

**The Concept of Human Nature in Islam and Its Implications for the
Social Behavior of the Muslim Community**

Muhammad Yusuf

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam (STAI) Al-Jami Banjarmasin, Indonesia
muhammadyusuf@staijaljami.ac.id

Muhammad Eissawy Abu El Yazid

King Saud University Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
eissawyabueltazid@ksu.edu.sa

Ahmad Faizal Syahrul Azmi

International Islamic University Malaysia, Malaysia
faizalsahurulazmi@iiu.edu.my

Abstract

The concept of the essence of humanity in Islam emphasizes that humans are created by Allah SWT as noble beings with the primary purpose of worshipping Him and serving as stewards (khalifah) on earth. Humans are endowed with intellect, conscience, and an innate nature (fitrah) that distinguishes them from other creatures. The essence of humanity in Islam encompasses three main dimensions: spiritual (ruhaniyah), intellectual (aqliyah), and social (ijtimaiyah). As stewards, humans have the responsibility to cultivate the earth, maintain the balance of nature, and uphold justice. As servants of Allah, humans are required to constantly worship and draw closer to Him through all activities performed with sincere intentions. Understanding this essence of humanity has profound implications for the social behavior of Muslims, encouraging them to uphold justice, promote equality, and care for social welfare. Values such as mutual assistance, solidarity, and tolerance form the foundation for building harmonious social interactions. However, Muslims also face challenges in implementing this concept, such as individualism, social injustice, and moral degradation. To address these challenges, serious efforts are needed through religious education, the enforcement of Islamic values in society, and the development of collective awareness of social responsibility. By understanding and practicing the concept of the essence of humanity in Islam, Muslims can build a just, harmonious, and civilized society.

Keywords: Essence of Humanity, Social Behavior, Islam.

Introduction

Humans, as creatures created by Allah SWT, possess a unique and noble nature from an Islamic perspective. The essence of humans is not limited to the physical aspect, but also encompasses the spiritual, intellectual, and natural dimensions instilled by the Creator. The Qur'an refers to humans as "ahsani taqwim" (the best of creation) (QS. At-Tin: 4), indicating their uniqueness and high status compared to other creatures. This uniqueness is not without responsibility, but rather requires humans to be aware of their role and duties in the world. In Islam, humans were created with a clear purpose, namely to worship Allah (QS. Adz-Dzariyat: 56) and to function as caliphs on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30). These two purposes serve

as the main foundation for understanding human existence, where worship is not limited to rituals but also encompasses all aspects of life, including social interactions and management of nature (Arif, 2022).

As caliphs, humans are entrusted with the responsibility to prosper the earth and maintain the balance of nature in accordance with the principles established by God. This requires humans to use their reason and natural instinct responsibly, while always prioritizing the values of goodness and justice. Human nature, which naturally gravitates toward truth and goodness, guides them in carrying out this role. However, humans are also given the freedom to choose between right and wrong, which makes them unique and a test in life. Thus, the essence of humankind in Islam emphasizes not only physical and intellectual excellence but also the moral and spiritual responsibility to create a harmonious and just life in this world, as preparation for the eternal afterlife.

Understanding the nature of humankind in Islam has significant implications for the social behavior of Muslims. In Islam, humans are viewed as noble creatures and entrusted by Allah SWT to be caliphs on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30). This mandate requires each individual to carry out their social function with full responsibility, justice, and compassion. Values such as honesty, tolerance, mutual assistance, and justice are the main foundations for building healthy and harmonious social interactions. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized this in his saying, "The best of people are those who are most beneficial to others" (Narrated by Ahmad). This saying implies that a person's success in fulfilling their human nature is measured not only by individual piety but also by their contribution to social welfare (Asril, 2018).

This understanding encourages Muslims to focus not only on ritual worship but also actively contribute to building a just and prosperous society. Justice, for example, is a non-negotiable principle in social interactions, whether within the family, community, or nation. Furthermore, the values of mutual assistance and social solidarity are also hallmarks of Muslims who understand their essence as part of one community (ummah). This concept is reflected in the practices of zakat, infaq, and sadaqah, which not only purify wealth but also strengthen social bonds and reduce economic disparities.

