

## **Qur'anic Moral Education Values in QS. An-Naml 18–19: A Tafsir Al-Misbah Analysis and Its Pedagogical Implications for Islamic Education**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the Qur'anic moral education values contained in QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 through the interpretive perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab and explores their pedagogical implications for Islamic education. Although previous studies have discussed Qur'anic values and character education, limited attention has been given to how specific Qur'anic narratives can be systematically interpreted and reconstructed into educational principles through contemporary tafsir perspectives. This study employs a qualitative library research approach using thematic Qur'anic interpretation (maudhu'i) and content analysis. The primary source is Tafsir Al-Misbah Volume 10, supported by relevant academic literature on Qur'anic pedagogy, Islamic education, and moral development. The analysis reveals four interconnected moral educational values derived from the story of Prophet Solomon and the ant: (1) empathic and humanistic leadership, reflecting responsible and compassionate authority; (2) ethical communication based on husnuzan, emphasizing respectful and constructive interaction; (3) gratitude as an ethical orientation in utilizing knowledge and power; and (4) collective responsibility and social solidarity as foundations for communal care. These findings indicate that QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 contain educational principles that extend beyond narrative understanding and provide conceptual resources for developing moral education in Islamic contexts. This study contributes to Qur'anic pedagogy by connecting Tafsir Al-Misbah's socio-cultural interpretation with contemporary Islamic educational discourse and highlighting the relevance of Qur'anic narratives as sources of moral pedagogical reflection.

**Keywords:** *Moral Education, QS. An-Naml, Tafsir Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab, Islamic Education*

## 1. Introduction

Islamic education is fundamentally not merely oriented toward the transmission of knowledge but also toward the formation of students' moral character and ethical awareness. Recent studies have positioned Islamic education as a process that emphasizes the development of morality (akhlaq), moral responsibility, and ethical commitment rather than merely focusing on cognitive achievement (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Manurung et al., 2024). Therefore, the contemporary challenge of Islamic education lies in ensuring that moral values do not remain confined to instructional materials but are internalized into students' attitudes, social relationships, and everyday behaviors (Mahfud et al., 2025; Hidayah & Kosasih, 2025). Within this framework, educational resources and pedagogical processes are required to establish meaningful connections between ethical values and reflective as well as applicable learning experiences, particularly through dialogue, exemplary modeling, and value-based learning approaches (Zein & Ramadhona, 2026; Koesoemawati et al., 2026).

The Qur'an, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, does not merely provide educational guidance through explicit moral injunctions but also through Qur'anic narratives (al-qashash) that encourage reflection, ethical reasoning, and character formation (Yusoff, 2023; Harahap & Irham, 2022). Several studies have emphasized that Qur'anic stories can serve as pedagogical resources because they present moral messages, exemplary figures, and human interactions that facilitate the internalization of values within educational contexts (Yusoff, 2023; Hamzah et al., 2025).

Within this context, the story of Prophet Solomon (Nabi Sulaiman) becomes particularly relevant for educational interpretation because the Qur'anic narrative of Solomon in Surah An-Naml is associated with knowledge, leadership, communication, gratitude, and social responsibility (Tohir, 2022). More specifically, Prophet Solomon's interaction with the ant community as described in QS. An-Naml (18–19) can be understood as a narrative that illustrates meaningful communication, a leader's sensitivity toward other creatures, and a reflective response characterized by understanding and gratitude. Consequently, these verses provide a valuable foundation for analyzing Qur'an-based character education and the development of moral values through Islamic educational perspectives (Ilahi et al., 2026).

Among these narratives, the story of Prophet Solomon provides a relevant framework for moral and educational analysis. Current studies on the Qur'anic Solomon narrative identify recurring values that include knowledge, wisdom, gratitude, leadership, moral conduct, and social responsibility, although these findings often come from the broader An-Naml narrative rather than exclusively from verses 18–19 (Sulistyo & Faizah, 2025). For that reason, it is more publication-safe to say that QS. An-Naml 18–19 offers a distinctive entry point for examining communication, gratitude, ethical leadership, and sensitivity toward other beings, rather than claiming that each of those

themes is exhaustively contained in those two verses alone (Besharati & Rouhani, 2021; Mizwar et al., 2024). Solomon's smiling response and prayer of gratitude can therefore be framed as an instance of moral awareness and acknowledgment of divine blessing, which later educational analysis may extend into broader discussions of humility, responsibility, and relational ethics (Ilahi et al., 2026).

