

## HAMKA'S PHILOSOPHY OF *HIKMAH* IN *TAFSĪR AL-AZHAR*: ADDRESSING THE CRISIS OF *ADAB* IN MUSLIM SOCIETIES

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**Abstract:** Courtesy or *adab* is crucial in human life as it influences many other aspects. Addressing the current *adab* crisis is essential to fostering a civilized society. One solution to this crisis is the application of wisdom (*hikmah*). This research analyzes Hamkas thoughts on resolving the *adab* crisis through *hikmah*. The study employs a literature review method with a content analysis approach, utilizing data from Hamka's works and books, especially *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, and journals related to his thoughts. Data analysis involved three steps: compare, contrast, and critique. The research reveals that Hamka defines wisdom as the result of thinking that develops through deep experience and practice, which guides individuals toward truth and wisdom in living life. Hamka proposes three main approaches to obtaining wisdom: understanding the Qur'ān deeply, thinking critically, and emulating good behavior. As a solution to the crisis of *adab*, he emphasizes strengthening spiritual intelligence, which consists of seven main aspects: *al-rūḥ*, *al-qalb*, *al-nafs*, *al-'aql*, *īmān*, *ibādah*, and *adab*. This study argues that spiritual intelligence is considered fundamental in maintaining mental health and forming the character of civilized and integral individuals.

**Keywords:** *Adab* Crisis; *Hikmah*; Hamka; Spiritual Intelligence; *Tafsīr al-Azhar*.

## Introduction

Humans are essentially born on this earth with inherent potential, and external factors cause changes in their growth patterns.<sup>1</sup> The rapid technological advancements have given rise to Western civilization, which has ironically affected the current generation in terms of mental health, morals, psychology, spiritual emptiness, and the role of religion in human life.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon is triggered by various life problems, such as anxiety and stress, which are often not addressed by the values of faith.<sup>3</sup> In facing the complexity of this condition, it is vital to appreciate the inner essence (*bāṭinīyah*) through understanding wisdom (*ḥikmah*) as a fundamental guideline in realizing human potential as witnessed during the womb.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of the current era of globalization, humans consider the shifts occurring without establishing anything fundamental in the depths of the heart, namely courtesy (*adab*).<sup>5</sup> Amid the roar of the modern world, reading and understanding the Qur'ān has become an essential activity for Muslims. One of the *Asmā' al-Ḥusnā, al-Ḥakīm*, is identified as wisdom in the Qur'ān, which has varying meanings depending on the context. This fact

<sup>1</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekularisme*, trans. Khalif Muammar et al (Bandung: PIMPIN, 2010), 169.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Thoriqul Islam, Muhammad Miftah, and Nawa Marjany, "Dhuha Prayer as A Solution in Implementing Morals at MTs Lailatul Qadar Sukoharjo," *Jurnal Pendidikan: Riset & Konseptual* 8, no. 1 (2024): 64-69; Achyar Zein, "Makna Zikir Perspektif Mufassir Modern di Indonesia," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 9, no. 2 (2015): 502-27.

<sup>3</sup> Chhaya Shantaram Kurhade et al., "Religion-Based Interventions for Mental Health Disorders: A Systematic Review," *Journal of Applied Consciousness Studies* 10, no. 1 (2022): 20-33.

<sup>4</sup> M. Solihin and M. Rosyid Anwar, *Akhlak Tasawuf Manusia* (Bandung: Nuansa, 2004), 16; Muhammad Thoriqul Islam et al., "An Analysis of KH. Ahmad Dahlan's Thought in Islamic Education and Its Relevance in 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Learning," *Tarbawi Ngabar: Jurnal of Education* 6, no. 1 (2025): 1-37.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Thoriqul Islam and Khoiruddin Nasution, "The Meaning of Subbah Tijaniyah Tariqa in Building Adab," *Al-Hayat: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 2 (2024): 421-32; Muhammad Thoriqul Islam, "Islamisasi Ilmu Berbasis Ta'dib Terhadap Pendidikan Islam Menurut Perspektif Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas," in *International Conference on Indonesian Islam, Education and Science International Conference on Indonesian Islam, Education and Science (ICIIES): The Prospects and Challenges in the East and the West* (2017), 406-15.

implies that courtesy must be restored by understanding a lesson that enables every human being to adopt the right attitude.<sup>6</sup>

Some scholars define wisdom as religious knowledge or understanding of the verses of the Qur'ān. Some refer to it as prophetic wisdom, relating to the Qur'ānic verses and their adapted limitations.<sup>7</sup> The centrality and importance of wisdom are explained by the God, who grants it to whom He wills, highlighting its great value.<sup>8</sup> Wisdom is a method for resolving all problems related to courtesy towards oneself, the creator, and others. The God explains that this world is temporary, and His wisdom is reflected in the provision of wisdom. By understanding wisdom, people can gain clear insight, like a reflection from the God, which can distinguish between truth and the influence of Satan. According to a Ḥadīth from *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, envy is permitted only towards two types of people: those whom the God has given wealth and who spend it in the path of truth, and those who have been given wisdom and implement it.<sup>9</sup> This fact emphasizes that wisdom has the most significant center and value in facing the dynamics of the modern world, which is full of challenges. Some scholars, such as Avicenna, explain wisdom as a complement to the soul, providing a balance between theoretical and practical truths.<sup>10</sup>

Wisdom will continue to be used to maintain and balance the rapid progress of this civilization.<sup>11</sup> This value aligns with the views of al-Ghazālī, who defines wisdom as guidance on deeds, courtesy, and circumstances, sometimes as the knowledge of interpreting the

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<sup>6</sup> A. Muwahhid Muhammadi, "Aktualisasi Al-Qur'an di Era Modern," *Karimiyah: Journal of Islamic Literature and Muslim Society* 1, no. 2 (2022): 75-84; Muhammad Thoriqul Islam et al., "The Advantages of the Uswah Hasanah Method in the Perspective of Q.S. Al-Ahzab Verse 21: Conceptual Analysis and Implementation," *Paedagogia: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan* 28, no. 1 (2025): 103-13.