Studying the concept of human nature in Islam and its implications for the social behavior of Muslims is crucial for understanding how Islamic teachings shape the character of individuals and society. Through this understanding, it is hoped that Muslims will reflect Islamic values in their daily lives, thereby creating a social order in accordance with Islamic principles.

Thus, an understanding of the essence of humankind in Islam not only shapes pious individuals but also a society that is ethical, caring, just, tolerant, and environmentally responsible. These implications serve as guidelines for Muslims in building a harmonious and sustainable social life, in accordance with the teachings of Islam, which is rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessing for all the worlds).

Library Review

According to the Qur'an and Hadith, humans were created for a noble purpose: to worship Allah (QS. Adz-Dzariyat: 56) and to be caliphs on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30). Several sources highlight that the essence of humans in Islam encompasses three

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main interrelated dimensions: the spiritual dimension (ruhaniyah), the rational dimension (aqliyah), and the social dimension (ijtimaiyah). These three dimensions form a holistic Islamic view of human existence and its role in life.

The spiritual dimension (ruhaniyah) emphasizes the psychological aspects and human relationship with God. Humans were created from the dust (physical) and breathed into it by God (QS. Al-Hijr: 28-29). This creation process shows that humans have two complementary elements: the physical body and the spiritual soul. This spiritual element is what distinguishes humans from other creatures and gives them the potential to draw closer to God through worship, dhikr, and good deeds (Trinurmi, 2015). This spiritual dimension reminds humans that life on earth is only temporary, while the afterlife is the eternal final goal. Thus, humans are required to always maintain their relationship with God through obedience and sincere devotion.

The dimension of reason (aqliyah) affirms that humans are given the privilege of reason to think, understand, and distinguish between good and evil (QS. Al-Baqarah: 164). Reason is a gift from God that enables humans to explore the universe (verses kauniyah) and understand God's revelation (verses qauliyah). Through reason, humans can create progress in various fields of life, such as science, technology, and art. However, reason must also be used within the framework of Islamic law to avoid being trapped in arrogance or deviation. In this context, reason functions as a tool to achieve truth and goodness, as well as a means to understand the essence of creation and the purpose of human life.

The social dimension (ijtimaiyah) emphasizes that humans were created as social beings who cannot live alone. Humans must interact with others within the framework of taawun (mutual assistance) and amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil) (QS. Ali Imran: 110). This social dimension requires humans to care for their surroundings, respect the rights of others, and contribute positively to society. Islam teaches values such as justice, compassion, and solidarity as the basis for building harmonious social relationships (Syarif, 2017). Furthermore, humans also have a responsibility to maintain the balance of nature and preserve the environment as part of the mandate of the caliphate.

Several authors, such as M. Quraish Shihab in his book "Wawasan Al-Qur'an," emphasize that humans are creatures with free will but also responsible for their choices before God. This freedom is not absolute, but rather a freedom framed by divine and moral values. Thus, humans are required to use their freedom wisely and responsibly. Awareness of this responsibility shapes ethics and morality within humans, which are then reflected in everyday behavior.

Understanding the essence of humankind in Islam has profound implications for the social behavior of Muslims. The concept of humans as khalifah (God's representatives on earth) and servants of God ('abd) demands that Muslims carry out their responsibilities in social life with full awareness and sincerity. Some of the main implications of this understanding include justice and equality, social responsibility, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and tolerance and harmony (Ulfah et al., n.d.).

First, the concepts of justice and equality are fundamental principles in the social behavior of Muslims. The Quran affirms that all humans, regardless of race, gender, or social status, have equal dignity before God (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). Justice in Islam is not only legalistic, but also moralistic, encompassing fairness in the distribution of wealth, public services, and respect for individual rights. As caliphs,

Muslims are required to uphold justice in all aspects of life, including social, economic, and political interactions. This also includes rejecting all forms of discrimination, exploitation, and injustice that harm others.

Second, social responsibility is a concrete implication of understanding the nature of humans as social beings. Islam teaches that every individual has an obligation to care for the welfare of others, especially those who are weak and in need. Zakat, infaq, and sadaqah are concrete examples of this social responsibility (Quran, Al-Baqarah: 267). Zakat, as one of the pillars of Islam, not only purifies wealth but also distributes it equitably, thereby reducing social inequality (Sitompul et al., n.d.). Furthermore, infaq and sadaqah encourage Muslims to share with others, creating social solidarity, and strengthening bonds of brotherhood. This social responsibility also includes efforts to meet basic community needs, such as education, health care, and environmental protection.