For the interpretive frame, Tafsir Al-Misbah is appropriately described as a contextual, multidisciplinary, and socially oriented exegetical work rather than only a linguistic commentary (Setiawan, 2023; Aisyah, 2021). Studies on Quraish Shihab's educational thought further indicate that moral education is treated as central to Islamic education and is advanced through habituation, exemplary conduct, and healthy moral environments (Taqim, 2019). It is therefore reasonable to state that Al-Misbah provides a strong basis for deriving educational principles from Qur'anic narratives for contemporary life (Nafisah et al., 2025).

The research gap can also be sharpened. Recent studies widely discuss Qur'anic values, character education, and prophetic narratives, but several note that prior work often remains broad, fragmented, or focused on general moral messages rather than constructing a systematic pedagogical framework from a specific narrative and a contemporary tafsir lens (Hamzah et al., 2025; Wardana et al., 2026). A publishable formulation, then, is that scholarship has not yet sufficiently explained how contemporary interpretation of a specific Qur'anic story can be translated into coherent educational principles linking Qur'anic meaning, moral formation, and pedagogical practice (Abidah et al., 2025).

This research addresses this conceptual gap by examining QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 through the perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah and exploring its implications for Islamic moral education. Unlike previous studies that primarily identify moral messages within Qur'anic texts, this study seeks to reconstruct the educational dimensions embedded within the narrative by connecting exegetical interpretation with contemporary Islamic educational discourse. The novelty of this study lies in three aspects: first, its specific focus on QS. An-Naml 18–19 as a narrative foundation for moral education; second, its use of Tafsir Al-Misbah as a socio-cultural interpretive framework for understanding Qur'anic educational meanings; and third, its effort to formulate pedagogical implications from Qur'anic interpretation by highlighting moral dimensions such as humanistic leadership, ethical communication, gratitude, and collective responsibility.

Based on this perspective, this study seeks to answer three research questions: (1) How is QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 interpreted from the perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah? ; (2) What moral educational values are reflected in the story of Prophet Solomon and the ant according to Quraish Shihab's interpretation?; and (3) How can these moral educational values contribute to the development of contemporary Islamic education?

## **2. Literature Review**

This section reviews the theoretical foundations of moral education in Islam, situates Tafsir Al-Misbah as a pedagogical approach to Qur'anic exegesis, and examines the position of Qur'anic stories as an educational method relevant to this study.

### **2. 1. Moral Education and Character Formation in Islamic Education**

Moral education constitutes a fundamental dimension of Islamic education because Islamic education is consistently described as aiming not only at intellectual growth but also at the formation of ethically aware, spiritually grounded, and socially responsible persons (Herlinda et al., 2025; Sunarti & Rahman, 2025). Recent scholarship also notes that many Islamic educational institutions still struggle to balance cognitive achievement with character development, which makes moral formation a continuing educational concern rather than an already resolved ideal (Sulistyo & Faizah, 2025). For that reason, Islamic education is more accurately framed as an integrative project in which knowledge, spirituality, and ethics are expected to develop together (Evelyna et al., 2026).

Within this perspective, knowledge is not treated as complete when detached from moral orientation, because contemporary studies repeatedly position character, adab, and ethical responsibility as substantive educational ends rather than supplementary outcomes (Defriyanto et al., 2026). The concept of values in Islamic education is correspondingly grounded in revelation and is presented as guiding motivation, self-regulation, judgment, and social conduct (Razaqtana et al., 2025). Several recent studies therefore describe the ideal of insan kamil as a holistic human profile in which intellectual, moral, spiritual, and social dimensions are integrated rather than separated.

