Worship, Khalifah and Amanah: A Reconstruction of The Concept of Human Roles From The Perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi

Mochamad Yunus Ariansyah[1*], Khaerunnisa[2], Imam Syafei[3], Endang Saeful Anwar[4]

[1,2,3,4]UIN Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, Serang, Banten, Indonesia
[*]Corresponding author:
Email: 262701217.yunus@student.uinbanten.ac.id

Abstract.
Studies on human beings from the perspective of the Qur'an have extensively discussed the dimensions of servitude to God, human stewardship, and moral responsibility. However, the relationship among these three concepts as an integrated framework of the human role from the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi *has received limited integrative reconstruction. This study aims to analyze the relationship among the concepts of* ibadah, khalifah, *and* amanah *in the Qur'an and to reconstruct them as a conceptual framework of the human role and its implications for Islamic education. This study employs a qualitative approach using library research and the muqarran method of Qur'anic interpretation within the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi. The primary sources include the Qur'an and the works of Tafsir Ath-Thabari, Ibn Kathir, al-Misbah, and al-Azhar. The main verses analyzed are QS. Adz-Dzariyat [51]:56 concerning* ibadah, *QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30 concerning* khalifah, *and QS. Al-Ahzab [33]:72 concerning* amanah. *The analysis was conducted through the collection and categorization of relevant verses, examination of their contexts and meanings, comparative analysis of interpretations, and conceptual synthesis. The findings indicate that* ibadah, khalifah, *and* amanah *are integrally interconnected.* Ibadah *functions as a transcendental orientation,* khalifah *as the actualization of human roles, and* amanah *as the ethical principle and accountability underlying the fulfillment of those roles. This reconstruction results in a conceptual framework of orientation-actualization-accountability. From the perspective of* Tafsir Tarbawi, *this framework indicates that Islamic education should develop human beings holistically by strengthening their spiritual, intellectual, social, and moral dimensions, thereby cultivating individuals who possess faith and knowledge, demonstrate good character, are capable of actualizing their potential, and are responsible in fulfilling their roles as servants of Allah and stewards of the earth.*
Keywords: *Ibadah, Khalifah, Amanah, Tafsir Tarbawi and Islamic Education.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings play a vital role in Islamic education, as its primary aim is to develop human potential so that individuals can lead lives in accordance with spiritual and moral principles. From the Qur'anic perspective, human beings are not merely recipients of knowledge; rather, they are endowed with intellect, spiritual capacity, the ability to make decisions, and ethical responsibility for their existence (Nur'aini & Hamzah, 2023). Therefore, a clear understanding of human nature and human functions is essential for formulating an approach to Islamic education. Research on Islamic education grounded in the Qur'an indicates that divine revelation not only provides general guidance on knowledge and education but also establishes a conceptual framework for defining the objectives, sources, and direction of human education (Rosidin, 2021). Thus, the study of human beings in the Qur'an plays a crucial role in the development of Islamic education theory, particularly from the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi (Qur'anic Exegesis from an Educational Perspective).

The Qur'an portrays human beings as having two fundamental and interconnected roles: as servants of Allah and as His vicegerents (khalifah) on Earth (Hakim & Rawzalgina, 2026). The human role as a servant of Allah is affirmed in Surah Adh-Dhariyat [51]:56, which states that the purpose of creating jinn and humankind is to worship Allah. Meanwhile, the human role as a khalifah (vicegerent) is affirmed in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]:30, which designates human beings as stewards of the earth (Susilawati et al., 2026). These two roles demonstrate that human existence encompasses both vertical and horizontal dimensions: devotion to God and the fulfillment of responsibilities in the world. Based on the findings of a study by Shofiyah et al. (2023) which explains that the meaning behind human creation, as described in the Qur'an, is closely related to worshipping Allah and fulfilling the responsibility of serving as a khalifah (steward or representative of God on Earth). Meanwhile, a study by Panggayuh et al. (2025), suggests that the concept of khalifah in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 30 is associated with the development of ethical character, cognitive abilities, and social responsibilities through Islamic education.

Nevertheless, the relationship between the status of human beings as servants of God (‘*abd*) and their role as vicegerents (khalifah) should not be viewed merely as the coexistence of two parallel concepts.

Rather, the concept of amanah (trust and responsibility) serves as a link between them, adding an ethical dimension and emphasizing the accountability inherent in fulfilling human obligations (Hanief, 2025). In QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 72, amanah (trust) is portrayed as a responsibility entrusted to humankind, while QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30 provides the theological foundation for the human role as khalifah (vicegerent) on Earth. Various studies focusing on the concept of amanah recognize it as a fundamental element of Qur'anic ethics, encompassing human obligations toward Allah, fellow human beings, and the environment (Hani et al., 2026). Furthermore, other studies examining the nature of human beings from the Qur'anic perspective emphasize the interrelationship between the spiritual dimension of human beings as servants of God who engage in worship, their social dimension as stewards (khalifah) on Earth, and their responsibility to fulfill their obligations with sincerity and commitment (Rusmiati & Mahmud, 2025). Thus, worship can be regarded as the spiritual focus of human existence, while the role of vicegerent (khalifah) represents the fulfillment of human responsibilities in the world, and amanah (trust and responsibility) serves as a guiding principle that shapes and sets boundaries for the exercise of that role.