Third, amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil) is a moral and social responsibility inherent in every Muslim (QS. Ali Imran: 104). This principle encourages Muslims to actively contribute to building a civilized and moral society. Amar ma'ruf nahi munkar is not only carried out through words, but also through concrete actions, such as setting good examples, advocating for just policies, and opposing all forms of evil that undermine the social order. Thus, Muslims are expected to become agents of change that bring goodness to all humanity.

Fourth, tolerance and harmony are important values taught in Islam. The Quran emphasizes that humans were created in a diversity of ethnicities, nations, and religions (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13). This diversity is not a source of conflict, but rather a gift that should be appreciated and managed well. Muslims are expected to live in harmony with followers of other religions, respect differences, and uphold the principles of peace (Damayanti, 2021). Tolerance in Islam does not mean sacrificing one's beliefs, but rather recognizing the right of every individual to practice their beliefs freely and peacefully. These values foster an inclusive and harmonious society.

In the article "*Islamic Ethics and the Implications for Social Behavior*" by Abdul Aziz Said, it is explained that Islamic ethics derived from the Qur'an and Hadith shape social behavior that is inclusive and oriented towards the common good. Islamic ethics emphasizes the importance of balance between rights and obligations, as well as between individual and societal interests. Thus, understanding the nature of human beings in Islam not only shapes good personalities individually, but also creates a just, caring, and harmonious social order.

Method

Qualitative methods are a research approach frequently used in Islamic studies, particularly when researchers wish to gain a deeper understanding of philosophical or theological concepts. One relevant qualitative method for research on "The Concept of Human Nature in Islam and Its Implications for the Social Behavior of Muslims" is literature study (*library research*). Through literature studies, researchers collect data from various relevant primary and secondary sources, such as the Qur'an, Hadith, tafsir, Islamic philosophy books, and the works of classical and contemporary scholars. These sources form the basis for a comprehensive understanding of the concept of human nature in Islam (Nurhasnah et al., 2023). The Qur'an and Hadith, as the primary sources of Islamic teachings, provide guidance on

human nature, the purpose of creation, and the role of humans as caliphs on earth. Meanwhile, tafsir and the works of scholars help researchers interpret and contextualize these concepts in modern life. Literature studies allow researchers to explore the thoughts of Islamic scholars and philosophers who have discussed human nature from various perspectives, such as theological, philosophical, and Sufi. This method is very suitable for exploratory and descriptive research, because it allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the concept of human nature in Islam without having to collect field data.

In addition to literature studies, another qualitative method that can be used is textual analysis. Textual analysis allows researchers to examine religious texts in depth, both in terms of language, historical context, and the meanings contained therein. In the context of research on human nature, researchers can analyze verses of the Quran or Hadith that discuss the creation of humans, their natural disposition (fitrah), reason, heart, and human responsibility as servants of God and caliphs on earth. Through textual analysis, researchers can identify Islamic values and principles related to human nature, as well as how these values influence the social behavior of Muslims. For example, researchers can analyze how the concepts of human nature as pure and the potential for good or evil influence Muslim views on morality, ethics, and social interaction. Textual analysis also allows researchers to see how these concepts are interpreted by Islamic scholars or thinkers in different contexts, thus providing a more holistic understanding of human nature in Islam (Sinaga et al., n.d.).

These two methods—literature study and text analysis—complement each other in qualitative research. Literature study provides a strong theoretical and conceptual foundation, while text analysis allows researchers to explore the meaning and implications of these concepts in greater depth. By combining these two methods, researchers can develop a comprehensive understanding of the essence of humankind in Islam and how this concept influences the social behavior of Muslims. Furthermore, qualitative methods also allow researchers to observe the dynamics and development of thinking about the essence of humankind in Islam throughout history, from the early Islamic period to the contemporary era. This is crucial for understanding how these concepts remain relevant and applicable in changing social contexts. Thus, qualitative methods, particularly literature study and text analysis, are an effective approach to exploring the concept of the essence of humankind in Islam and its implications for the social behavior of Muslims.