<sup>7</sup> Nāṣir b. Sulaymān al-'Umar, *al-Hikmah*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan li al-Naṣr, 1412), 11. <http://www.waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=2516>

<sup>8</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, vol. 1-7 (Singapura: Pustaka Nasional PTE LTD, 2001), 539.

<sup>9</sup> al-'Umar, *al-Hikmah*, 22.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Massingham, "An Aristotelian Interpretation of Practical Wisdom: The Case of Retirees," *Palgrave Communications* 5, no. 123 (2019): 1-13.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan E. Dickerson, "Data, Information, Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding," *Anaesthesia & Intensive Care Medicine* 23, no. 11 (2022): 737-739.

Qur'an.<sup>12</sup> This condition indicates a shift between wisdom in the traditional era and its development in the contemporary era. A new understanding of wisdom emerged in the modern era, according to Fakhruddin al-Razi, who states that wisdom cannot be separated from scientific and practical aspects.<sup>13</sup>

These pioneers of reform in the contemporary era emphasize that Indonesia also has a renowned figure for his works and movements that provide enlightenment to the nation, namely Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Hamka).<sup>14</sup> Hamka is not only known for his phenomenal work, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, but also for his other works, such as *Tasawuf Modern* (Modern Sufism), *Falsafah Hidup* (Philosophy of Life), *Lembaga Hidup* (Life Foundation), *Lembaga Budi* (Character Foundation), and *Lembaga Hikmat* (Wisdom Foundation). His method of explaining wisdom differentiates him from other scholars. He includes spiritual experiences and his life journey in each of his writings, providing a broad and beautiful dimension to the understanding of wisdom.<sup>15</sup> This fact highlights that Hamka's teachings offer knowledge for the next generation to emulate what he initiated. One of his contributions to wisdom thinking can be found in *Tafsir al-Azhar*,<sup>16</sup> especially in the interpretation of Sūrah al-Nahl [16]. He explains wisdom, sometimes considered more subtle than philosophy. The philosophical side may require training of the mind and logic, but wisdom can attract the attention of even the unintelligent. More than just words, according to him, wisdom is manifested in actions and attitudes to life.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, many researchers have previously analyzed Hamka's thoughts on solutions to the courtesy crisis through the

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<sup>12</sup> Abdul Swamad Gyagenda, "The Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Educational Views to the Contemporary System of Muslim Education: Focus on Islamic Education in Uganda," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education* 4, no. 1 (2021): 1-12.

<sup>13</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Tafsir al-Kabīr*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, vol. 2 (Beirut-Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 72-73.

<sup>14</sup> Sutoyo, "Tasawuf Hamka dan Rekonstruksi Spiritualitas Manusia Modern," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 10, no. 1 (2015): 108-36.

<sup>15</sup> Ade Jamarudin, H Asmal May, and Ofa Ch Pudir, "The Prospect of Human in The Exegetical Work: A Study of Buya Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Ulumuna* 23, no. 1 (2019): 24-47.

<sup>16</sup> Matsna Afwi Nadia and Icha Aulia, "Buya Hamka: Story Analysis and Inclusivism of Tafsir Al-Azhar," *Advances in Humanities and Contemporary Studies* 4, no. 2 (2023): 47-54.

<sup>17</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 235.

wisdom method. Based on the authors' observations, previous research was divided into three trends: *first*, politeness towards The God, the Prophet Muḥammad, parents, oneself, and the community, and politeness in assemblies;<sup>18</sup> *second*, the inclusion of the concept of Sufism moral education, providing development by adding a spiritual domain (faith) to the three curriculum domains: cognitive (science), psychomotor (actions), and affective (morals);<sup>19</sup> *third*, the virtue of mind that seeks to eliminate all bad traits in humans to produce better behavior useful to society.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the authors shared previous research as a reference and comparison to complement each other. If previous research focused on three tendencies, then in this case, the author added the concept of wisdom according to Hamka, Hamka's way of obtaining wisdom, the purpose of wisdom in Hamka's view, the implementation of wisdom according to Hamka, the relationship between wisdom and courtesy, the challenges of courtesy in the modern era, wisdom as a solution to the courtesy crisis, and wisdom and happiness.

This research employed a literature review method,<sup>21</sup> which is a systematic and straightforward approach for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing work produced by previous researchers and practitioners.<sup>22</sup> The focus of this study is to analyze Hamka's thoughts on the solution to the courtesy crisis through the wisdom method. Therefore, the literary sources comprised books, journals, proceedings, magazines, and articles. Specifically, the sources related to Hamka's works included *Tafsir al-Azhar*, *Falsafah Hidup*, *Lembaga Budi*, *Lembaga Hidup*, *Tasawuf Modern*, and others.

<sup>18</sup> Muhammad Lukman Arifianto et al., "Investigating Politeness in the Prayers of Prophets: A Quranic Discourse Perspective," *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 10, no. 5 (2023): 112-35.

<sup>19</sup> Muhammad Naufal Hakim, "The Concept of Sufism and Its Relationship with Moral Education: Examine Hamka's Thought (Examine Hamka's Thought)," *IPCIS: International Postgraduate for Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies* 1, no. 1 (2023): 143-54.

<sup>20</sup> Elit Ave Hidayatullah and Syamsuddin Arif, "Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' Exposition on the Concept of Ethics," *Afkar* 24, no. 1 (2022): 409-46.