Previous studies have laid an important foundation for this discourse. One such study was conducted by Shofiyah et al. (2023) on the purpose of human creation. The findings indicate that human beings possess intellectual and spiritual faculties, which are directed toward worshipping Allah and fulfilling their role as khalifah (entrusted stewards and caretakers of the Earth). Furthermore, a study by Hasibuan et al. (2024) examines the concept of khalifah as presented in Surah Al-Baqarah [2]:30, explaining its relevance to the objectives of Islamic education, particularly in fostering moral development, intellectual growth, and social responsibility. In line with this, Efendi and Alwizar (2024) also revisited the nature of humanity from a Qur'anic perspective, highlighting its spiritual and social dimensions, the importance of humanity's role as stewards of the Earth, and the concept of amanah (divine trust or mandate). Similarly, Kamilah et al. (2025) focused their study on amanah (trust and responsibility) as a pillar of Qur'anic ethics through the thematic interpretation method. From a methodological perspective, Rosidin (2021) demonstrates that a thematic Tafsir Tarbawi approach can be employed to construct concepts of Islamic education through the collection, categorization, and analysis of Qur'anic verses based on specific themes. These studies indicate that scholarly discussions on human beings, the concept of the caliphate, amanah (trust and responsibility), and Islamic education have continued to develop. However, most of these studies still tend to examine these concepts separately, with relatively limited integration among them.

Based on this review, a research gap remains, as limited attention has been paid to reconstructing the relationship between *ibadah* (worship), *khalifah* (vicegerency), and *amanah* (trust and responsibility) as an integrated conceptual framework for understanding the human role from the perspective of *Tafsir Tarbawi* (Qur'anic interpretation from an educational perspective). Existing studies on the purpose of human existence tend to emphasize servitude to God and the role of humans as God's vicegerents (*khalifah*). Discussions of *khalifah* primarily focus on human obligations and their implications for education, while studies on *amanah* tend to situate the concept within the framework of ethics and moral responsibility. Consequently, there remains an opportunity to bring these three concepts together into an integrated framework that explains the orientation, actualization, and accountability of human roles. Rather than revisiting the meaning of each concept in isolation, this article seeks to analyze the interrelationships among these concepts through the *Tafsir Tarbawi* approach.

Based on this research gap, the novelty of this study lies in the conceptual reconstruction of the human role through the interrelationship of three Qur'anic concepts: *'ibadah* (worship), *khalifah* (vicegerency), and *amanah* (trust and responsibility). This article proposes that these three concepts can be understood within a conceptual framework in which *'ibadah* serves as the transcendental orientation, *khalifah* represents the actualization of the human role, and *amanah* functions as the ethical principle and basis of accountability. Within this framework, the role of human beings as *khalifah* is not viewed as a separate function, but rather as an embodiment of *'ibadah* itself, constituting a form of devotion that must be carried out in accordance with the principles of *amanah*. This perspective further extends to educational implications, suggesting that Islamic education should not merely aim to develop individuals with knowledge and skills, but also cultivate

individuals who possess a God-centered orientation, the capacity to fulfill their social obligations, ethical integrity, and an awareness of their responsibility for every action they take and every potential they possess. This conceptual framework builds upon the synthesis presented in preliminary studies, which identify *'ibadah* as the purpose of human existence, *khalifah* as the human role, and *amanah* as the moral responsibility of human beings.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the concepts of *'ibadah* (worship), *khalifah* (vicegerency), and *amanah* (trust and responsibility) through relevant Qur'anic verses and the interpretations of classical and contemporary Qur'anic scholars. It also seeks to reconstruct the relationship among these three concepts as an integrated conception of the human role from the perspective of *Tafsir Tarbawi* (Qur'anic interpretation from an educational perspective), and to examine their implications for the orientation of Islamic education. Accordingly, this study is expected to make a conceptual contribution to the development of *Tafsir Tarbawi* and Islamic education studies, particularly by fostering a more comprehensive understanding of human beings as servants of Allah and, simultaneously, as vicegerents entrusted with fulfilling their responsibilities in everyday life.

II. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research and a comparative exegesis (*tafsir muqaran*) method. The primary data sources consist of the Qur'an and four Qur'anic commentaries: Tafsir al-Tabari, Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Misbah, and Tafsir al-Azhar. The secondary data sources include journal articles, books, and previous studies relevant to the concepts of human beings, worship (ibadah), stewardship (khalifah), trust and responsibility (amanah), and Islamic education. The use of primary and secondary sources in library-based Qur'anic exegesis is also employed in Tafsir Tarbawi studies.

The selection of verses was based on their relevance to the research focus. The primary verses analyzed were QS. Adh-Dhariyat [51]:56, which discusses worship (ibadah); QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30, which addresses the concept of human beings as stewards (khalifah); and QS. Al-Ahzab [33]:72, which concerns the concept of trust and responsibility (amanah). The selection of these verses follows the tafsir muqaran (comparative exegesis) approach, which involves collecting verses related to a particular theme and examining them comparatively to facilitate a more systematic and relevant understanding of the values embodied in the Qur'an (Amin et al., 2025).