Results and Discussion

The concept of human nature in Islam emphasizes that humans were created by Allah SWT as the most noble of His creations. This glory is reflected in the Quran Surah Al-Isra verse 70, which states, "*And indeed We have honored the children of Adam, We have carried them on land and sea, We have provided them with good things, and We have preferred them by perfect preference over most of those We have created.*" This verse shows that humans have a special position in the hierarchy of Allah's creation, equipped with various advantages, including the ability to manage the earth, the intellect to think, and the conscience to distinguish between good and bad. The nature of humans in Islam includes several important dimensions that shape human identity and role in life. Humans were created as caliphs on earth. In QS. Al-Baqarah verse 30, Allah says, "*Remember when your Lord said to the angels, 'I am*

going to place a vicegerent on earth." As caliphs, humans are given the mandate to manage, prosper, and protect the earth and all its contents (Aziz, n.d.). This mandate demands great responsibility, because humans must ensure that all their activities on earth do not damage the balance of nature and remain in accordance with divine values.

Humans are servants of God who have the obligation to worship and submit to Him. This is emphasized in QS. Az-Zariyat verse 56, "*And I did not create the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me.*" As servants, humans must always remember the purpose of their creation, namely to worship and draw closer to Allah. Worship in Islam is not only limited to rituals such as prayer or fasting, but also includes all activities carried out with sincere intentions to seek Allah's pleasure. Third, humans were created with fitrah, namely a natural tendency to know and acknowledge the truth. QS. Ar-Rum verse 30 explains, "*So set your face straight towards the religion (Islam); (according to) the nature of Allah, in accordance with which He created man.*" This nature shows that every human being is born in a pure state and has the potential to receive the truth (Zalnur & Aroka, n.d.). However, the environment and external influences can influence this nature, so education and guidance are important to maintain the purity of human nature.

Humans are endowed with reason and conscience. Reason enables us to think, analyze, and make decisions, while conscience serves as a moral guide, distinguishing between good and evil. This combination of reason and conscience makes humans unique creatures, capable of balancing logic and spirituality. With reason, humans can understand the signs of God's greatness in the universe, while conscience directs them to act in accordance with the values of goodness and justice.

The concept of human nature in Islam has profound implications for human behavior and responsibilities in social life. As caliphs, humans are required to wisely care for the earth and all its contents, refrain from overexploiting natural resources, and preserve the environment. As servants of God, humans must always prioritize the values of worship in every aspect of life, including social interactions. The pure human nature teaches the importance of maintaining morality and honesty in society, while reason and conscience guide us in making just and responsible decisions. By understanding and practicing the concept of human nature in Islam, humanity can live a life in harmony with the purpose of its creation: to worship God and prosper the earth as caliphs (Rahmawati et al., 2021).

The concept of human nature in Islam has profound implications for the social behavior of Muslims, shaping their patterns of interaction and responsibilities within society. One key implication is social responsibility. As caliphs on earth, Muslims are entrusted with creating justice, prosperity, and goodness within society. This is reflected in the principle *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, namely, inviting goodness and forbidding evil. This principle not only serves as a foundation for individual morality but also serves as a guide for Muslims to actively engage in solving social problems, such as poverty, injustice, and inequality (Maulidi, 2024). Thus, Muslims are required to focus not only on personal interests but also contribute to the welfare of the community as a whole.

Another implication is the emphasis on equality and brotherhood. Islam teaches that all humans are equal before God, regardless of ethnicity, race, social status, or gender. This concept encourages Muslims to build harmonious social

relationships based on mutual respect and support. In his final sermon, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized, "*There is no superiority for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a white person over a black person, nor for a black person over a white person, except on the basis of piety.*" This value of equality encourages Muslims to reject discrimination and build strong solidarity, both within the family, community, and wider society (Amini et al., n.d.).