In this literature, akhlaq is presented as the central axis of Islamic moral education rather than as a secondary behavioral add-on (Arifah et al., 2024). Recent studies describe moral education in Islam as a process of inner formation, habituation, and value embodiment, which is why akhlaq is better understood as a cultivated disposition that shapes actions from within rather than as external rule compliance alone (Sutikno, 2026). That framing supports your sentence, but it is publication-safer to define akhlaq in functional terms as an internalized moral disposition instead of attributing a single technical definition to one source only.

The connection between akhlaq and tawhid is also strongly supported. Recent work presents tawhid as the foundational value orientation from which moral awareness, responsibility, and ethical self-regulation emerge. This is why moral education in Islam is often described not simply as teaching ethical norms, but as a transformative process that links faith, conduct, and responsibility toward God, other people, and the wider social world (Adel et al., 2025). Studies on implementation further indicate that moral formation becomes effective when values are translated into lived practice through role



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modeling, habituation, reflective dialogue, and coherent educational environments (Zein & Ramadhona, 2026).

## **2. 2. Qur'anic Narratives as a Source of Moral Pedagogy**

The Qur'an is described in recent scholarship not only as a source of explicit ethical guidance but also as a source of pedagogical narratives that foster reflection, moral reasoning, and spiritual awareness (Suhendi et al., 2026; Zarezadeh & Jalilvand, 2024). Qur'anic narratives are therefore better understood as educational instruments rather than merely historical reports, because they present exemplary figures, ethical situations, and reflective experiences in meaningful contexts (Saleh et al., 2025). This point aligns with studies showing that students internalize values more deeply when Qur'anic learning moves from memorization to reflection and personal engagement (Aulia et al., 2025).

From an educational perspective, narratives appear especially useful because moral understanding is strengthened through engagement with experiences, choices, and consequences rather than through abstract instruction alone. Recent classroom-based and conceptual studies also identify storytelling, dialogue, exemplarity, and reflective practice as interconnected strategies for value internalization across cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Syamsuri & Musgamy, 2026). For that reason, Qur'anic stories can be framed as a form of moral pedagogy that connects knowledge, reflection, and character formation in a way that is applicable to contemporary Islamic education.

For the final paragraph, the safest formulation is to treat QS. An-Naml 18–19 as a distinctive entry point for moral-educational analysis, not as a self-sufficient source for every leadership theme in the wider Solomon narrative. Recent studies support the educational relevance of the Solomon story by linking it to knowledge, gratitude, communication with other creatures, moral teaching, and governance-related wisdom (Mizwar et al., 2024). Other studies on Surah An-Naml discuss communication, protective leadership, and responsibility across the broader narrative arc of verses 7–40 or 17–44, which means those themes can support your paragraph if phrased carefully as broader interpretive dimensions rather than claims limited strictly to verses 18–19 (Fikri et al., 2025).

A publication-ready wording is therefore: the interaction between Prophet Solomon and the ant in QS. An-Naml 18–19 illustrates ethical sensitivity across forms of creation and provides a relevant context for discussing communication, gratitude, humility, and responsibility in Islamic moral education (Safitri et al., 2025). This wording stays close to what the current evidence supports while preserving your intended argument about Qur'anic narratives as sources of moral pedagogy.

### **2. 3. Tafsir Al-Misbah as an Interpretive Framework for Islamic Moral Education**

Understanding the educational dimensions of Qur'anic narratives requires an interpretive approach capable of connecting textual meaning with contemporary human experience. In this respect, Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab provides a relevant analytical framework because recent studies consistently describe it as a contextual tafsir that combines a tahlili method with an adabi al-ijtima'i orientation that relates Qur'anic meaning to social realities (Munandar & Amin, 2023).

Unlike approaches that prioritize linguistic or theological explanation alone, the adabi al-ijtima'i approach is generally characterized by attention to socio-cultural conditions, contemporary problems, and the practical guidance of the Qur'an for communal life (Yusron, 2022; Saputra & Kurniawan, 2025). In Tafsir Al-Misbah, this orientation is also supported by a communicative style and the use of illustrations close to everyday experience, which makes Qur'anic messages more accessible for contemporary readers and more applicable to educational reflection (Falah, 2023; Kafrawi et al., 2025).