<sup>21</sup> Ahmad Fahrudin, *Dasar-Dasar Metodologi Penelitian: Kompetensi dan Strategi Jitu Riset Peneliti*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Tulungagung: UIN Satu Press, 2020).

<sup>22</sup> Chitu Okoli and Kira Schabram, "A Guide to Conducting a Systematic Literature Review of Information Systems Research," *Sprouts* 10, no. 26 (2010): 1-3.

The data analysis utilized thematic analysis techniques, a method used to recognize patterns or determine themes within the collected data. This analysis technique involved three steps: *compare* (identifying similarities across various reading sources), *contrast* (identifying differences among various reading sources and drawing conclusions), *criticize* (offering opinions based on the results of the collected reading analysis).<sup>23</sup>

This research aims to describe and analyze Hamka's thoughts on solutions to the courtesy crisis through the wisdom method. Therefore, this research considered it essential to explore more deeply the results of Hamka's works regarding ideas and solutions to the development and progress of technology and information culture without abandoning their courtesy, ensuring alignment with the ideas and developments of the times.

### Hamka on the Essence of *Hikmah*

Wisdom or *hikmah* is derived from the root words “*ha*,” “*kaf*” and “*mim*,”<sup>24</sup> meaning ‘to restrain or forbid, specifically to forbid out of virtue and to abandon injustice.’<sup>25</sup> This restraint is driven by the pursuit of virtue and guided by divine direction. Thus, wisdom can be considered as God's guidance.<sup>26</sup>

Etymologically, wisdom encompasses several meanings. *First*, it is associated with justice, knowledge, patience, prophecy, and scripture, reflecting its deep connection to the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Bible.<sup>27</sup> *Second*, wisdom signifies a profound understanding in science, which entails a deep comprehension of the most refined aspects of knowledge, requiring continuous progress and the relentless pursuit of perfection in mastering a given field. *Third*, wisdom refers to the integration of reason and knowledge,

<sup>23</sup> Heriyanto, “Thematic Analysis Sebagai Metode Menganalisa Data untuk Penelitian Kualitatif,” *Anuwa* 2, no. 3 (2018): 317.

<sup>24</sup> Fr. Louis Ma'luf and Fr. Bernard Tottel Al-Yassu'i, *al-Munjid fi Lughah wa al-A'lam*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Beirut: Dār al-Mechreq sarl, 2008), 221.

<sup>25</sup> Mehmet Önal, *Wisdom (Hikmah) as a Holistic Basis for Inter-Religious Education BT - International Handbook of Inter-Religious Education*, eds. Kath Engebretson et al. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> A.W. Munawwir and Muhammad Fairuz, *Kamus Al-Munawwir Arab-Indonesia Terlengkap* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progresif, 2007), 286.

<sup>27</sup> Muḥammad b. Mukrim Mandhūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, 12<sup>th</sup> edition (Beirut: Dār Ṣadr, 2010), 140.

highlighting one's ability to synthesize intellectual insight and empirical understanding to discern and establish truth.<sup>28</sup>

As science evolves, the meaning of wisdom has expanded beyond a single definition, encompassing various interpretations that embody its core values. For instance, wisdom includes the principles of justice (rejecting oppression), patience (resisting anger), and knowledge (opposing ignorance as a prohibition for humans).<sup>29</sup> Despite its diverse meanings, wisdom remains a foundational element for self-development and a deeper understanding of truth and ethical conduct.

Wisdom in the Qur'ān has a profound and extensive meaning that touches various aspects of life. It is detailed in several verses, underscoring its significance in Islamic teachings. For instance, the Qur'ān states that wisdom includes the hadiths conveyed by the Prophet, confirming that wisdom is not limited to the Qur'ān but also encompasses the teachings of the Prophet Muḥammad. Previously, those who believed were in darkness, but with the arrival of the Prophet, they were given correct guidance and wisdom to lead them to the truth.<sup>30</sup>

When wisdom is mentioned without being compared to the Qur'ān, its meaning extends to broader aspects, including truth in words, deeds, and beliefs, as well as the ability to put things in their right place.<sup>31</sup> The God grants wisdom to whom He wills, providing a deep understanding of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Those who receive wisdom also gain various other blessings. This implies that wisdom is not just knowledge but a profound understanding reflected in wise actions and thoughts.<sup>32</sup>

Unlike the philosophical view, which emphasizes the love of wisdom, the Islamic perspective on wisdom shares similarities but has distinct nuances. Philosophy, derived from the Greek words

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<sup>28</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Ma'rūf Rāghib al-Aṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Ḡharīb al-Qur'ān*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Beirut: Maktabat Naẓr Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 2009), 126-127, and 167.

<sup>29</sup> Sa'īd b. 'Alī b. Wahf al-Qaḥṭān, *Maḥbūm al-Ḥikmah fī Da'wah ilā Allāh Ta'ālā*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Mulq Fahd al-Waṭaniyyah Athnā' al-Naṣr, 1424), 30.

<sup>30</sup> Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Aẓḥar*, 982-83..

<sup>31</sup> Mohd. Fakhruddin Abdul Mukti, "Philosophical Ideas in Islam: The Attitude of Ibn Khaldun," *Afkar* Special Edition, no. 1 (2014): 67-96.

<sup>32</sup> Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Aẓḥar*, 655-658.

“*philo*” (love) and “*sophia*” (wisdom), implies a human desire to understand and cherish wisdom.<sup>33</sup> The term “philosophy” comes from the Arabic “*falsafah*,”<sup>34</sup> borrowed from the Greek “*philosophia*,” meaning the love of wisdom.<sup>35</sup> Socrates, in opposition to the sophists, first used the term “*philosophus*” to refer to himself, meaning a lover of wisdom. The Arabs later adopted this term as “*falsafah*” or philosophy.<sup>36</sup> Wisdom is considered the highest achievement that humans can attain through reason, heart, and thought.

