

## Arrogance and Forgetfulness: Analyzing the Roots of Moral Degradation from a Spiritual Perspective.

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**Abstract:** The phenomenon of moral degradation has become a significant issue in contemporary society, particularly in an era marked by disruption, individualism, and hedonism. This moral decline is evident in the rise of traits such as arrogance and forgetfulness, which are seen as fundamental roots of moral negligence. These behaviors lead to various forms of deviance, including violence, misuse of technology, free sex, integrity erosion, bullying, disrespect, and corruption. Identifies arrogance and forgetfulness as the core traits driving moral degradation. Arrogance, symbolized by Satan's downfall due to pride, and forgetfulness, represented by Prophet Adam's disobedience regarding the forbidden tree, contribute to this decline. This study explores these traits from the perspective of Islamic spirituality and their impact on social life, employing library research with a qualitative-descriptive approach. The findings suggest that arrogance involves denial of truth and belittlement of others, while forgetfulness entails neglect of life's purpose and divine trust. If not addressed, these traits can lead to systemic moral corruption. The study recommends revitalizing spiritual education based on monotheism (*tauhid*) and self-reflection (*muhasabah*) as essential tools for combating moral degradation, with a focus on reflection and sincere repentance, particularly through practices like remembering death (*dzikri maut*).

**Keywords:** Moral Degradation, Arrogance, Forgetfulness, Islamic Spirituality, Muhasabah

**Abstrak:** Fenomena degradasi akhlak menjadi keprihatinan utama dalam masyarakat modern yang dipengaruhi oleh disrupsi, individualisme, dan hedonisme. Hal ini tercermin dalam meningkatnya perilaku sombong dan lupa diri, yang merupakan akar dari berbagai penyimpangan moral seperti kekerasan, penyalahgunaan teknologi, free sex, korupsi, bullying, dan lemahnya integritas. Degradasi akhlak berakar pada dua sifat utama: sombong dan lupa. Sombong, yang mengarah pada penolakan terhadap kebenaran, mengingatkan pada keangkuhan Iblis, sementara sifat lupa merujuk pada kelalaian Nabi Adam yang melanggar perintah Allah. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis akar degradasi akhlak dengan menelaah kedua sifat destruktif ini dalam perspektif spiritual Islam dan implikasinya dalam kehidupan sosial. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi pustaka dengan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa kesombongan meremehkan orang lain dan menolak kebenaran, sedangkan sifat lupa menggambarkan kelalaian terhadap tujuan hidup dan amanah ilahiah. Jika dibiarkan, kedua sifat ini dapat menjadi benih kerusakan moral yang sistemik. Studi ini merekomendasikan revitalisasi pendidikan spiritual berbasis tauhid dan muhasabah untuk mengatasi degradasi moral, sesuai dengan pandangan Roni Nugraha yang menekankan refleksi dan taubat melalui dzikri maut.

**Kata Kunci:** Degradasi Akhlak, Sombong, Lupa, Spiritualitas Islam, Muhasabah

## 1. Introduction

Moral decadence in the modern era, particularly among younger generations, is a growing concern linked to technological advancements and globalization.<sup>1</sup> This decline manifests in various forms, including violence, sexual deviance, drug abuse, and corruption.<sup>2</sup> The loss of spiritual values and the rise of hedonistic, materialistic lifestyles contribute to this moral degradation. The impact is especially pronounced in the millennial and Generation Z cohorts, who have grown up with technology and are more susceptible to its negative influences.<sup>3</sup> To address this issue, researchers emphasize the importance of spiritual and religious education, as well as reinforcing cultural and civic values<sup>4</sup>. Additionally, the role of family and educational institutions is crucial in instilling moral values and countering the effects of moral decadence<sup>5</sup>.

This is an indicator that there has been an alarming decline in moral values. Data updated about five years ago stated that there were at least five triggers for moral degradation in Indonesia, namely: 1). Moral decline is evident across all levels of society; 2). 64% of primary school children have accessed pornography; 3). 62.7% of teenagers engage in *free sex*; 4). 20% of 92,270 women have experienced pregnancy outside of marriage; 5). 21.2% of junior high and high school students have had an abortion. These figures may increase by the year 2025.

