concepts (Hendratno, et al., 2023).

Al-Attas argues that an educated person is a good person. By "good" here, he meant *adab* (good manners) in a comprehensive sense, encompassing a person's spiritual and physical life, which strives to instill the good qualities they receive. The concept of *ta'dib* (religious conduct) is expected to focus not only on teaching and the results of knowledge, but also on its application in life, thus forming a civilized person. Al-Attas also explains that teaching and the process of learning skills, no matter how scientific, cannot be interpreted as education if it is not instilled with the goal of seeking true knowledge. Humans have the intelligence to recognize and identify problems and solve them, as well as the discipline to think before acting. In short, *adab* is imbued with moral considerations. A person will do their best to obey all existing rules (Anugrah & Syahidin, 2024).

The concept of *ta'dib* is important for educators and students to implement and incorporate into the educational curriculum, particularly Islamic education. First, the concept of *ta'dib* for educators. Regarding the educational process, in addition to providing the best possible learning materials, educators need to remember that the ultimate goal of education is to produce individuals with character, noble morals, and civility. An educator is required to be a role model for students in two ways: mastery of knowledge and noble morals in every behavior. Thus, in the educational process, there is a balance between scientific and moral values. From this explanation, an educator is not only tasked with transferring

learning materials to students, but more than that, an educator is a role model and role model for students. In accordance with the Javanese concept of educators, a teacher means someone who is trusted and imitated. It means that an educator has mastered a set of knowledge and has broad insight so that he can share knowledge with students. To be imitated means as a role model, an educator is considered to possess a complete personality, making their attitudes, behavior, and everything they do worthy of emulation by students. Currently, with the concept of student-centered learning, the role of educators in the transformation of knowledge is diminished. However, the responsibility of educators to instill moral values, instill ethics, and shape students' morals is increasing (Septoyadi & Akbar, 2023).

**Table 2. The Nature of Humans and Education based on the Perspective of Al-Attas**

No	Al-Attas' Key Commentaries	Nature Discussed	Impact on the Relationship between Humans and Education
1	Human is both soul and body	Humans	Education must strengthen both soul and body aspect of humans
2	Human senses are coordinated and governed by intelligence	Humans	Humans' ability to understand knowledge and communicate what they understand makes them capable of education
3	Human's contemplation on their origins is more suited to ordinary intelligence	Humans	Humans are the only creatures capable of asking questions about many things, which is essential in education process
4	Education is the process of instilling something into humans	Education	The three fundamental elements that constitute education are process, content, and recipient
5	The goal of education in Islam is to produce good human beings	Education	<i>Adab</i> is fundamental element of education which encompasses both the spiritual and material life of a person
6	The concept of <i>ta'dib</i> encompasses the elements of knowledge, teaching, and good guidance	Education	The concept of <i>ta'dib</i> is the most appropriate concept for Islamic education

## DISCUSSIONS

Based on an in-depth study of human nature and the nature of education from Al-Attas' perspective, a synthesis of the relationship between humans and education can be outlined in the following points.

### Education Strengthens Humanity's Dual Nature

Al-Attas argues that humans possess two distinct yet complementary natures: a physical and a spiritual being. The physical cannot function properly without the spiritual, and vice versa. Furthermore, Al-Attas argues that the goal of education is to cultivate good human beings. The word "good" in this statement refers to *adab* (ethics) in the sense that it encompasses both the spiritual and physical aspects of humankind. In this regard, education must be able to instill various good qualities in humans. Education must maximize all human physical potential. For example, in the context of physical education, sports, and health, education provides us with knowledge about what is good and bad for the human body, what movements can strengthen the human body, and so on. Furthermore, education must also be able to strengthen the potential of the human spirit. This can be implemented through education in faith and morals from an early age, both at home and at school.