This view is supported by prominent Muslim thinkers such as al-Ghazālī, Sayyid Quṭb, and Nurcholish Madjid. Al-Ghazālī asserts that wisdom is the power of knowledge that distinguishes between truth and falsehood, encouraging righteous deeds.<sup>37</sup> Quṭb emphasizes that wisdom results from education provided by the wise Qur’ān,<sup>38</sup> as the Qur’ān is titled al-hakīm, meaning wise. It is explained in the Qur’ān that the God says: “This Qur’ān verse contains wisdom.”<sup>39</sup> This wisdom is interpreted as wisdom spoken wisely, with each verse appropriate to each situation. Those given the title *al-hakīm* can see all matters in their proper context, weigh them accurately, and achieve appropriate goals.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, Nurcholish Madjid highlights that wisdom is manifested in wise actions in daily life.<sup>41</sup> These scholars agree that wisdom is a wise attitude involving a correlation between knowledge and wisdom, driven by a strong will, sharp logic, and mature thinking.

<sup>33</sup> Jane Gaukroger, *Cultivating Wisdom: A Collection of Essays for Leaders and Organisation Developers*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (London: United Kingdom, 2020), 5.

<sup>34</sup> Tigani M.A. Zaid and Ibrahim M. Zein, “Stages of Development in Arabic Philosophical Nomenclature: Emergence, Progression and Stability,” *Intellectual Discourse* 24, no. 2 (2016): 217-43.

<sup>35</sup> Victoria S Harrison, “Realigning Philosophy and Wisdom in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift Voor Wijsbegeerte* 112, no. 3 (2020): 325-340.

<sup>36</sup> Ma’luf and al-Yassu’i, *al-Munjid fi Lughah wa al-A’lam*, 593.

<sup>37</sup> Abdul Hakim Abdullah and Kabara Auwal Halabi, “The Wisdom: A Concept of Character Building Based on Islamic View,” *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 7, no. 5 (2017): 412-425.

<sup>38</sup> Edin Lohja, *Sayyid Quṭb and Qur’anic Method of Exhortation*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Malaysia: IIUM Malaysia, 2020), 65.

<sup>39</sup> Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, 5556.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 3583.

<sup>41</sup> Luluk Fikri Zuhriyah, “Dakwah Inklusif Nurcholish Madjid,” *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam* 02, no. 02 (2012): 218-242.



In Hamka's view, wisdom is not just theoretical knowledge but also a deep desire to understand the secrets of knowledge and its essence.<sup>42</sup> He asserts that wisdom is not only achieved through theoretical learning but also through in-depth practical experience.<sup>43</sup> According to Hamka, wisdom is the result of a mind that develops through direct experience and deep practice. This illustrates how vital wisdom is in seeking actual truth and living life wisely.<sup>44</sup>

Hamka also emphasizes that God rewards wise people because they consider nature and events as gateways to knowing Him. For wisdom experts, known in Arabic as al-Hakim one of the names of God the highest wealth given by the God is the wealth of wisdom.<sup>45</sup> The Qur'ān states that the God grants understanding of the Qur'ān and Sunnah to whom He wills, and only those who are endowed with wisdom can draw wisdom from His words.<sup>46</sup> This confirms that the wisdom described by Hamka is a harmony of interrelated meanings, where achieving wisdom is the main goal for those who strive to learn it.

In short, previous statements imply that hikmah is a concept in Arabic often translated as "wisdom" or "deep understanding." More broadly, wisdom refers to the profound understanding and insight gained from life experience, reflection, and learning. In the context of religion, especially Islam, wisdom often signifies a deep comprehension of the teachings and values given by the God, as well as the ability to apply them wisely and thoughtfully in daily life.

### **How to Obtain *Hikmah*?**

According to Hamka, there are several ways to gain wisdom, namely reading and understanding the Qur'ān, thinking deeply and practicing good habits, and imitating good attitudes of others. The Qur'ān, a divine revelation full of wisdom and truth, is not only called that because of its profound content but also because of its perfect placement. Each verse is appropriate to its context, and by

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<sup>42</sup> Hamka, *Falsafah Hidup*, 12<sup>th</sup> edition (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1994), 362.

<sup>43</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 983.

<sup>44</sup> Hamka, *Falsafah Hidup*, 363.

<sup>45</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 656.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 657-658.

understanding its interpretation and implementation in life, a person will experience the transformative guidance it contains. Prioritizing the Qur'ān in life is a process that frees the soul from falsehoods and lies, guiding it toward wisdom and a deep understanding of life's secrets.<sup>47</sup> The God's Word describes the Qur'ān as a main book with high value and rich wisdom, directing a person's views towards wisdom and philosophy as they mature.<sup>48</sup> Philosophy, in this context, is an integral part of wisdom, encouraging profound reflection and understanding of hidden truths. However, to fully grasp these depths, one needs sharp reasoning, trained intelligence, and consistent actions based on the Qur'ān's values.

In the term of thinking deeply and practicing good habits, wisdom is not only related to logical thinking but also requires philosophical depth. Ibn Rushd translated "*ḥikmah*" as philosophy, viewing it as the foundation of wisdom.<sup>49</sup> This concept is reinforced by al-Ghazālī, who believes that wisdom is not only about having good manners but also the courage to speak honestly, even in difficult situations.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, someone who possesses wisdom combines moral goodness with knowledge, understanding that good manners without knowledge can be misleading, while knowledge without morality can be useless. Ibn Arabi further supports this approach in his work, *Futuhat*.<sup>51</sup> Thinking deeply and cultivating goodness is the first step to achieving wisdom, as stated by Hamka and other philosophers. While Ibn Rushd emphasizes profound thinking, it is essential to balance it with priorities and an attitude in life based on the objective value of wisdom.