These branches of moral degradation do not occur suddenly, but are the result of various interrelated factors, both internal and external. On the one hand, the role of the family as the first and primary educational environment is weakening. Many parents are no longer able to instill moral values in their children due to their busy lifestyles or lack of understanding.

On the other hand, formal education systems often place greater emphasis on cognitive aspects and academic achievement, while character building is only a supplement, a seasoning for an educational institution's menu that in reality does not make it a top priority.

The rapid advancement of digital technology presents both challenges and opportunities for Islamic education in the modern era. While technology enhances learning engagement and accessibility<sup>6</sup>, it also contributes to moral degradation, including cyberbullying, online game addiction, and declining communication ethics.<sup>7</sup> The integration of digital tools in Islamic education requires careful consideration to maintain spiritual and ethical integrity while fostering innovation. Key strategies include developing technology-

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<sup>1</sup> Besariani, J., and M. Pandin. *The Influence of Globalization and Technology on Moral Degradation in Contemporary Society*. 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Malyuna, Anisa. *Moral Decadence in the Modern Era: Implications for Youth and Society*. 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Susanti, Lusia. *The Impact of Hedonism and Materialism on Moral Degradation in the Millennial Generation*. 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Susanti, Lusia. *The Impact of Hedonism and Materialism on Moral Degradation in the Millennial Generation*. 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Ainun, Siti, Rahmawati R. D., and M. Nabil. *The Role of Family and Educational Institutions in Addressing Moral Decadence among Generation Z*. 2023.

<sup>6</sup> Muslim, Sulaiman. *The Role of Technology in Enhancing Learning Engagement in Islamic Education*. 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Pratiwi, Y., et al. *The Impact of Digital Technology on Morality: A Study on Cyberbullying and Online Game Addiction*. 2024.

based curricula, training educators in digital literacy, and implementing policies to mitigate negative impacts on student behavior, Islamic education can leverage digital platforms and resources to present religious teachings in an engaging manner while addressing potential threats such as access to negative content<sup>8</sup>. Ultimately, Islamic education serves as a solution to ethical challenges by implementing learning methods based on Islamic principles and enforcing an Islamic education system<sup>9</sup>.

Social media has emerged as a double-edged sword in modern society, capable of both inspiring and degrading character, particularly among students. Its impact on morality is significant, with exposure to fake news and inappropriate content potentially weakening moral values<sup>10</sup>. The uncontrolled use of social media has led to moral degradation among students, posing a critical challenge for educators. To address this issue, educators can internalize character education concepts, such as those proposed by Yusuf Qardhawi, to strengthen students' moral foundations.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, reinforcing Pancasila values, including faith, piety, and noble character, can help prevent negative influences from social media, particularly in cases of sexual crimes targeting elementary school children<sup>12</sup>. These approaches aim to mitigate the potential harm of social media while harnessing its positive aspects.

The papers discuss the importance of character education and Islamic morality in addressing moral degradation in society. Character education should be implemented early in family, school, and community settings to cultivate positive behaviors<sup>13</sup>. Islamic morality, rooted in the Quran and Hadith, provides a stable ethical foundation compared to changing human-derived ethics.<sup>14</sup> To combat moral crises, the authors recommend strengthening spiritual values through faith-based education, using stories of prophets as moral examples, and emphasizing character education in families and schools<sup>15</sup>. Islamic da'wah aims to shape personalities and perfect morals, with noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) being the concrete manifestation of a Muslim's faith. Addressing poor morals is a collective responsibility, requiring various approaches to achieve a peaceful society.<sup>16</sup>

In Islamic tradition, morals are a reflection of one's faith and spiritual depth. The deterioration of morals reflects a breakdown in a person's relationship with God (*habl min Allah*) and with other people (*habl min al-nas*). Among the various causes of moral decay, as

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<sup>8</sup> Gultom, Yusrina, et al. Integrating Digital Literacy into Islamic Education: Challenges and Strategies. 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Ahirin, Juli, et al. *Islamic Education as a Solution to Ethical Challenges in the Digital Age*. 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Dewitanti, A., et al. The Influence of Social Media on Morality: Exposure to Fake News and Inappropriate Content. 2024., Sivam, R., et al. *social media as a Double-Edged Sword: The Impact on Character and Morality Among Students*. 2023.