Furthermore, the concept of human nature in Islam also demands concern for the environment. As part of the mandate of the caliph, Muslims have a responsibility to preserve nature and not damage it. Islam teaches that the universe is God's creation and must be respected and cared for. Excessive exploitation of natural resources or environmental destruction is considered a violation of this divine mandate. Therefore, Muslims are encouraged to adopt an environmentally friendly lifestyle, such as reducing waste, maintaining cleanliness, and utilizing natural resources wisely (Septemiarti, 2023). This concern for the environment is not only an individual responsibility, but also a collective responsibility of Muslims as part of the global community.

Another equally important implication is the instilling of noble morals in social interactions. The concept of humans as servants of God teaches that every action and behavior must be based on the values of piety and goodness. Noble morals, such as honesty, justice, patience, and mutual assistance, form the foundation for building healthy and harmonious social relationships. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself was sent to perfect human morals, as he said, "*Indeed, I have been sent to perfect noble character.*" In everyday life, these noble morals are reflected in various forms, such as respecting others, keeping promises, helping the weak, and resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner (Mualimin, 2017).

By understanding and practicing these implications, Muslims can build a just, harmonious, and civilized society. Social responsibility encourages them to actively contribute to solving societal problems, while the values of equality and brotherhood strengthen social bonds between individuals. Concern for the environment ensures that human activities do not damage nature, while noble morals guide every social interaction. By implementing these values, Muslims not only fulfill their creative purpose as caliphs and servants of Allah but also serve as examples for the wider community in building a civilization based on divine values.

In everyday life, the concept of human nature in Islam can be realized through various forms of social behavior that reflect Islamic values. One of the most obvious practical examples is the implementation of zakat and alms. Zakat, as one of the pillars of Islam, is an obligation for Muslims who are able to give a portion of their wealth to those in need. This is not merely a financial obligation, but also a form of deep social concern. Through zakat, wealth is distributed equitably, reducing economic disparities, and helping the less fortunate meet basic needs. In addition to zakat, almsgiving is also a means of demonstrating empathy and social solidarity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "*The hand above (that gives) is better than the hand below (that receives).*" By giving alms, Muslims not only help others, but also cleanse their wealth and souls from stinginess, while strengthening social ties in society (Mualimin, 2017).

Another example of the application of the concept of human nature in Islam is maintaining silaturahmi (a religious bond). Islam places a high value on maintaining

good relationships with family, neighbors, and the wider community. Silaturahmi extends beyond visiting or communicating with relatives, but also encompasses mutual respect, assistance, and concern for the needs of others. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that silaturahmi can prolong life and broaden one's livelihood (Gumati, 2020). In practice, maintaining silaturahmi can be done in simple ways, such as visiting relatives, asking how neighbors are doing, or helping those experiencing difficulties. This value teaches that harmonious social relationships are an essential foundation for building a strong and mutually supportive society.

Furthermore, upholding justice is also a practical example of the application of the concept of human nature in Islam. Justice is a fundamental principle that must be upheld by every Muslim in all aspects of life, including resolving social conflicts. Islam teaches that justice must be upheld regardless of status, ethnicity, or religion. Allah SWT says in Surah An-Nisa, verse 135, "*O you who believe, be upholders of justice, witnesses for the sake of Allah, even if it is against yourselves or your parents or your relatives.*" In a social context, upholding justice means giving rights to those who are entitled, not taking sides with those who are wrong, and resolving problems in a fair and wise manner (Basyit, n.d.). For example, in resolving disputes between citizens, Muslims are expected to be fair mediators, listen to all parties, and make decisions that do not harm anyone.

These three practical examples—zakat and almsgiving, maintaining kinship, and upholding justice—demonstrate how the Islamic concept of human nature is translated into concrete actions that have a positive impact on society. Zakat and almsgiving strengthen social solidarity and reduce economic disparities. Maintaining kinship fosters harmonious and supportive relationships between individuals. Meanwhile, upholding justice creates a safe, just, and peaceful social environment. By implementing these values, Muslims not only fulfill their creative purpose as caliphs and servants of Allah but also contribute to building a society based on Islamic principles. Thus, the social life of Muslims reflects the values of piety, justice, and concern for others, ultimately benefiting all humanity.