Finally, regarding imitating good attitudes of others, Hamka initially proposes deep thinking and practicing kindness as paths to wisdom. Nevertheless, for some people, this approach may seem challenging. Alternatively, an easier way is to imitate the attitudes and behaviors of wise people or community figures who possess wisdom.<sup>52</sup> By emulating how they speak, behave, and act, a person

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 3202-3203.

<sup>48</sup> Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Jakarta: Republika, 2016), 299.

<sup>49</sup> Marzuki, *Prinsip Dasar Adab Mulia (Pengantar Studi Konsep-Konsep Dasar Etika dalam Islam)*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Yogyakarta: Debut Wahana Press & FISE UNY, 2009), 67.

<sup>50</sup> Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, 657.

<sup>51</sup> Marzuki, *Prinsip Dasar Akhlak Mulia*, 71.

<sup>52</sup> Hamka, *Tafsīr al-Azhar*, 344-345.

can develop wisdom within themselves. In this regard, the ultimate role model is the Prophet Muḥammad, whom the God blessed with extraordinary wisdom. The Qur'ān states that the Messenger of the God was sent to teach the Book, the Sunnah, and wisdom to his people.<sup>53</sup> Apart from the Prophet Muḥammad, another figure renowned for his wisdom is Luqmān al-Ḥakīm, mentioned in the Qur'ān during the time of the Prophet Dāwūd. The God bestowed upon him extraordinary wisdom, reflected in his advice to his son. Luqman emphasizes the importance of self-advice and avoiding pride in disobedience.<sup>54</sup> His advice is proof of his wisdom in educating his children. The Qur'ān also states that the God gave wisdom to Luqmān, which, among other things, means that being grateful to the God is being grateful to oneself.<sup>55</sup> By imitating Luqmān's advice and behavior, one can gain the same wisdom. This implies that through emulating wise individuals and understanding the teachings of the Qur'ān, people can cultivate wisdom within themselves.

### **The Purpose of *Hikmah***

Hamka conveys several purposes of wisdom, including. The first is being wise in carrying out obligations. Wisdom, reflected in words, actions, and attitudes towards life, serves as an example for people, as described in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Through these teachings, individuals are purified from misguided beliefs and idolatrous influences, cleansing themselves from hatred, envy, and betrayal. This purification process is both psychological and physical, helping individuals differentiate between unclean and clean self-confidence. This cleanliness opens the mind and heart to accept the truth and thrive in life.<sup>56</sup>

The second is understanding the nature of things/the secrets of life. True wisdom requires relentless perseverance in uncovering hidden secrets, continuous research, and dedicating all thought and attention to it. It demands hard work and determination to explore every layer of information, as sincerity is the key to unlocking the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 344-345.

<sup>54</sup> Mustafa al-Adawi, *Wasiat Luqman Al-Hakim Mendidik Buah Hati dengan Hikmah* (Solo: Tinta Medina, 2013), 20.

<sup>55</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 5565.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 658.

secrets we seek, and firm belief and trust in the process are essential.<sup>57</sup>

The third is adapting action and knowledge. Every individual guided by the God has the responsibility to develop their knowledge and actions as part of the gift of wisdom given to them. However, despite diligent efforts, the results may not always meet expectations and can sometimes lead to wasted energy.<sup>58</sup>

The fourth is knowing God. Through observations of nature, wisdom experts recognize the existence of God. They are considered wise because they possess wisdom, known in Arabic as *al-Hakim*, which directly connects them to the God, the highest source of wisdom for His servants. One of the greatest forms of wealth that God has given to humans is wisdom.<sup>59</sup>

The last is achieving happiness. According to Hamka, true happiness is determined by two main aspects. First, the source of happiness lies within the human soul. Humans have four soul powers that can lead them to happiness: wisdom, courage, determination, and justice. By combining these forces, true happiness can be achieved and will be fully realized in the afterlife. Second, happiness also originates from the physical dimension, a view adopted by Aristotle.<sup>60</sup> Hamka tends to accept this view, believing that happiness in this world should not be ignored on the way to the afterlife.<sup>61</sup> Based on Hamka's thoughts, wisdom plays a central role in achieving genuine happiness. Wisdom, as a deep understanding of nature and its Creator, requires high intelligence. With awareness of the Creator's existence, humans become more focused on good courtesy. Wisdom, as a branch of courtesy, does not arise from deviant or criminal acts, nor is it easily influenced by transient doctrines. Thus, through a deep understanding of nature and the existence of God, humans can achieve true happiness, both in this world and the afterlife.

Based on reviewing the meaning and purpose of wisdom, humans tend to refocus on finding wisdom as a guide to life. Amid the cultural and spiritual crises of the modern era, the awareness of

<sup>57</sup> Hamka, *Falsafah Hidup*, 362.

<sup>58</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 3665.

<sup>59</sup> Hamka, *Lembaga Budi*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition (Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 2001), 299.

<sup>60</sup> Monika Ardel and Jared Kingsbury, "Wisdom, Virtues, and Well-Being: An Empirical Test of Aristotle's Theory of Flourishing," *Topoi* 43 (2024).

<sup>61</sup> Hamka, *Tasawuf Modern*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition (Djakarta: Djajamurni, 1961), 39.

the importance of seeking wisdom has become increasingly urgent. The God, as the source of wisdom and beauty, guides those who seek the path to happiness in this world and the hereafter.<sup>62</sup>

### ***Hikmah* in Action: Hamka's Interpretation**

The previous discussion has outlined several definitions of wisdom in theory. However, beyond these theories, there is no greater beauty than wisdom itself.<sup>63</sup> Wisdom can be applied in social life, meaning it not only guides its possessor towards the truth but also fosters a sense of responsibility towards the community.<sup>64</sup>

Hamka emphasized that applying wisdom would be incomplete without a fair attitude. He considers justice an inseparable part of wisdom. Wisdom, as knowledge that guides humans towards truth,<sup>65</sup> is balanced by justice, which is the scale of truth. Without justice, wisdom loses its substance and usefulness.