<sup>11</sup> Armedi, D., et al. *Addressing Moral Degradation in the Age of social media: Character Education and Pancasila Values in Education*. 2025.

<sup>12</sup> Armedi, D., et al. Addressing Moral Degradation in the Age of social media: Character Education and Pancasila Values in Education. 2025.

<sup>13</sup> Windi Siti Jahroh and Sutarna, The Role of Character Education in Cultivating Positive Behaviors in Family, School, and Community Settings (2016).

<sup>14</sup> Pamungkas, *Islamic Morality and Its Ethical Foundation in the Quran and Hadith* (2017).

<sup>15</sup> Lutfiyah and Salamah, *Strengthening Spiritual Values Through Faith-Based Education and Character Education in Families and Schools* (2025).

<sup>16</sup> Pamungkas, *Islamic Morality and Its Ethical Foundation in the Quran and Hadith* (2017).

outlined above, two traits with deep spiritual roots and destructive consequences in Islam are arrogance (*kibr*) and forgetfulness (*nisyān*). The spectrum of these two traits (*kibr and nisyān*) is not limited to psychological issues alone but extends into the spiritual realm with social implications. This article aims to analyse the two roots of moral degradation, namely arrogance and forgetfulness.

## 2. Method

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive approach using library research methods. Data were collected from various classical and contemporary literature, including Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, works of scholars, and relevant scientific journals. Analysis was conducted thematically using a hermeneutic approach to interpret the deepest meanings of arrogance and forgetfulness in the context of Islamic spirituality.

This approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the root causes of moral degradation from a spiritual perspective by examining the traits of Arrogance and Forgetfulness, which are basic human characteristics, as well as how individuals can minimize or sever the roots of moral degradation to prevent it from developing on a larger scale.

The literature review was conducted by examining various relevant sources, including books, articles, scientific journals, two sources of Islamic law the Qur'an and Hadith as well as previous research results. The search for sources was conducted systematically through online databases and institutional libraries, focusing on publications discussing moral degradation, arrogance, forgetfulness, Islamic spirituality, and *mubasabah*.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the following stages: First, Identification and Selection of Sources: Selecting relevant and credible literature related to the research topic. Second, Categorization of Information: Grouping information based on main themes such as arrogance and forgetfulness in the perspective of Islam, the integration of arrogance towards moral degradation, and *mubasabah* as an effort to minimize the impact of arrogance and forgetfulness. Third, Content Analysis: Critically analysing the content of the literature to find patterns, relationships, and conceptual ideas that support the research argument. Fourth, Thematic Conclusions: Organizing findings in a narrative form that describes the context and concepts of arrogance and forgetfulness, their characteristics, and solutions that must be pursued by both individuals and teachers in minimizing this moral degradation.

Data validity is ensured through source triangulation, which involves comparing and cross-checking various references from different sources to reinforce the validity of findings. This approach allows researchers to comprehensively explore the dynamics of moral degradation rooted in arrogance and forgetfulness.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### *The Meaning of Arrogance and Forgetfulness in the Islamic Spiritual Perspective*

The concept of arrogance in Islamic texts is explored through various terms and expressions. “*Kibr*” and “*Takabbur*” are commonly used Arabic words denoting arrogance, pride, and a sense of superiority. The Quran employs multiple expressions for arrogance, including “*takabburan*,” “*ulmwan*,” and “*jabbāran*,” each with nuanced meanings and

contexts.<sup>17</sup> Arrogant behavior can manifest as rejecting truth, belittling others, and feeling superior. It is categorized into arrogance towards Allah, His Apostles, and fellow humans.<sup>18</sup> The Quran and Hadith emphasize the importance of avoiding arrogance, as it can lead to divine punishment and prevent entry into heaven.<sup>19</sup> Surah Luqman verse 18 distinguishes between “angry” (internal arrogance), “*Mukbtâl*” (pretending to be arrogant), and “*fakhbûr*” (boasting excessively).<sup>20</sup>