This makes Tafsir Al-Misbah particularly relevant for educational research, because several recent studies describe Qur'anic interpretation as pedagogically valuable when it helps translate revelation into questions of moral formation, social responsibility, and holistic human development (Alfani et al., 2025). Contemporary work on Islamic character education likewise indicates that Qur'anic values become educationally effective when they are interpreted as practical ethical guidance rather than as abstract doctrine alone (Haetami et al., 2025).

In interpreting Qur'anic narratives, Quraish Shihab is more accurately described as treating them as sources of reflection and contemporary guidance than as mere reports of the past (Mujahidin et al., 2024). This contextual orientation creates an important bridge between Qur'anic studies and Islamic educational discourse because it allows narrative meanings to be reformulated into ethical and pedagogical insights that remain relevant to present-day learners (Lischontina et al., 2025).

Within the context of QS. An-Naml verses 18–19, a publication-safe formulation is to state that Tafsir Al-Misbah offers a meaningful perspective for reading the interaction between Prophet Solomon and the ant as more than a narrative of miraculous ability alone. Recent studies on the broader Solomon narrative associate it with wisdom, gratitude, communication, moral teaching, leadership, and responsibility, which supports reading verses 18–19 as an ethical point of entry, even when not every theme is stated exclusively in those two verses. It is therefore more precise to say that the narrative can be interpreted as reflecting ethical sensitivity, humility, and gratitude for divine blessing, while its implications for responsibility and moral pedagogy emerge through broader interpretive analysis of the Solomon story and its educational relevance (Supeno et al., 2025).

#### **2. 4. Conceptual Framework: From Qur'anic Interpretation to Moral Pedagogy**

Based on the preceding discussion, this study may plausibly position Qur'anic moral education as a process involving the interaction between revelation, interpretation, and educational practice, because the recent literature repeatedly presents Qur'anic values as requiring pedagogical translation before they can shape character formation in lived settings (Munif, 2025). In this formulation, Qur'anic narratives provide moral situations and exemplary representations, interpretation uncovers their ethical meaning, and educational reflection converts those meanings into applicable pedagogical principles (Alfani et al., 2025).

Accordingly, the three-dimensional framework in this subsection is well aligned with current scholarship. The narrative dimension is supported by studies showing that Qur'anic stories present values in contextual, experience-like forms rather than as isolated abstractions (Haetami et al., 2025). The interpretive dimension is supported by work on Tafsir Al-Misbah and related contemporary tafsir that emphasizes contextualization, social meaning, and contemporary applicability (Aiyub & Mutia, 2023; Falah, 2023). The pedagogical dimension is supported by educational studies showing that value internalization depends on reflective dialogue, habituation, exemplary conduct, and curricular integration (Munif, 2025).

Through this framework, Qur'anic narratives are more convincingly treated not merely as objects of textual interpretation but as educational resources capable of informing moral formation in contemporary Islamic education (Sulistyo & Faizah, 2025). The relationship between Qur'anic meaning, interpretive understanding, and pedagogical application therefore provides a defensible theoretical basis for analyzing the moral educational values contained in the story of Prophet Solomon and the ant, especially when the claims are framed as interpretive and pedagogical extensions of the narrative rather than as meanings exhausted by the literal surface of QS. An-Naml 18–19 alone.

### **3. Research Method**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative library research design to examine the moral educational dimensions of QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 through the interpretive perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab. This design is appropriate because the study seeks to explore, interpret, and reconstruct meanings derived from Qur'anic texts and exegetical discourse rather than to measure variables statistically (Pranata et al., 2025).

Recent studies in Qur'anic and Islamic educational research similarly use qualitative, literature-based designs when the object of inquiry is conceptual, textual, or interpretive in nature (Ferdian et al., 2025). Library research is especially suitable when the analysis



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depends on documentary and textual sources, systematic reading, and conceptual synthesis rather than field observation (Abid Nurhuda, 2026).

Within Islamic educational research, the textual analysis of Qur'anic interpretation generally requires an interpretive methodology that attends to semantic meaning, contextual background, and educational significance (Lorens et al., 2024). For that reason, this study applies a thematic interpretive approach (tafsir maudhu'i) combined with qualitative content analysis to identify, categorize, and reconstruct moral educational values embedded in the narrative of Prophet Solomon and the ant (Khumairah et al., 2024).