In his book *Falsafah Hidup*, Hamka expresses that wisdom is the knowledge that leads to truth, while justice is the scale of truth.<sup>66</sup> There is a relationship between wisdom and justice because both significantly contribute to achieving the same goal: truth. Therefore, perfection in applying wisdom is only achieved when it is based on essential truth, which can only be realized after implementing a fair consideration process.

God creates humans with reason and gives them the responsibility to govern the earth justly. As caliphs, humans are responsible for God's trust, which will be accountable in the afterlife. Therefore, wisdom in decision-making is vital to carrying out this mandate well.<sup>67</sup> As the God says in *Sūrah al-Isrā'* [17]: 70, "Indeed, we have dignified the children of Adam, carried them on land and

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<sup>62</sup> David Rooney, "Spirituality, Wisdom and Quantum Theory: Wisdom Has a Measurement Problem Too," in *Applied Spirituality and Sustainable Development Policy*, eds. N. Singh and D. Bhatnagar (Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2023), 167-180.

<sup>63</sup> Nicholas Maxwell, *From Knowledge to Wisdom*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Pentire Press, 2007), 174.

<sup>64</sup> Hamka, *Tasawwuf Modern*, 18<sup>th</sup> edition (Jakarta: Yayasan Nurul Islam, 1981), 124-125.

<sup>65</sup> M. Fethullah Gülen, *Pearls of Wisdom*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (New Jersey, USA: The Light, 2005), 76.

<sup>66</sup> Hamka, *Falsafah Hidup*, 115.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures.”<sup>68</sup> When we consider humans as a whole—body, mind, and soul—we see how perfect and valuable we are. Muslims know that Islam embodies a code of ethics that guides their desires and controls their actions within certain limits. These codes and ethics are explicitly spelled out in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.<sup>69</sup>

Hence, wisdom is an understanding of knowledge and justice that emanates from experience and learning.<sup>70</sup> Theoretical wisdom is not acquired from birth or inherited but is obtained through life’s journey and reflection. It combines knowledge about God, an understanding of religion, and justice. This ability allows a person to discern right from wrong and to worship the Creator with wisdom under the principles of theoretical wisdom.<sup>71</sup> Al-Ghazālī emphasized that theoretical wisdom involves knowledge of reality, the ability to distinguish between truth and error, and the integration of thinking that harmonizes various points of view to provide direction for practical action.<sup>72</sup>

Individuals who possess theoretical wisdom tend to have well-developed personalities. They appreciate the uniqueness and diversity of others and are not fixated on general social expectations. They guide themselves with a set of values that include integrity, honesty, justice, and kindness.<sup>73</sup> With the primary source of wisdom originating from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, they continue to develop their understanding and view of the world.

According to Hamka, implementing wisdom requires understanding what one should do and the essence of goodness in life. Wisdom includes aspects of our intellectual, moral, and daily activities, aiming to ensure a better life for ourselves and the community. However, in this modern era, wisdom practices often experience deviations. Some people may interpret wisdom as supernatural knowledge related to individual supernatural or magical

<sup>68</sup> Hamka, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, 4093-4094.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 1612.

<sup>70</sup> Dermot Alan Tredget, “Practical Wisdom and the Rule of Benedict,” *Journal of Management Development* 29, no. 7/8 (2010): 716-723.

<sup>71</sup> Ja’far, *Gerbang-Gerbang Hikmah: Pengantar Filsafat Islam* (Banda Aceh: Pena, 2011), 39.

<sup>72</sup> Gülen, *Pearls of Wisdom*, 77.

<sup>73</sup> Hamka, *Falsafah Hidup*, 96.

powers. Hamka conveys that the true essence of wisdom lies in learning from life experiences that serve as guidelines in daily life; hence, each individual can provide solutions to various life problems.<sup>74</sup>

Hamka exemplifies the application of wisdom daily based on his experience. One example is how a person assesses and treats others. The Qur'ān states that insulting or defaming others is inappropriate. Hamka encourages reflection, noting that those we insult are also ourselves. Therefore, living happily involves mutual respect and collective well-being.<sup>75</sup> Hamka's ability to apply the wisdom of the Qur'ān in his life highlights the importance of understanding and internalizing wisdom values in daily life.

### Relationship between *Hikmah* and *Adab*

Linguistically, the word “courtesy” is derived from “*addabahu*’*addibu-ta’dib*,” which means polite, courteous, friendly, and refined.<sup>76</sup> This meaning is synonymous with character or commendable behavior.<sup>77</sup> A person who teaches etiquette, politeness, personality, and self-development is called a “*mu’addib*” (an educator).<sup>78</sup> In Sufi terms, according to Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465 AH), courtesy is a collection or combination of all good attitudes within the human spirit.<sup>79</sup> Meanwhile, al-Fayūmī, in his work “*al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*,” stated that courtesy is good conduct, meaning humans can actualize the goodness embedded within them.<sup>80</sup>

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzīyah explained that courtesy is the practice of etiquette or good behavior, implying an effort to direct

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<sup>74</sup> Kaili Zhang et al., “Wisdom: Meaning, Structure, Types, Arguments, and Future Concerns,” *Current Psychology* 42, no. 18 (2023): 15030-15051.

<sup>75</sup> Hamka, *Falsafah Hidup*, 124.

