



# The Concept of Fitrah in the Qur'an: An Exegetical Study and Its Implications for Education

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**Abstract:** *This article examines the concept of fitrah in the Qur'an and its methodological implications for both Islamic and contemporary education. Using a qualitative library-research method with a thematic (maudhu'i) exegetical approach, this study analyzes the semantic meaning of fitrah and the interpretations given by authoritative scholars regarding verses that address it. The findings show that fitrah is not a blank slate (tabula rasa) but an innate human potential inclined toward truth, monotheism (tauhid), and moral goodness from birth. In the context of education, this concept implies a paradigm shift: from a passive indoctrination-behaviorist model of education to an active, growth-oriented humanist-spiritual model. The educator's task is not to mold the child from nothing, but to stimulate, safeguard, and actualize the potential of fitrah already embedded within the learner.*

**Keywords:** *Fitrah, Qur'an, Thematic Exegesis (Tafsir Maudhu'i), Educational Epistemology, Potential Development.*

## Introduction

Education, in its essence, is a conscious effort to humanize human beings. Yet in the reality of modern education, humans are often viewed in purely mechanistic or materialistic terms. The modern Western educational paradigm—particularly as shaped by John Locke's theory of tabula rasa—tends to regard the learner as an empty vessel to be passively filled by the environment and the educator (Locke, 1689). This view neglects the innate spiritual dimension and transcendental potential inherent in human existence even before birth.

Islam offers a fundamental and holistic perspective through the concept of fitrah. The term fitrah affirms that human beings are not born in a state of spiritual emptiness or moral neutrality. The Qur'an indicates that every individual carries a divine pattern

that guides them toward the recognition of God and universal values of goodness (Al-Attas, 1991).

Although this potential is inherent, it does not automatically develop without stimulation. Fitrah can be obscured by negative environmental influences, improper upbringing, or the hegemony of materialistic culture. This is precisely where education plays a crucial role. This article examines the concept of fitrah through a thematic survey of Qur'anic verses and formulates its practical and methodological implications for reconstructing the current education system..

## Method

This study employs a qualitative library-research design. The analytical method used is thematic exegesis (tafsir maudhu'i). The steps involved include collecting verses related to the word faṭārah and its derivations, analyzing their linguistic

structure and historical context (asbab al-nuzul, where available), and reviewing the views of authoritative exegetes across different eras (al-Farmawi, 1977). The data obtained were then analyzed using content analysis techniques to formulate a conceptual synthesis regarding the implications of fitrah for educational theory and practice.

## Results and Discussion

### A. Semantic and Conceptual Analysis of Fitrah in the Qur'an

Etymologically, the word *fiṭrah* derives from the root fa-ṭa-ra, meaning to split, to create, or to bring forth (Faris, 1979). In meaning, *fiṭrah* refers to the original state or initial condition of human creation, unaffected by external factors. In the Qur'an, derivations of this word appear 28 times in various forms; however, the noun form (ism) *fiṭrah* referring specifically to humankind appears only once, in QS. Ar-Rum [30]: 30:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَرِيقُ الْبَاطِلُ  
يُخَوِّدُونَ

"So set your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the *fiṭrah* of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know."

Ibn Kathir (2000), in his exegesis, explains that Allah SWT created human beings with a natural inclination to know Him (*ma'rifatullah*), to affirm His oneness, and to submit to Him. Every human being's original state is one of acknowledging the truth of Islam. This aligns with an authentic hadith stating that every child is born in a state of *fiṭrah*, and it is their parents who subsequently make them Jewish, Christian, or Zoroastrian (Al-Bukhari, 1997).

M. Quraish Shihab (2002), in *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, emphasizes that *fiṭrah* is a component, capacity, or innate potential that God has bestowed upon human beings from the very beginning of their creation, enabling them to receive truth, goodness, and beauty. *Fiṭrah* causes a person to feel unsettled when committing wrongdoing and at peace when doing good. Sayyid Qutb (2009), in *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, views *fiṭrah* as a form of complete harmony between the laws of the universe (*sunnatullah*) and the internal design of the human soul. To reject or distance oneself from *fiṭrah* is to create a destructive inner conflict within oneself.