The analysis was conducted in several stages: (1) identifying the themes of worship (ibadah), vicegerency (khalifah), and trust (amanah); (2) collecting relevant Qur'anic verses; (3) classifying the verses according to their respective subthemes; (4) examining the contextual and linguistic meanings of the verses; (5) analyzing the interpretations of Qur'anic exegetes; and (6) developing a synthesis (Maimun & Manshur, 2026).

The comparison of interpretations was conducted by examining the similarities, differences in emphasis, lines of argumentation, and educational relevance in the works of al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Quraish Shihab, and Hamka. The two classical exegetes were consulted to establish a foundation in classical Qur'anic interpretation, while Quraish Shihab and Hamka were examined to explore the development of interpretive meanings within contemporary contexts. The findings of this comparison subsequently served as the basis for formulating a conceptual synthesis.

The Tarbawi exegesis synthesis was conducted in three stages: the synthesis of Qur'anic verse meanings, conceptual synthesis, and educational synthesis. The conceptual synthesis of this study is formulated as shown in Fig. 1.

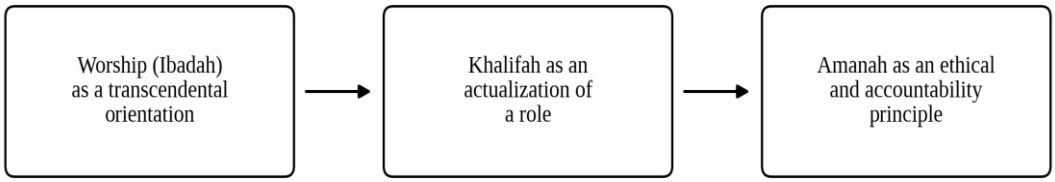


Fig. 1. Conceptual synthesis of ibadah, khalifah, and amanah

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Worship (Ibadah) as a Transcendental Orientation of Human Beings

The concept of worship serves as the starting point for understanding the purpose of human existence. This is affirmed by Allah Almighty in Surah Adh-Dhariyat [51]: 56

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ ٱلْجِنَّ وَٱلْإِنسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

Translation: *"I did not create the jinn and humankind except that they may worship Me."*

The verse explicitly links the creation of humankind to worship. In Tafsir al-Tabari, the phrase لِيَعْبُدُونِ (*liya'budun*) is understood in relation to devotion to Allah. Al-Tabari also compiles several narrations explaining that this purpose is associated with human beings fulfilling their role as servants of Allah (Al-Bakri et al., 2007). Al-Tabari compiled two groups of narrations. The first consists of a narration from Zayd ibn Aslam, who interpreted this verse within the framework of divine predestination: Allah created a group of the jinn and humankind destined for happiness (*su'ada'*) to worship Him, and another group destined for misery (*ashqiya'*) to disobey Him. The second consists of a narration from Ibn 'Abbas, who interpreted the phrase "*liya'budun*" as *liyuqirru bil-'ubudiyyah taw'an wa karhan*, meaning that they are to acknowledge their servitude to Allah, whether willingly or unwillingly (Ath-Thabari, 2001).

Al-Tabari reinforces Ibn 'Abbas's view and addresses a potential objection: if human beings were created to submit to Allah, why do some of them disbelieve? According to him, all creatures submit to Allah's decree, which cannot be evaded, whereas disbelief constitutes disobedience through one's actions rather than a rejection of the authority of that decree. From this perspective, worship encompasses an ontological dimension, namely, the acknowledgment of and submission to Allah inherent in the human status as a created being. At the same time, this interpretation allows for a distinction between submission that is inevitable (*karhan*) and submission that is voluntary (*taw'an*) (Ath-Thabari, 2001).

Meanwhile, Ibn Kathir's exegesis explains that human beings were created to worship Allah, not because Allah is in need of their worship (Ghoffar & Al-Atsari, 2004). This clarification rejects the understanding of worship as a transaction that benefits Allah; rather, the benefits of worship accrue to those who perform it. Ibn Kathir then brings together several interpretations of the phrase لِيَعْبُدُونِ (*liya'budun*): First, according to a narration transmitted by 'Ali ibn Abi Talhah from Ibn 'Abbas, all creatures acknowledge their servitude to Allah, whether willingly or unwillingly. Second, according to Ibn Jarir (al-Tabari), the phrase means that they may come to know Allah (*ma'rifah*). Third, al-Rabi' ibn Anas interprets it as referring exclusively to worship. Fourth, al-Suddi argues that some forms of worship benefit those who perform them, whereas others do not, because worship mixed with shirk (associating partners with Allah) offers no benefit to the worshipper. Nevertheless, acknowledging that Allah created the heavens and the earth is still regarded as a form of worship. Fifth, al-Dahhak maintains that the verse specifically addresses believers. This range of interpretations demonstrates that, within the classical exegetical tradition, worship encompasses acknowledgment (*iqrar*), recognition (*ma'rifah*), and practical obedience, while its quality is determined by the purity of tawhid (monotheism) (Ibn Kathir, 1999). Thus, worship constitutes a human need and an orientation for human life, rather than a need on the part of Allah, the Almighty.