<sup>76</sup> Muhammad Thoriqul Islam, “Theory and Application of Suhbah in Building Adab from Tijaniyah Tariqa Perspective,” *Fahima: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kajian Keislaman* 2, no. 2 (2023): 157-176.

<sup>77</sup> Muhammad Ridwan, “Konsep Tarbiyah, Ta’lim dan Ta’dib dalam Al-Qur’an,” *Nazḥruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2018): 37-60.

<sup>78</sup> Neguin Yavari, “Adab and Modernity: A ‘Civilising Process’? (Sixteenth–Twenty-First Century),” *Iranian Studies* 53, no. 5-6 (2020): 991-999.

<sup>79</sup> Abū al-Qāsim al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālat al-Qushayrīyah* (Cairo: Muṭabī‘ Mu’assasat Dār al-Sha‘b, n.d.), 474.

<sup>80</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Fayūmī, *al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr fī Gharīb al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr* (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2008), 9.

someone to implement good deeds in life.<sup>81</sup> Nawawī al-Bantānī supported this view, describing courtesy as the use of all commendable qualities in words and actions.<sup>82</sup> From the opinions of these scholars, courtesy is considered the application of the internal drive to do good. If courtesy is understood solely as good behavior, it can be examined within an axiological framework.

In terms of courtesy within an axiological framework, al-Ghazālī explained in his work *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* that courtesy is not just behavior but an essential innate ability within humans to behave well and correctly. This means there is a close relationship between courtesy and *al-ḥalq* as follows:

...فالأدب :تَهذيب الظاهر والباطن فإذا تَهذب ظاهر العبد وباطنه صار صوفياً أديباً، وإنما سميت المأدبة مأدبة لاجتماعها على أشياء، ولا يتكامل الأدب في العبد إلا بتكامل مكارم الأخلاق، ومكارم الأخلاق مجموعها من تحسين الخلق، فالخلق صورة الإنسان والخلق معناه...أن الله تعالى خلق الإنسان وهياً لقبول الصلاح والفساد وجعله أهلاً للأدب ومكارم الأخلاق، ووجود الأهلية فيه كوجود النار في الزناد ووجود النخل في النوى، ثم إن الله تعالى بقدرته ألهم الإنسان ومكنه من إصلاحه بالتربية إلى أن يصير النوي نخلاً...فالأدب :استخراج ما في القوة إلى الفعل، وهذا يكون لمن ركبت السجية الصالحة فيه، والسجية فعل الحق لا قدرة للبشر على تكوينها، كتكون النار في الزناد إذ هو فعل الله المخلص واستخراجه بكسب الآدمي، فهكذا الأدب منبعها السجيا الصالحة والمنح الإلهية، ولما هياً الله تعالى بواطن الصوفية بتكميل السجيا فيها توصلوا بحسن.<sup>83</sup>

The quote above states that courtesy is “*tabdhīb al-ẓāhir wa al-bāṭin*,” meaning ‘the process of coaching, structuring, and purifying an individual’s mind, soul, and behavior.’ Courtesy will not be perfect except with “*takāmul makārim al-akhlāq*.” Courtesy, derived

<sup>81</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Madārīj al-Salīkīn bayn Manāzil Iyyāk Naʿbud wa Iyyāk Nastaʿīm*, Juz 3 (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣāmiʿī li al-Naṣr wa al-Tawzīʿ, 2011), 2360–61.

<sup>82</sup> Nawawī al-Bantānī, *Tanqīḥ al-Qawl al-Ḥathīb Sharḥ Lubāb al-Ḥadīth* (Jakarta: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, n.d.), 65.

<sup>83</sup> Abū Ḥamid al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyah, 2011), 1707.



from the word “*al-kebuluq*,” implies that the God creates something within humans in the form of “*al-sajyat al-ṣāliḥah*.” This means that a human’s correct innate character or disposition is a form of His will, and humans cannot create it themselves.<sup>84</sup> In its application, humans do not have the will to determine their innate character (*al-sajyat al-ṣāliḥah*) because it is the divine guidance that directs humans to behave correctly as the God desires. Al-Ghazālī explained the relationship between courtesy in both an ontological and axiological framework.

In contrast, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas explains courtesy in three dimensions: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. The first is al-Attas’s explanation of courtesy in an ontological framework. In this realm, courtesy concerns recognizing and acknowledging the spirit that God breathed into humans and the dignity (*murātib*) within the structure of form, existence, knowledge, and actions.<sup>85</sup> In the spirit realm, the God created the spirit, which is the reality of the human condition, and has bound humans in an agreement (*iqrār al-rubūbiyyah*) to determine the goals of life, behavior, and actions in their relationship with the God. A person’s attachment to God is manifested by complete surrender, actualized by worshiping the God and paying attention to both the outer and inner aspects. This worship aligns with the fundamental essence (*fiṭrah*) that the God has created in humans.<sup>86</sup> This *fiṭrah* is the basic plan or innate original character, perfected within humans to recognize and acknowledge the God as God.<sup>87</sup> Courtesy in this aspect reflects the spirit and *qalb* of humans, recognizing and acknowledging the God as the Creator who must be worshiped.<sup>88</sup>

Second is al-Attas’s explanation of courtesy in an epistemological framework. In this realm, several sciences lead humans to recognize God: the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, *al-‘ilm al-ladunnī*, and wisdom,

<sup>84</sup> Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Rawdat al-Ṭālibīn wa ‘Umdat al-Sālikīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍīyah al-Ḥadīthah, n.d.), 17.

<sup>85</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekularisme*, 163-178; Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2001), 118.

<sup>86</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekularisme*, 178.

<sup>87</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Islam Fahaman Agama daan Asas Akhlak* (Kuala Lumpur: Ta’dib International, 2019), 8-9.