Although the concept of human nature in Islam is highly idealized and imbued with noble values, in practice, Muslims often face various challenges that hinder the full implementation of this concept. One major challenge is individualism, namely the tendency to prioritize oneself and ignore the interests of others. This individualism contradicts Islamic principles that emphasize the importance of social solidarity and collective responsibility. Furthermore, social injustice is also a common problem, such as economic inequality, discrimination, and oppression of vulnerable groups. This injustice not only undermines social harmony but also contradicts the principles of justice taught by Islam (Winata et al., 2023). Another equally serious challenge is moral degradation, where noble moral values are beginning to be eroded by cultural influences inconsistent with Islamic teachings, such as materialism, hedonism, and permissiveness towards destructive behavior.

To overcome these challenges, serious and systematic efforts are needed. First, improving religious understanding through education is a crucial step. Comprehensive and in-depth religious education can help Muslims understand the essence of human creation, their responsibilities as caliphs, and their obligations as servants of God. This education is not limited to knowledge of religious rituals but also encompasses an

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understanding of social values, such as justice, caring, and responsibility (Setiawan et al., n.d.). Through education, Muslims can internalize Islamic values and apply them in their daily lives. Furthermore, education must also include the instilling of noble morals from an early age, so that the younger generation can grow with strong character and adhere firmly to Islamic principles.

Second, upholding Islamic values in community life is a crucial solution to addressing social challenges. This can be achieved by enhancing the role of religious institutions, such as mosques, Islamic study groups, and Islamic organizations, in fostering community development. These institutions can serve as centers for teaching and practicing Islamic values, such as honesty, justice, and social awareness. Furthermore, religious figures and community leaders play a crucial role in setting an example and encouraging the community to live according to Islamic teachings. By upholding Islamic values in community life, Muslims can create a harmonious, just, and compassionate social environment (Aryandika Firmansyah et al., 2024).

Third, building a collective awareness of social responsibility is key to overcoming challenges such as individualism and social injustice. Muslims need to be made aware that they are part of an interconnected and interdependent community. This awareness can be fostered through social campaigns, group discussions, or activities involving community participation, such as community service, community service, or economic empowerment programs. By raising collective awareness, Muslims can become more sensitive to social issues around them and be motivated to contribute to addressing them. Furthermore, this awareness will also encourage Muslims to be more concerned about the environment and natural resources, as part of their responsibility as caliphs on earth (Hendri, 2016).

By implementing these solutions, Muslims can overcome the challenges that hinder the implementation of the Islamic concept of human nature. Good religious education will shape individuals who understand and practice Islamic values. Upholding Islamic values in community life will create a harmonious and just social environment. Meanwhile, a collective awareness of social responsibility will strengthen solidarity and concern among community members. Thus, Muslims can realize a social life that aligns with the essence of their creation: as caliphs and servants of God, responsible for themselves, others, and the universe.

Conclusion

The concept of human nature in Islam emphasizes that humans were created by Allah SWT as noble creatures with a clear purpose, namely to worship Allah (QS. Adz-Dzariyat: 56) and to be caliphs on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30). Humans are equipped with various advantages, such as reason, conscience, and natural disposition, which distinguish them from other creatures. The essence of humans in Islam encompasses three main dimensions: spiritual (ruhaniyah), reason (aqliyah), and social (ijtimaiyah). These three dimensions are interrelated and form a holistic view of the role of humans in life, as caliphs, humans have a responsibility to prosper the earth, maintain the balance of nature, and uphold justice. As servants of God, humans are required to constantly worship and draw closer to Him through all activities undertaken with sincere intentions. Human nature, which is pure, teaches the importance of maintaining morality and honesty in society, while reason and conscience guide us in making just and responsible decisions.

Understanding the nature of humankind in Islam has profound implications for the social behavior of Muslims. This concept encourages Muslims to uphold justice, uphold equality, and care for social welfare. Values such as mutual assistance, solidarity, and tolerance are the main foundations for building harmonious social interactions. Furthermore, Muslims are also required to preserve the environment as part of the mandate of the caliphate, in practice, the Islamic concept of human nature can be realized through various forms of social behavior, such as the performance of zakat (almsgiving) and sedekah (charity), maintaining relationships, and upholding justice. However, Muslims also face challenges in implementing this concept, such as individualism, social injustice, and moral degradation. Overcoming these challenges requires serious efforts through religious education, the enforcement of Islamic values in society, and the development of a collective awareness of social responsibility.

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