This interpretation is further reinforced by Quraish Shihab in his Tafsir Al-Misbah. He explains that Allah's purpose in creating the jinn and humankind is not to derive any benefit from them, but rather to ensure that the course of their lives ultimately leads to the worship of Him (Shihab, 2001). Quraish Shihab draws on the definitions proposed by Muhammad 'Abduh and Thabathaba'i, who describe worship (*'ibadah*) as an act of submission and obedience that reaches its highest expression through a profound awareness of

the majesty of the One being worshipped. He distinguishes between purely ritual worship (*mahdhah*) and non-ritual worship (*ghairu mahdhah*). He also refers to Sayyid Qutb's perspective, which links worship to the responsibility of *khalifah* (humanity's role as God's vicegerent on earth), a duty that encompasses efforts to preserve and develop the earth. Worship is the purpose of human creation and represents the fulfillment of that purpose. Allah the Almighty created human beings to grant them rewards, while the benefits of worship ultimately accrue to the individuals themselves, as Allah has absolutely no need for it. Allah's will is rooted in His divine attributes. He created humankind and jinn because He is the Most Exalted (Shihab, 2002). Therefore, the concept of worship encompasses a meaning far broader than ritual practices alone.

An examination of QS. Adz-Dzariyat [51]:56 in Tafsir Al-Azhar also reveals that Hamka regards worship as the primary purpose of human creation and as the foundation for the development of human spirituality and morality (Hamka, 2015). This verse can be understood as an affirmation that human life does not lose its sense of direction when it is understood as an act of devotion to Allah. Worship should not be limited to ritual practices that are disconnected from everyday life. Sincere intentions, honesty, earning a lawful livelihood, fulfilling social responsibilities, and using reason and intellect appropriately can all become acts of worship, provided that they are carried out in accordance with religious teachings.

Based on this comparison, there is a strong convergence between classical and contemporary Qur'anic exegetes regarding the understanding of worship ('ibadah) as a fundamental orientation of human life. The differences lie primarily in their emphasis: classical exegesis places greater emphasis on obedience and servitude to God, whereas contemporary exegesis more readily relates worship to broader aspects of human life. From the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi (Qur'anic Exegesis in Education), these findings indicate that Islamic education should not merely enhance students' cognitive abilities but also cultivate an awareness of devotion ('*ubudiyyah*) as a central guiding principle in their lives. A closer examination reveals that education oriented toward worship contributes to character formation and should not be confined solely to formal religious rituals. Accordingly, within the conceptual framework of this study, worship is positioned as the transcendental orientation of human existence. This means that all human potentials, including intellectual capacity, knowledge, skills, and social activities, should ideally be directed toward the ultimate purpose of devotion to Allah.

Khalifah as an Actualization of the Human Role

The orientation toward servitude to God does not mean that human beings are exclusively engaged in ritual activities; rather, they also have responsibilities in worldly life. This is affirmed in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوٓاْ أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ ٱلدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۖ قَالَ إِنِّيٓ أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

Translation: *And [remember] when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will make a vicegerent on earth.' They said, 'Will You place therein someone who will cause corruption and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and declare Your holiness?' He said, 'Indeed, I know that which you do not know."*

The verse indicates that human beings hold a distinctive position in earthly life. In Tafsir al-Tabari, the term khalifah is derived from the root "*khalafa*", meaning to succeed or take the place of someone who came before. Al-Tabari interprets this verse as the appointment of a successor who administers justice among Allah's creatures in accordance with His laws. This successor is Adam and anyone who assumes his position by obeying Allah and upholding justice. Regarding the entity or beings whom Adam was appointed to succeed, al-Tabari compiles several narrations. Ibn 'Abbas reports that the jinn inhabited the earth before humankind, spread corruption, and shed blood. Al-Hasan al-Basri interprets khalifah as successive generations of Adam's descendants who replace one another. Meanwhile, Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn 'Abbas, through the narration of al-Suddi, maintain that Adam himself was the khalifah, while the corruption mentioned in the verse is attributed to his descendants. Al-Tabari understands the angels' question as a request for clarification (*istikhbar*), rather than an objection to Allah's will. He rejects the interpretation that their question constitutes a request for permission, as the verse provides no evidence to support such reading. He further interprets the statement "*inni a'lamu ma la ta'lamun*" (Indeed, I know what you do not know) as

an affirmation that Allah possesses knowledge beyond the comprehension of the angels (Ath-Thabari, 2001). The distinctive feature of this interpretation lies in its emphasis on the normative requirements of khilafah (vicegerency). The position of khalifah does not merely signify the succession of generations; rather, it entails obedience to Allah and the exercise of justice in making decisions. These two requirements establish a conceptual connection between khilafah and 'ibadah (worship and obedience), as well as between khalifah and amanah (trust and responsibility), with justice serving as a fundamental expression of accountability.