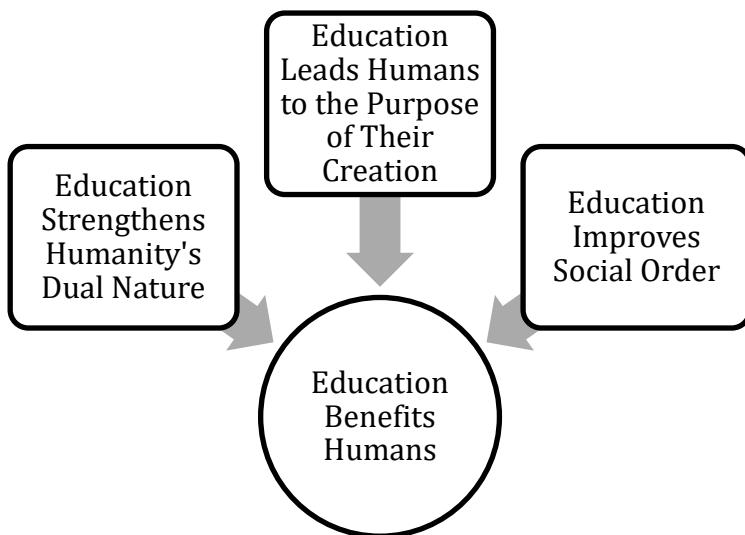
### Education Leads Humans to the Purpose of Their Creation

Allah Ta'ala created humans with two purposes. The first purpose is for humans to be servants of Allah, always worshiping Him, carrying out His commands, and avoiding all His prohibitions. Furthermore, humans were created to be caliphs who care for this world as best as possible. These two mandates are extremely burdensome, so humans need something to help them fulfill them. In this regard, education plays a vital role. Al-Attas coined the concept of *ta'dib* as the most appropriate term to define holistic education. The concept of *ta'dib* focuses not only on the teaching process and the content of the knowledge taught, but also seeks to maximize its application in life. By applying the results of education, or *ta'dib*, a civilized human being will be realized. According to Al-Attas, a civilized human being possesses intelligence balanced with moral judgment. These two elements will guide humans toward achieving the purpose of their creation in this world.

### Education Improves Social Order

Humans are social creatures. As such, they cannot live alone without other humans. This requires them to establish social relationships, resulting in a structured social order, from the lowest to the highest levels. With so many people in society, problems are inevitable. Al-Attas has expressed concern about the dilemma facing Muslims amidst the onslaught of various cultures that conflict with Islamic values, as well as leaders lacking moral character who occupy positions of power. As explained in the previous point, education, based on the concept of *ta'dib* (religious guidance) proposed by Al-Attas, is expected to produce intelligent and

moral individuals so that they avoid missteps and fundamental problems within the Muslim community can be resolved. Through education, society can understand knowledge with the right purpose, *adab* (good manners) will return to them, and leaders with appropriate moral, intellectual, and spiritual standards will emerge.



**Figure 1. Relationship between Humans and Education**

## CONCLUSION

Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas is a prominent Muslim scholar. He contributed extensively to various aspects of education, including Islamic education. Al-Attas believed that humans possess a dual, complementary nature: spiritual and physical. Al-Attas also believed that humans' ability to communicate and reflect on their origins makes them unique compared to other creatures of God.

Regarding education, Al-Attas disagreed with the concept of *tarbiyah* (education), which is more commonly used in the context of Islamic education, as he considered it too general and not applicable to humans alone. He believed that the concept of *ta'dib* (education) was more appropriate for human education because it encompassed both *tarbiyah* and *ta'lim* (religious education). Furthermore, according to Al-Attas, education based on the concept of *ta'dib* can address various fundamental problems plaguing the Muslim community.

This research shed new light on the positive impact of education on humans as a manifestation of the relationship between them. The relationship between humans and education, from Al-Attas' perspective, can be explained in three main points. First, education must be able to strengthen the dual nature inherent in humans. Second, education must be able to guide humans toward the purpose of their creation, namely as servants of God and His vicegerents on earth. Third, education must be able to address dilemmas within the Muslim community and subsequently improve the social order.