Thematic interpretation is widely described as a method that gathers Qur'anic verses around a shared theme and examines them in a coherent and contextual way (Maisaroh & Toriquddin, 2021). Several recent studies also use this approach not only to describe Qur'anic values but to reconstruct them into conceptual and pedagogical frameworks relevant to contemporary Islamic education (Wicaksono et al., 2026). The methodological orientation of this study is therefore organized around three analytical dimensions: first, textual analysis of QS. An-Naml verses 18–19; second, interpretive analysis of Quraish Shihab's explanation in Tafsir Al-Misbah; and third, pedagogical reconstruction of the identified values into principles relevant to contemporary Islamic education.

### **3.2. Data Sources**

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary sources, a structure commonly used in qualitative library research on Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic education. In comparable studies, the primary sources usually include the Qur'an and selected tafsir works, while secondary sources include books, journal articles, and other scholarly literature relevant to the educational theme under investigation (Pranata et al., 2025).

Accordingly, the primary sources of this study are the Qur'an, particularly QS. An-Naml verses 18–19, and Tafsir Al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an Volume 10 by M. Quraish Shihab, which functions as the main interpretive reference. This selection is methodologically defensible because studies centered on thematic or educational interpretation routinely treat the Qur'anic text as the principal object of analysis and authoritative tafsir as the main lens for clarifying meaning, context, and educational implications (Fakhury et al., 2026).

Recent studies focused specifically on Tafsir Al-Misbah also position it as a relevant primary source when the goal is to examine how contemporary Qur'anic interpretation informs education, moral formation, or value-based institutional thought (Rangkuti & Iswandi, 2026). Because the present study asks how a contemporary tafsir constructs moral meanings and their educational implications, using Tafsir Al-Misbah as the principal interpretive source is consistent with this established research pattern.

The secondary sources consist of relevant academic literature on Islamic moral education, Qur’anic pedagogy, character education, and educational interpretation. In recent literature, such secondary materials are used to provide theoretical grounding, comparative support, and broader conceptual positioning rather than to replace the primary exegetical object itself (Lubis et al., 2026).

One publication-safe adjustment is worth keeping. Because the study analyzes one narrative unit rather than a broad multi-verse corpus, it is clearer to describe tafsir maudhu’i here as a thematic-interpretive orientation combined with qualitative content analysis, rather than as a full-scale thematic survey of all Qur’anic verses on one topic.

### 3.3. Data Collection Technique

Data collection was conducted through documentation and systematic literature review. The collection stages included: (1) identifying and recording the interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah related to QS. An-Naml verses 18–19; (2) inventorying the concepts of moral education that emerge within the interpretation; and (3) reviewing journals and prior studies relevant to the research topic.

### 3.4. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used is content analysis combined with thematic analysis (Braun, V., & Clarke 2006). Using a thematic exegetical approach (maudhu’i), this study identifies and organizes the main themes related to moral educational values within the story. The analysis process was conducted in stages through: (1) data reduction and selection of relevant information; (2) categorization based on themes/categories of moral values; (3) hermeneutic interpretation and meaning-making; and (4) drawing argumentative and contextual conclusions.

**Table 1.** Research Methodology Flow

| Stage | Component                     | Description                                                                                          |
|-------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Data Collection               | Documentation of primary and secondary literature; Tafsir Al-Misbah Volume 10, SINTA/Scopus journals |
| 2     | Data Reduction                | Selection of relevant data; separation of primary and supporting information                         |
| 3     | Thematic & Content Analysis   | Identification of moral value themes; content analysis of Al-Misbah's exegetical text                |
| 4     | Hermeneutic Interpretation    | Contextual interpretation of the verse; integration of exegetical perspective with Islamic pedagogy  |
| 5     | Conclusions & Recommendations | Conceptual formulation of moral values and practical relevance for modern Islamic education          |

*Source: Adapted from Creswell (2014) and Braun & Clarke (2006)*



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## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Interpretation of QS. An-Naml Verses 18–19 in Tafsir Al-Misbah**

QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 present a unique Qur’anic narrative describing the interaction between Prophet Solomon and an ant community. The narrative begins when Solomon’s army approaches a valley inhabited by ants, and one of the ants warns its community to immediately enter their shelters to avoid being unintentionally harmed by the approaching army. Upon hearing the communication of the ant, Prophet Solomon smiles and subsequently prays to Allah, expressing gratitude and requesting the ability to continue performing righteous deeds.