### B. Characteristics and Dimensions of Human Fitrah

Through thematic analysis of the Qur'anic text, human *fiṭrah* is not singular but manifests in several interrelated basic dimensions of potential (Muhaimin, 2004):

1. Religious *Fiṭrah* (*Fiṭrah Diniyah*): The innate potential to seek, acknowledge, and worship the Most Holy Power—that is, to affirm the oneness of Allah SWT.
2. Intellectual *Fiṭrah* (*Fiṭrah Akliyah*): The potential to think, reason, analyze, and explore the secrets of the universe in the pursuit of scientific truth.
3. Moral *Fiṭrah* (*Fiṭrah Khuluqiyah*): The original inclination to favor the values of justice, honesty, and compassion, and to reject wrongdoing and immorality.
4. Aesthetic *Fiṭrah* (*Fiṭrah Jamaliyah*): The inner drive to express and appreciate beauty, harmony, and balance.

### C. Implications of the Concept of Fitrah for the Educational Paradigm

A deep understanding of the concept of *fiṭrah* calls for a radical shift in the system, methods, and goals of education:

| Educational Component          | Conventional Paradigm (Tabula Rasa)                                                                                               | Fiṭrah-Based Paradigm (Qur'anic)                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| View of the Child              | The child is like a blank, passive sheet of paper, whose character is entirely determined and shaped by the external environment. | The child is a superior seed already possessing divine potential, active, unique, and inclined toward the positive. |
| Role of the Educator (Teacher) | Acts as a sculptor or filler of an empty vessel; dominates the entire learning process (Director).                                | Acts as a caretaker, guardian, and facilitator who nurtures potential from within (Nurturer/Guide).                 |

| Educational Component | Conventional Paradigm (Tabula Rasa)                                   | Fitrah-Based Paradigm (Qur'anic)                                                                  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Learning Objective    | Mere knowledge transmission aimed at workforce readiness (pragmatic). | Balanced actualization of tauhid-based potential to produce a complete human being (Insan Kamil). |

### 1. Redefining the Role of the Teacher and Learning Methodology

Educators must not engage in "intellectual coercion" or rigid indoctrination that could damage a child's unique character. Given that a child already carries innate goodness from birth, the educator's role shifts toward preventive and corrective education—that is, safeguarding this pure fitrah from environmental distortion (Ramayulis, 2012). Teaching methods should be developed in a humanistic and dialogical manner—such as the storytelling, question-and-answer, and parable methods frequently used in the Qur'an—while foregrounding genuine exemplary conduct (uswah hasanah).

### 2. Developing an Integrative Curriculum

Another implication of the concept of fitrah is the need for an integrative curriculum. The curriculum must not dichotomously separate religious sciences (sacred sciences) from general sciences (profane sciences). Since intellectual fitrah and religious fitrah require balanced nourishment, science and spirituality must be integrated to prevent mental secularization and spiritual crisis among learners (Al-Attas, 1980).

### 3. Integrating a Character- and Spirituality-Based Curriculum

The educational curriculum must not separate cognitive academic achievement from emotional and spiritual maturity. Moral education (akhlak) is not merely memorizing ethical theory, but a process of refining and returning human beings to the purity of their fitrah (Al-Attas, 1993). The primary goal of the curriculum is to produce a balanced human being: intellectually capable, professionally skilled, yet remaining firmly connected to the Creator.

## Conclusion

The concept of fitrah in the Qur'an affirms that human beings are born as noble creatures, carrying an innate and lofty potential for monotheism, intelligence, and morality. This concept refutes Western theories that regard humans as born without any spiritual capital whatsoever. Its implications for education are far-reaching: it transforms the educational paradigm from one centered on the imposition of external material (exogenic) to a process of nurturing and developing potential from within (endogenic). Restoring fitrah-based education is the key to safeguarding future generations from identity crisis, moral decline, and spiritual emptiness.

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