According to Ibn Kathir's interpretation, the term *khalifah* refers to human beings who succeed one another from generation to generation to inhabit and manage the earth. His explanation also highlights the honor and status bestowed upon humankind, which Allah had disclosed to the angels before the creation of Adam (Ghoffar & Al-Atsari, 2004). Ibn Kathir explains the creation of Adam and his placement on earth as part of divine wisdom. He presents various narrations concerning the identity of the *khalifah* and the interpretation of the dialogue between Allah and the angels. The angels' question should not necessarily be understood as a rejection of Allah's decision; rather, it may be interpreted as an inquiry into the wisdom behind it. Allah's response emphasizes that His knowledge surpasses what the angels know and that among Adam's descendants would emerge righteous individuals and forms of obedience that had not previously been known to them (Ibn Kathir, 1999).

Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab emphasizes the responsibilities of human beings after their presence on Earth. Thus, the concept of khalifah is understood not merely as a title or status, but as a role involving responsibilities that humans are expected to fulfill. An examination of Tafsir Al-Misbah indicates that the concept of khalifah in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30 is closely related to human responsibilities and potential in carrying out their roles in life on Earth (Shihab, 2001). Quraish Shihab explains that the term khalifah may be understood as a successor to other creatures that once inhabited the Earth or as a representative entrusted with upholding Allah's will and decrees. This does not imply any weakness on Allah's part; rather, Allah intends to test and honor human beings. The concept of khilafah comprises three elements: the authority granted by Allah, the beings entrusted with this responsibility (Adam and his descendants), and the domain in which this responsibility is to be exercised (the Earth). The angels' question is interpreted as an inquiry beginning with "whether" rather than as an objection. Their supposition is understood as a question, to which Allah responds briefly without either confirming or denying it, since some creatures do indeed act in the manner the angels anticipated. Because this authority originates from Allah, the role of khalifah must be carried out in accordance with His guidance. Any exercise of judgment that contradicts His will constitutes a violation of this responsibility (Shihab, 2002).

From Hamka's perspective in Tafsir Al-Azhar, the term khalifah in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30 is also associated with human beings as successors or those who continue life on Earth. Hamka's interpretation of this verse illustrates that human existence on Earth entails responsibilities regarding how people conduct their lives and utilize the potential bestowed upon them (Hamka, 2015).

The comparison suggests that the concept of khalifah encompasses dimensions of role and responsibility rather than merely a position or status. This understanding is reinforced by a study conducted by Hasibuan et al. (2024) which demonstrates that the concept of khalifah has implications for the objectives of Islamic education, particularly in fostering moral character, intellectual competence, and social responsibility. Accordingly, within the framework of Tafsir Tarbawi, khalifah represents the practical actualization of the human role following the establishment of a fundamental orientation toward servitude to Allah. If ibadah (worship) answers the question, "For what purpose do human beings live?", then khalifah addresses the question, "What should human beings do in life?".

Amanah as an Ethical Principle of the Caliphate

The concept of khalifah (vicegerent) is inseparable from that of amanah (trust and responsibility). When human beings are granted the position and ability to manage life on Earth, these privileges also entail accountability (Kurniawan & Pulungan, 2026). The primary basis for this concept is found in QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 72

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا ٱلْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱلْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَن يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

Translation: *"Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but they all declined to bear it and feared that they would fail to fulfill it. Yet, the human being accepted it. Indeed, he is truly unjust and ignorant."*

In Tafsir al-Tabari, amanah (trust) is explained, among other things, as obedience to Allah and the obligations He has prescribed for humankind. Amanah entails certain consequences: fulfilling these obligations brings rewards, whereas neglecting them carries moral consequences accountability and punishment (Al-Bakri et al., 2007). In the phrase "*dzaluman jahula"*, al-Ṭabarī cites, among other reports, a narration from Ibn ʿAbbas stating that Adam was heedless (*gharran*) of Allah's command, as well as a narration from Ibn Zayd explaining that Allah promised Adam assistance in the form of protection over his eyes, tongue, and private parts (Ath-Thabari, 2001). Thus, the concept of amanah is directly related to human obligations and accountability.

Ibn Kathir also compiled several narrations explaining amanah (trust) as obedience, religious obligations (*fara'id*), and the various commands and prohibitions of Allah. He emphasized that these interpretations ultimately converge on a common point: human beings are responsible for accepting and fulfilling Allah's commands, with the promise of reward for those who fulfill them and punishment for those who neglect them (Ghoffar & Al-Atsari, 2004). He also records narrations concerning the offering of the amanah (trust) to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains. Each of them asks about its contents and the consequences of accepting it, but they decline, unwilling to seek its reward and unable to bear its burden. Adam then accepts it on the condition that obedience will be rewarded, whereas disobedience will be punished. Ibn Kathir also cites the hadith concerning the removal of the amanah from human hearts (the hadith of Hudhayfah) and the hadith emphasizing the obligation to fulfill trusts entrusted to others. He maintains that these various explanations are fundamentally not contradictory, as they all ultimately refer to the concept of taklif, namely, the human responsibility to accept and fulfill Allah's commands and prohibitions along with all their associated obligations. Those who fulfill this responsibility will be rewarded, while those who neglect it will be punished. Human beings bear this responsibility despite their inherent weakness, ignorance, and injustice, except for those whom Allah guides (Ibn Kathir, 1999).

Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab, in Tafsir Al-Misbah, interprets the concept of amanah in this verse as religious duties that were offered to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but which they were unable to bear because of the immense weight of the responsibility. Humanity's acceptance of this trust signifies its potential to fulfill such responsibilities, although it does not guarantee successful fulfillment. The expression ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا should be understood as a warning about humanity's capacity to wrong itself and its ignorance or misjudgment in assessing the burden of responsibility, rather than as a justification for denying human potential and accountability. Quraish Shihab further defines amanah as something entrusted to another party to be safeguarded and returned to its rightful owner, making it the opposite of betrayal (*khiyanah*). He interprets the offering of this trust to humanity as a recognition of human beings' potential to fulfill it, rather than as an act of coercion (Shihab, 2002). Furthermore, in *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Hamka interprets *amanah* as "something entrusted to be safeguarded and returned to its rightful owner," while highlighting the human tendency toward injustice and ingratitude (Hamka, 2021). Both interpretations demonstrate that *amanah* is not limited to ritual obligations but also encompasses the preservation of entrusted matters and the fulfillment of responsibilities placed upon human beings.

Based on these interpretations, amanah should not be understood merely as "trust" in the social sense. Rather, it encompasses normative, moral, and accountability dimensions. Human beings are not only endowed with the capacity to act but are also held responsible for how they exercise that capacity. From the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi, the principle of amanah provides a foundation for character education. Education should not merely produce individuals who are capable, but should also cultivate individuals who are both capable and responsible. Thus, amanah serves as an ethical principle that guides the exercise of the human role as khalifah (vicegerent), ensuring that it does not devolve into domination, exploitation, or the unrestricted exercise of human potential without ethical boundaries.

Based on a comparative analysis of the interpretations of the three main Qur'anic verses by al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Quraish Shihab, and Hamka, similarities and differences were identified in their respective emphases on the concepts of ibadah (worship), khalifah (vicegerency), and amanah (trust and responsibility). To provide a clear understanding of the comparative findings, the interpretations are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative interpretations of the three verses in four Qur'anic commentaries

Verses and Concept	Tafsir Al-Thabari	Tafsir Ibn Kathir	Tafsir Al-Misbah	Tafsir Al-Azhar	Research Synthesis
Ibadah: QS. Adz-Dzariyat [51]:56	The purpose of human creation is to worship Allah Swt.	Humans were created to worship and obey Allah Swt.	Worship (ibadah) serves as the orientation of human life; it is not limited to rituals.	Worship (ibadah) serves as both the purpose of life and the moral foundation for human beings.	Worship (ibadah) as a transcendental orientation for human beings.
Khalifah: QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30	Humans serve as the successors/stewards of life on Earth.	Khalifah relates to the transition between generations and the practice of obedience to Allah Swt.	Humans are entrusted with the task of managing the Earth, along with the potential and responsibility that entails.	Humans play a role in managing life and using their potential for the good.	Khalifah as an actualization of the human role.
Amanah: QS. Al-Ahzab [33]:72	Amanah relates to obligations and obedience for which one must eventually render an account.	Amanah encompasses religious obligations and the resulting rewards or sins.	Amanah reflects a human being's moral accountability for their tasks and choices.	Amanah represents a heavy responsibility in carrying out a role.	Amanah as an ethical principle and a form of human accountability.

The table indicates substantive similarities among the four Qur'anic exegetes. In their interpretations of QS. Adh-Dhariyat [51]:56, all four regard worship as the primary purpose and fundamental orientation of human existence. In QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30, the concept of khalifah reflects humanity's status and responsibilities on earth. Meanwhile, QS. Al-Ahzab [33]:72 highlights the trust (amanah) entrusted to human beings, for which they must ultimately be held accountable.

The main differences lie in the emphasis of the interpretations. Al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir rely more heavily on transmitted reports and explanations from the early generations of Muslim scholars in elucidating the meanings of Qur'anic verses. By contrast, Quraish Shihab and Hamka tend to relate these meanings more directly to human concerns and social life in their interpretations. Thus, classical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding the textual meanings of the verses and their transmitted interpretations, while contemporary perspectives help broaden their conceptual relevance to human life.

The comparison reveals that the three concepts are not independent of one another. Ibadah (worship) addresses the fundamental orientation of human existence, khalifah (vicegerency) explains the actualization of the human role, while amanah (trust) establishes the ethical principles and accountability underlying the fulfillment of that role. Furthermore, the table demonstrates that the four exegetes offer complementary emphases. Worship is not limited to ritual activities but serves as the fundamental orientation of human existence. Vicegerency signifies both the position of human beings and the actualization of their role in life, while trust introduces an ethical dimension through responsibility and accountability for the fulfillment of that role. Thus, these three concepts do not exist in isolation but form a sequential conceptual relationship.

A Synthesis of Interpretations: The Interconnection of Worship (Ibadah), Vicegerency (Khalifah), and Trust (Amanah) in Four Exegeses (Tafsir)

Based on the four interpretations, the relationship among the three concepts is shown to be not merely sequential (orientation, actualization, and accountability), but also mutually inclusive. First, ibadah

encompasses khalifah. Al-Tabari stipulates obedience to Allah as a prerequisite for anyone who occupies the position of khalīfah. Ibn Kathīr contrasts the angels' glorification of Allah, as a symbol of ritual worship, with the fruits of human khalifah, manifested in the prophets, the truthful, the martyrs, and the righteous. Meanwhile, through Sayyid Quthb perspective, Shihab does not separate worship from the task of cultivating and prospering the earth. Therefore, khalifah constitutes a form of worship within the social and ecological spheres, rather than an additional role separate from 'ibadah.