Through the perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab explains that this narrative should not be understood merely as a depiction of Solomon’s miraculous ability to understand the language of animals. Rather, the narrative reveals a deeper ethical relationship between knowledge, authority, and responsibility. Solomon’s ability to understand the ant represents a divine blessing that requires moral awareness and responsible action. Knowledge and power, therefore, are not presented as instruments of superiority, but as forms of trust (*amanah*) that must encourage humility, compassion, and responsibility toward other beings.

Furthermore, Quraish Shihab interprets the expression *fa-tabassama dhahikan* (“then he smiled, laughing”) as a reflection of spiritual awareness rather than an expression of pride. Solomon’s response demonstrates recognition that his ability to understand the ant is a manifestation of Allah’s grace. This awareness immediately leads him to express gratitude through prayer, indicating that genuine knowledge should strengthen humility and ethical responsibility.

From an educational perspective, this interpretation highlights an important principle: moral development occurs when individuals are able to transform knowledge and capability into responsible action. Therefore, QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 provide a foundation for understanding moral education as a process that integrates intellectual capacity, spiritual awareness, and ethical behavior.

### **4.2 Reconstruction of Moral Educational Values from Tafsir Al-Misbah**

Based on the analysis of Quraish Shihab’s interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah, this study identifies four interconnected moral educational values embedded within QS. An-Naml verses 18–19. These values are not isolated ethical concepts but represent an integrated framework of moral formation involving leadership, communication, personal awareness, and social responsibility.

#### **4.2.1 Humanistic Leadership as Ethical Responsibility**

The first moral educational value identified is humanistic leadership. The interaction between Prophet Solomon and the ant demonstrates that leadership is fundamentally related to responsibility toward those who are vulnerable or have limited power. Although Solomon possesses authority over a large army consisting of humans, jinn, and birds, his response toward the ant does not reflect domination or superiority. Instead, he responds with awareness, humility, and appreciation.

According to Tafsir Al-Misbah, Solomon's ability to understand the ant is not merely a privilege that distinguishes him from other creatures but a responsibility requiring ethical sensitivity. This interpretation shifts the meaning of leadership from a position of authority toward a moral obligation to protect and care for others.

This finding contributes to Islamic educational leadership discourse by emphasizing that educators and educational leaders should not only function as transmitters of knowledge but also as moral caregivers (*murabbiy*). Within educational contexts, humanistic leadership requires sensitivity toward students' conditions, recognition of individual differences, and commitment to creating supportive learning environments.

Thus, the narrative of Solomon and the ant expands the concept of leadership education by showing that legitimate authority is inseparable from empathy, responsibility, and ethical awareness.

#### **4.2.2 Ethical Communication and Moral Dialogue**

The second value emerging from the narrative is ethical communication based on respect and positive assumptions (*husnuzan*). The ant's communication with its community demonstrates a responsible way of delivering warnings. The ant does not accuse Prophet Solomon or his army of intentional harm; instead, it communicates concern based on awareness of a potential situation.

This aspect becomes significant when interpreted through Tafsir Al-Misbah because the narrative illustrates that communication should preserve dignity and avoid unnecessary conflict. The ant's statement reflects wisdom in communication, while Solomon's response demonstrates openness and emotional maturity. Rather than reacting defensively, he responds with reflection and gratitude.

In the context of Islamic education, this principle provides a foundation for developing dialogical learning environments. Educational communication should not be limited to delivering information but should cultivate mutual respect between teachers and learners. Teachers who communicate ethically create spaces where students feel valued, heard, and encouraged to participate actively in the learning process. Therefore, QS. An-Naml 18–19 presents communication as a moral practice that connects knowledge exchange with respect, empathy, and relational responsibility.