## REFERENCES

*Al-Qur'an Al-Karim.*

Ahmed, F. (2018). *An exploration of Naquib al-Attas' theory of Islamic education as ta'dib as an "indigenous" educational philosophy.* <https://doi.org/10.17863/CAM.62378>

Al-Asyqar, M. S. (n.d.). Zubdatut Tafsir Min Fathil Qadir. <https://tafsirweb.com/7684-surat-al-ahzab-ayat-72.html>. Diakses pada 14 Oktober 2025.

Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1980). *The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education.* Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC).

Al-Attas, S. M. N. (1979). *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education.* Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University.

Anugrah, D. S. & Syahidin. (2024). Secularism and Moral Education: A Study of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' Thoughts on the Concept of Moral Education. *TARBAWY: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education*, 11(1), 13-26. DOI: 10.17509/t.v11i1.66560

Azzahro, G. S. S., et al. (2023). Hakikat Manusia dalam Islam. *Religion: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, dan Budaya*, 2(3), 127-145.

Firmansyah, A., et al. (2024). Pandangan Islam dalam Memaknai Hakikat Manusia. *Jurnal Manajemen dan Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2(1), 88-103.

Foyajul Islam, S. K. (2017). *The Contribution of Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Naqib al-Attas and Ismail Raji al-Faruqui to the Islamization of Knowledge* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Dhaka).

Haudi. (2020). *Dasar-Dasar Pendidikan.* Solok: Insan Cendekia Mandiri.

Hendratno, A., et al. (2023). Pemikiran Pendidikan Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas. *Jurnal Studi Islam MULTIDISIPLIN*, 1(1), 14-37.

Jarbi, M., & Ag, S. (2022). Hakikat Manusia dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Wawasan Keislaman*, 4(1), 58-75.

Khasinah, S. (2013). Hakikat Manusia Menurut Pandangan Islam dan Barat. *Jurnal Ilmiah Didaktika: Media Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 13(2).

Khayrurrijal (2021). Al-Attas's View on the Importance of Man in Our Understanding of the Cosmos. *TAFHIM: IKIM Journal of Islam and the Contemporary World*, 14(2), 53-76.

Pradoko, S. (2017). *Paradigma Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Keilmuan Seni, Humaniora, dan Budaya.* Yogyakarta: UNY Press.

Putri, N. E., et al. (2023). MAKNA DAN TUJUAN PENDIDIKAN MENURUT SYED. MUHAMMAD NAQUIB AL-ATTAS. *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 6(3). 150-159.

Risallah, F. & Denisova, T. (2019). Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas on Human Origin. *TSAQAFAH: Jurnal Peradaban Islam*, 15(2), 345-362. <https://doi.org/10.21111/TSAQAFAH.V15I2.3382>

Sapri, et al. (2022). Naquib al-Attas Educational Thought in Contemporary Islamic Education. *Tadris: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Institut Agama Islam Negeri Madura*, 17(2), 272-283. <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v17i2.4978>

Septoyadi, Z. & Akbar. (2023). The Concept of Ta'dib According to An-Naquib Al-Attas And Humanism According to Paulo Freire and their Relevance with Islamic Education. *Al-Abshar: Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 2(1). 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.58223/al-abshar.v2i1.66>

Sidiq, U. & Choiri, M. M. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif di Bidang Pendidikan*. Ponorogo: CV. Nata Karya.

Usiono. (2023). PHILOSOPHY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION ACCORDING TO SYED MUHAMMAD NAQUIB AL-ATTAS. *Proceeding International Seminar on Islamic Studies Medan*, 4(1).

Yahya, M. (2020). *Ilmu Pendidikan*. Jember: IAIN Jember Press.

Zahrah, F. A. (2025). RUH, NAFS, AKAL, QOLB, FITRAH SEBAGAI POTENSI DALAM MEMBEKALI MANUSIA SEBAGAI ABDULLAH. *JIPDAS (Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar)*, 3(3), 100-106.