Second, the concept of the caliphate encompasses the notion of amanah (trust and responsibility). Al-Tabari reinforces the meaning of amanah as encompassing both religious obligations and responsibilities toward fellow human beings, making its scope consistent with the socially oriented dimensions of the caliph's role. Ibn Kathir defines amanah as a divinely imposed obligation (*taklif*) that entails consequences in the form of reward or punishment. Shihab argues that the duties of the caliph must be carried out in accordance with Allah's will, while Hamka, as reported in secondary literature, explicitly describes the caliph as the trustee responsible for managing the earth. Thus, amanah serves as a benchmark for evaluating how the authority vested in the caliph is exercised.

Third, amanah (trust and responsibility) encompasses ibadah (worship). According to al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, the content of amanah includes obligations and obedience, which constitute the very essence of worship. Accountability, therefore, does not exist outside worship; rather, it completes its cycle: the transcendental orientation serves as the source of the content of amanah, while amanah becomes a test of the quality of worship. Accordingly, the formulation of orientation, actualization, and accountability proposed in this article is best understood as an analytical sequence rather than a chronological order or three separate categories.

This synthesis has implications for Islamic education from the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi. Drawing on the interpretations of al-Tabari and Ibn Kathir, the education of worship should go beyond the habituation of ritual practices to foster recognition and awareness of Allah and the purity of tawhid (divine oneness). It should also guide students from a state of compelled submission (*karhan*) toward willing submission (*taw'an*). According to al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, and Shihab, education for khilafah (vicegerency) entails developing competencies grounded in justice, moral well-being, and conformity with Allah's will, rather than merely acquiring knowledge. Across all the exegetes examined, education in amanah (trust and responsibility) involves character formation that encompasses both divine and social responsibilities, including self-control as implied in narrations concerning the guarding of one's eyes, tongue, and private parts. Since human beings are portrayed as bearers of a trust who are also vulnerable to failure (*zaluman jahula*), Islamic education is not a one-time process but an ongoing endeavor to ensure that the potential for khilafah remains firmly anchored in the orientation toward worship and the boundaries of amanah. This provides the exegetical foundation for reconstructing the concept of the human role in the following subsection.

Reconstruction Ibadah-Khalifah-Amanah as a Conceptual Framework for the Human Role

The comparative analysis shows that the three concepts occupy distinct yet interrelated positions. 'Ibadah (worship) concerns the purpose and orientation of human existence; khalifah (vicegerency) refers to the position and actualization of human beings in life; while amanah (trust and responsibility) establishes the ethical implications of fulfilling these roles. These relationships can be reconstructed as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Reconstruction of the Qur'anic concepts of the human role

Qur'anic Concept	Core Meaning	Position within the Concept of the Human Being
Ibadah	Devotion to Allah Swt	Transcendental orientation
Khalifah	The role of humans on Earth	Actualization of a role
Amanah	Obedience, obligation, and accountability	Ethical/accountability principles

This reconstruction constitutes the conceptual finding of the study. Ibadah (worship) provides direction, khalifah (vicegerency) provides a space for actualization, while amanah (trust and responsibility) establishes moral boundaries and accountability. These three concepts form an integrated framework that

explains how human beings should conduct their lives. From this perspective, the human roles as servants of Allah (‘abd) and vicegerents (khalifah) need not be viewed as contradictory. Human beings fulfill their role as vicegerents as an integral part of their devotion to Allah, while carrying out this role within the framework of amanah. Contemporary studies on the relationship between the concepts of ‘abd and khalifah also highlight the importance of integrating these two dimensions within the framework of Islamic education. Conceptually, this study proposes the model presented in Fig. 2.

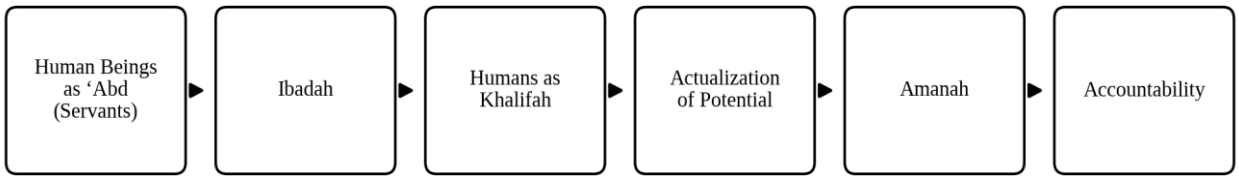


Fig. 2. Conceptual model of the human role based on the ibadah–khalifah–amanah reconstruction

The model illustrates that amanah (trust and responsibility) serves as an ethical link between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of human existence. Worship connects human beings with Allah, while the concept of khalifah (vicegerency) connects them with life and society. Amanah ensures that these relationships are maintained in accordance with the values and commands of Allah Almighty.