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#### **4.2.3 Gratitude as an Ethic of Knowledge and Power**

The third and central value identified in Tafsir Al-Misbah is gratitude as an ethical orientation in utilizing knowledge and authority. Prophet Solomon's prayer after hearing the ant's communication demonstrates that gratitude is not merely a verbal expression of appreciation but a moral commitment to use blessings according to their intended purpose.

Quraish Shihab emphasizes that Solomon's knowledge and power originate from Allah and therefore must be directed toward righteous actions. Knowledge, intelligence, and authority are not personal achievements that justify superiority but responsibilities that require accountability.

This interpretation has significant implications for contemporary Islamic education. In an era characterized by rapid technological development and expanded access to knowledge, education must cultivate not only intellectual competence but also ethical responsibility. Learners need to understand that knowledge should contribute to human welfare rather than generate arrogance, exploitation, or misuse of power. Accordingly, gratitude in Islamic education represents an ethical framework for guiding the relationship between knowledge and responsibility. Individuals who possess knowledge are expected to transform it into beneficial action for society.

#### **4.2.4 Collective Responsibility and Social Solidarity**

The fourth moral educational value identified is collective responsibility. The ant community in QS. An-Naml 18–19 demonstrates an organized social awareness through communication and mutual protection. Although represented through a small creature, the narrative illustrates an important ethical principle: the well-being of a community depends on awareness and responsibility among its members.

Through Tafsir Al-Misbah, this narrative can be understood as a reflection of social responsibility and concern for others. The ant does not act only for personal safety but communicates information to protect the entire community. This demonstrates that moral behavior involves awareness of collective interests rather than individual concerns alone.

In Islamic education, this value is relevant for developing caring learning communities. Educational institutions should not only focus on individual achievement but also cultivate cooperation, mutual support, and responsibility among members of the educational environment. Therefore, the narrative of the ant provides an important pedagogical insight that character formation requires the development of social awareness and collective responsibility.

**Table 2.** Moral Educational Values in QS. An-Naml 18–19 from the Perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah

| <b>N o.</b> | <b>Moral Value</b>                         | <b>Source in the Verse</b>                                                          | <b>Al-Misbah's Perspective</b>                                                | <b>Pedagogical Implication</b>                                                        |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1           | Empathic & Humanistic Leadership           | Prophet Solomon noticed the ant and did not trample it                              | The blessing of knowledge gives rise to universal moral responsibility        | A model of an educator who cares for all learners, including the weak                 |
| 2           | Ethical Communication & Husnuzan           | The ant stated that Solomon “was unaware,” rather than placing blame                | An ethic of polite, non-confrontational communication that preserves husnuzan | Inclusive, constructive classroom dialogue based on mutual appreciation               |
| 3           | Gratitude as an Ethic of Knowledge & Power | Solomon's prayer asks for the ability to be grateful and to perform righteous deeds | Gratitude = using a blessing according to the purpose of its bestowal         | Knowledge and potential directed toward the common good, not intellectual arrogance   |
| 4           | Collective Responsibility & Solidarity     | The ant warned its entire community in an organized manner                          | Even small creatures possess a disciplined social order                       | Building a learning community grounded in care, solidarity, and preventive leadership |

*Source: Results of analysis of Tafsir Al-Misbah Volume 10 (Shihab, 2002)*

### 4.3 Qur’anic Moral Pedagogy Framework for Islamic Education

The findings of this study indicate that QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 can be understood as more than a narrative containing moral lessons. Through Tafsir Al-Misbah’s adabi-ijtima’i interpretation, the narrative can be reconstructed into a framework of Qur’anic moral pedagogy that connects revelation, interpretation, and educational practice.

The framework consists of four interconnected pedagogical dimensions:

**a. Humanistic leadership**

Emphasizing empathy, responsibility, and ethical use of authority.

**b. Ethical communication**

Emphasizing respectful dialogue, positive assumptions, and relational awareness.

**c. Gratitude-oriented knowledge utilization**

Emphasizing that knowledge and capability must be directed toward beneficial actions.