<sup>88</sup> Muhammad Thoriqul Islam and Elvan Tedio Fawaz, “Islamization of Knowledge in Qur’anic Perspective,” *Studia Quranika: Jurnal Studi Quran* 2, no. 1 (2017): 23-38.

which is the source of accurate and perfect knowledge that guides humans to acknowledge the God as the source of all knowledge.<sup>89</sup> This aspect is considered a science because it relates to the confident recognition of truth. This truth concerns the causes of existence, embodied in the heart. The heart is a place within humans to receive light, inner images, meanings, and secrets that are retained (courtesy) and manifest as the desire to behave well.<sup>90</sup> The science of knowledge based on *qalb* and reason can describe the essence permanently and precisely in the spiritual and unseen realms. *Qalb* is where this meaning arrives, as al-Attas states in his work 'A Brief Review of the Fairy of Knowledge': it is the arrival of *ma'nā* into oneself and the arrival of oneself to *ma'nā*. This means recognizing a natural plan for everything in creation, leading to the recognition of the Lord of the Universe.<sup>91</sup> From this, oneself, in the form of the spirit '*aql* or *qalb*, is a place to receive *ma'rifah* (knowledge of recognition),<sup>92</sup> forming self-awareness regarding the nature of the 'Original Agreement' of a servant with God.<sup>93</sup> Thus, courtesy from the epistemological aspect is understood as the *qalb*'s ability to receive truths that lead to recognizing and confessing the God as the ultimate goal of humans.

Third is al-Attas's explanation of courtesy in an axiological framework. Courtesy in this aspect describes the recognition and confession of the spirit's creation, the original character within oneself, and conformity (*qalb*) with the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and the words of the ulema. It manifests as reverence, love, respect, and humility, placing oneself correctly.<sup>94</sup> Appropriate action and putting things right define justice, the basis of courtesy. The peak of character lies in pledging oneself to the *rubūbiyah* agreement made by all humans in the realm of the spirit.<sup>95</sup> Every individual is thus obliged to be obedient, submissive, humble, respectful, self-

<sup>89</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekularisme*, 178-179; Al-Attas, *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin*, 33-34.

<sup>90</sup> Al-Attas, *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin*, 51-52.

<sup>91</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Tinjauan Ringkas Peri Ilmu dan Pandangan Alam* (Kuala Lumpur: Ta'dib International, 2019), 39-40.

<sup>92</sup> Nur Hadi Ihsan and Muhammad Thoriquul Islam, "Nur Muhammad in the Perspektif of the Tijaniyah Tarekat," *Kanaz Philosophia* 9, no. 1 (2023): 23-42.

<sup>93</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam Fahaman Agama dan Asas Akhlak*, 37-38.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Attas, *Islam dan Sekularisme*, 145-146.

<sup>95</sup> Al-Attas, *Risalah untuk Kaum Muslimin*, 37-38.

deprecating, loving, and sincerely accepting the truths of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah with moral conviction. Conscious realization in the heart of the God's presence in beliefs, thoughts, and actions is proper courtesy, as viewed by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, representing an Islamic worldview.<sup>96</sup>

Hamka responds to al-Attas's opinion about courtesy by stating that courtesy is a path leading to the goodness or badness of a person's character. He conveys that courtesy is not just behavior but inner capital shaping attitudes and actions. He divides courtesy into two categories: good and bad. Good courtesy prepares the soul for virtuous attitudes, while bad courtesy prepares the soul for negative behaviors. This concept aligns with Ibn Miskawayh's thoughts, who defines courtesy as an inner state encouraging individuals to act without thinking.<sup>97</sup> Ibn Miskawayh classifies the human soul into three levels: *al-nafs al-shahwīyah/bahimah* (lust for wild animals), considered the bad level; *al-nafs al-ghaḍabīyah/sabuṭīyah* (lust for reptiles), considered the moderate level; and *al-nafs al-nāṭiqah/mulkīyah* (intelligent soul), considered the good level.<sup>98</sup> This classification indicates that courtesy is the primary basis for human interaction with each other, the surrounding environment, and God.

## Conclusion

The core of this study is the importance of wisdom in overcoming the crisis of *adab*. Hamka defines wisdom as the result of thinking that develops through deep experience and practice, which plays a role in guiding individuals toward truth and wisdom in living life. Hamka proposes three main approaches to obtaining wisdom: understanding the Qur'ān deeply, thinking critically, and emulating good behavior. As a solution to the crisis of *adab*, he

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<sup>96</sup> Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Ma'na Kebahagiaan dan Pengalamannya dalam Islam*, trans. Muhammad Zainiy Uthman (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2002), 37-39.

<sup>97</sup> Mohd Nasir Omar, "The Soul (Al-Nafs) and Its Effects on Character: An Analysis of the Thought of the Great Muslim Moralist, Miskawayh (d. 1030)," *Sci. Int. (Labore)* 30, no. 1 (2018): 53-57.

<sup>98</sup> Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Miskawayh, *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa-Taṭhīr al-A'raq*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition (Mesir: al-Maṭba'ah al-Ḥusaynīyah, 1911), 13; Ibn Maskawih, *Menuju Kesempurnaan Akhlak: Buku Daras Pertama tentang Filsafat Etika* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), 44.

emphasizes strengthening spiritual intelligence, which consists of seven main aspects: *al-rūḥ*, *al-qalb*, *al-naḥs*, *al-'aql*, *īmān*, *'ibādah*, and *adab*. This spiritual intelligence is considered fundamental in maintaining mental health and forming the character of civilized and integral individuals. Suggestions and Limitations: This study highlights wisdom from Hamka's perspective but has not compared it with other scholars' thoughts or contemporary *adab* theories. Further studies can explore the implementation of wisdom in the education system or the role of spiritual intelligence in forming individual character in various social and cultural contexts.

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