The Implications of Reconstruction for Islamic Education

The reconstruction of the concepts of ‘ibadah (worship), khalifah (vicegerency), and amanah (trust and responsibility) has direct implications for the orientation of Islamic education. Islamic education should not be understood merely as a process of transferring religious knowledge, but rather as a process of shaping individuals who are capable of integrating spiritual, intellectual, social, and moral dimensions (Tarigan et al., 2025).

First, worship provides a spiritual orientation for education. Education should foster an awareness that knowledge and human activities have a dimension of devotion to Allah (Gani et al., 2024). However, teachers must clarify the conceptual boundaries of this principle: an activity cannot be considered an act of worship merely because it takes place in an Islamic educational setting; such devotion must be embodied in sincere intentions and actions that do not contradict religious values. Therefore, educational success should be measured not only by academic achievement but also by the quality of faith and the awareness of one’s status as a servant of Allah Swt.

Second, the concept of khalifah provides a framework for developing human potential and social responsibility. Students need to be equipped with knowledge, skills, critical thinking abilities, and social competencies to enable them to make positive contributions to society. This is not an empirical conclusion directly established by QS. Al-Baqarah [2]:30, but rather an educational implication derived from the position of human beings on earth and the verse’s acknowledgment of the possibility of corruption and bloodshed. Interpreting khalifah as a role requires education to connect individual capabilities with the pursuit of the common good, rather than merely enhancing skills or pursuing individual achievement. Research by Hasibuan et al. (2024) also indicates that the concept of khalifah can serve as a foundation for developing moral character, intellectual competence, and social responsibility as integral objectives of Islamic education.

Third, amanah (trust and responsibility) provides moral direction and accountability. Education should develop individuals who not only possess knowledge and skills but are also capable of applying them responsibly (Juariah, 2023). Accordingly, character traits such as honesty, responsibility, discipline,

integrity, and social awareness become integral components of educational objectives. These three

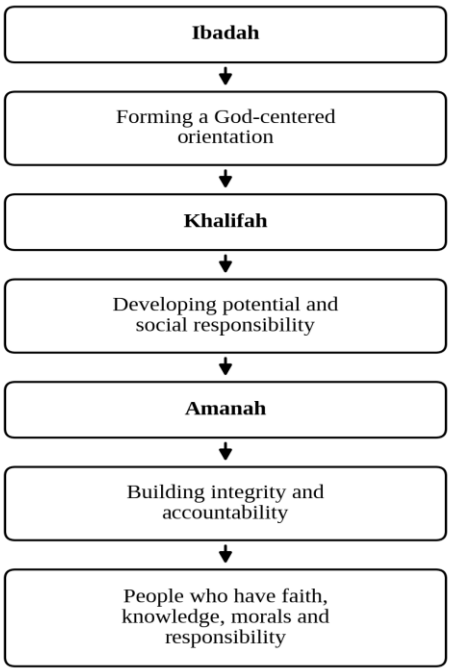


Fig. 3. Implications of the reconstruction for Islamic education

Thus, the findings indicate that the objectives of Islamic education can be understood more integratively through these three dimensions. Ibadah (worship) addresses the orientation of human life, khalifah (vicegerency) explains the actualization of human roles, while amanah (trust and responsibility) clarifies how these roles should be carried out. This integration constitutes the study's primary conceptual contribution from the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi (Qur'anic Exegesis in Islamic Education).

IV. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Qur'anic concepts of ibadah (worship), khalifah (vicegerency), and amanah (trust) are integrally interconnected in shaping the concept of the human role. Through a comparative analysis of the interpretations of al-Tabari, Ibn Kathir, Quraish Shihab, and Hamka, ibadah is understood as the transcendental orientation of human life, khalifah as the actualization of the human role on earth, and amanah as the ethical principle and basis of accountability in fulfilling that role.

The reconstruction of these three concepts establishes a conceptual relationship among ibadah (worship), khalifah (vicegerency), and amanah (trust), which can be understood in terms of orientation, actualization, and accountability, respectively. Thus, the human role as khalifah is inseparable from devotion to Allah. Rather, this role represents the fulfillment of one's commitment and the discharge of an obligation that must be carried out within the framework of amanah (trust) and moral responsibility.

From the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi (Qur'anic Interpretation in Education), this conceptual framework implies that Islamic education should be directed toward the holistic development of the human person. Ibadah (worship) provides a theocentric orientation, khalifah (vicegerency) encourages the development of human potential and social responsibility, while amanah (trust) cultivates integrity, a sense of responsibility, and accountability. Therefore, the objectives of Islamic education should not be limited to the mastery of knowledge and skills but should also encompass the development of individuals who possess faith, knowledge, and noble character, are capable of realizing their potential, and are responsible in fulfilling their roles as servants of Allah and vicegerents on earth.

The conceptual contribution of this study lies in reconstructing the relationship between worship (ibadah), the role of humans as stewards (khalifah), and trust and responsibility (amanah) as an integrated framework for understanding the human role from the perspective of Tafsir Tarbawi. Future studies may further develop this framework through empirical research to examine its applicability in Islamic educational practices and its relevance to the goals of Islamic education.

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