**d. Collective responsibility**

Emphasizing social care, cooperation, and concern for communal well-being.

These dimensions demonstrate that Qur'anic moral education operates through three interconnected processes. First, Qur'anic narratives provide moral situations and exemplary representations. Second, interpretation through contemporary tafsir reveals ethical meanings contained within the narrative. Third, educational reflection transforms these meanings into principles for character formation.

**Table 3.** Relevance of Moral Educational Values to Modern Islamic Education

| <b>Moral Value</b>                 | <b>Challenge in Modern Education</b>            | <b>Implementation in the Curriculum</b>                                | <b>Competency Developed</b>                                       |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Humanistic leadership              | Leadership crisis, low social concern           | Qur'anic story-based leadership modules; mentoring programs            | Empathy, social responsibility, emotional intelligence            |
| Ethical Communication              | Bullying, social discord, hate speech           | Cooperative learning; ethical digital literacy; value-based discussion | Assertive communication, conflict resolution, mutual appreciation |
| Gratitude as an Ethic of Knowledge | Intellectual arrogance, misuse of technology    | Integration of ethics within STEM; digital character education         | Academic integrity, responsible use of technology                 |
| Collective Responsibility          | Individualism, weak school-community solidarity | Community learning programs; care-based school culture                 | Solidarity, preventive leadership, communal awareness             |

*Source: Results of the study's analysis, 2025*

#### 4.4 Position of This Study within Existing Literature

Compared with previous studies on Qur'anic moral education, this research contributes a distinct perspective by moving beyond the identification of moral values toward the reconstruction of a pedagogical framework. Previous studies have largely examined Qur'anic verses as sources of character values or analyzed prophetic narratives

through thematic interpretation. However, fewer studies have explored how contemporary tafsir interpretation can be systematically connected with educational principles and character formation.

This study extends previous discussions by demonstrating that Tafsir Al-Misbah provides not only an interpretation of Qur'anic meaning but also a contextual framework for understanding moral education. Through the analysis of QS. An-Naml verses 18–19, this research shows how Qur'anic narratives can generate educational principles related to leadership, communication, knowledge ethics, and social responsibility.

Therefore, the contribution of this study lies in positioning Qur'anic interpretation as a foundation for developing moral pedagogy in Islamic education. The findings suggest that contemporary Islamic education can utilize Qur'anic narratives not only as sources of religious knowledge but also as frameworks for cultivating ethical and socially responsible individuals.

## 5. Conclusion

This study examined the moral educational dimensions of QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 through the perspective of Tafsir Al-Misbah by M. Quraish Shihab and explored their implications for contemporary Islamic education. The findings demonstrate that the interaction between Prophet Solomon and the ant represents more than a Qur'anic narrative of miraculous communication; it reflects ethical principles concerning responsible authority, humility, gratitude, and social awareness. Through the *adabi-ijtima'i* interpretation approach of Tafsir Al-Misbah, four interconnected moral educational dimensions were identified: humanistic leadership, ethical communication, gratitude-oriented knowledge utilization, and collective responsibility.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Islamic educational scholarship by demonstrating how contemporary Qur'anic interpretation can serve as a bridge between textual understanding and moral pedagogical development. Rather than positioning Qur'anic narratives merely as sources of moral values, this study shows their potential as conceptual foundations for developing moral pedagogy in Islamic education. The proposed conceptual model highlights that Qur'anic moral education involves a process of interpreting ethical meanings, reflecting upon values, and transforming them into responsible educational practices.

Practically, the findings suggest that Islamic educational institutions can utilize Qur'anic narratives as reflective resources for curriculum development, teacher professional development, and character formation programs. The values identified in QS. An-Naml verses 18–19 provide pedagogical orientations for developing educational environments based on empathy, respectful communication, responsible knowledge use, and social care. This study is limited by its qualitative and library-based design, which focuses on textual interpretation and conceptual analysis. Therefore, the proposed



Qur'anic moral pedagogy model remains conceptual and requires further empirical validation. Future studies may examine its implementation through classroom research, case studies, or action research in Islamic educational settings such as madrasah and pesantren.

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