Islamic scholars define arrogance (*takabbur*) as rejecting truth and belittling others, as stated in a hadith by Prophet Muhammad.<sup>21</sup> Arrogance can be classified into three types: towards Allah, towards Prophets, and towards fellow humans. It can stem from various factors, including knowledge, worship, ancestry, and power.<sup>22</sup> The Quran and Hadith emphasize the gravity of arrogance, stating that those who die with arrogance in their hearts will not enter Paradise. Arrogant behaviors include walking proudly, talking loudly, and looking down on others. Islam considers arrogance a moral vice that breeds other vices, while humility fosters love and social solidarity. To combat arrogance, Islamic education should focus on modeling exemplary behaviors and reminding students to abstain from *takabbur*.<sup>23</sup>

Islamic scholars have extensively discussed the concept of arrogance (*takabbur*) in their works. Al-Ghazali identifies seven primary causes of arrogance, including knowledge, religious practices, and wealth, describing it as a subtle disease of the heart.<sup>24</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah divides arrogance into two forms: towards truth and towards others. Arrogance can be classified into three types: towards Allah, towards Apostles, and towards fellow humans. The Quran and Hadith emphasize the importance of avoiding *takabbur*, as it prevents entry into heaven. Manifestations of arrogant behavior include walking proudly, talking loudly, and looking down on others contrast arrogance with humility, noting that arrogance breeds moral vices, while humility fosters love and social solidarity. The author proposes seventeen remedies for removing arrogance from oneself and highlights the virtues of humility in personal and social life.<sup>25</sup>

Arrogance is considered a major sin in Islam, characterized by rejecting truth and belittling others. It stems from intellectual pride and ignorance of human weakness.<sup>26</sup> The Quran condemns arrogance as a dangerous trait that negatively impacts individual and collective life.<sup>27</sup> It can manifest as arrogance towards Allah, His Apostles, or fellow humans. Factors contributing to arrogance include knowledge, worship, ancestry, beauty, power, and

<sup>17</sup> Zaini, *Arrogance in the Quran: Expressions and Contexts of Takabbur, Maraban, Ulumwan, and Jabbaran* (2023).

<sup>18</sup> Hasiyah, *The Concept of Arrogance in Islamic Texts: Kibr and Takabbur* (2018).

<sup>19</sup> Suhemi, *The Consequences of Arrogance in Islam: Divine Punishment and Barriers to Heaven* (2020).

<sup>20</sup> Islamiati et al., *Analyzing the Types of Arrogance in Surah Luqman: Maraban, Mukbtâl, and Fakhbûr* (2023).

<sup>21</sup> Solihin, *Arrogance in Islam: The Teachings of Prophet Muhammad and the Consequences of Takabbur* (2020).

<sup>22</sup> Hasiyah, *The Concept of Arrogance in Islamic Texts: Kibr and Takabbur* (2018).; Rashid, *The Roots of Arrogance: Knowledge, Worship, Ancestry, and Power* (2021).

<sup>23</sup> Solihin, *Arrogance in Islam: The Teachings of Prophet Muhammad and the Consequences of Takabbur* (2020).

<sup>24</sup> Burrell, *Al-Ghazali's Concept of Arrogance: Seven Causes and the Disease of the Heart* (2019).

<sup>25</sup> Rashid, *The Roots of Arrogance: Knowledge, Worship, Ancestry, and Power* (2021).

<sup>26</sup> Albar, M., and S. Chamsi-Pasha. *The Origins and Impact of Arrogance in Islam: Intellectual Pride and Human Weakness* (2015).

<sup>27</sup> Arijo, F., and M. Memon. *The Role of Arrogance in Islam: The Consequences of Rejecting Truth and Belittling Others* (2023).

family status.<sup>28</sup> Islam emphasizes human responsibility for actions and views arrogance as the root of other sins. Conversely, humility is praised as a virtue that fosters love, mental peace, and social solidarity. To combat arrogance, scholars recommend various remedies and emphasize the importance of cultivating humility in personal and social life.<sup>29</sup>

From the views of Islamic scholars above, it can be concluded that arrogance (*kibr*) should be considered the root of moral degradation and the beginning of a dangerous disease of the heart that hides the potential for spiritual destruction. In QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 146, Allah SWT condemns those who are arrogant because they reject the signs of truth.

The papers discuss moral degradation, forgetfulness, and arrogance in religious contexts. Forgetfulness is explored in the Qur'an, with prophets like Adam and Moses experiencing it, though not in ways that neglect their responsibilities.<sup>30</sup> Moral degradation among youth is attributed to factors such as promiscuity and unwise social media use, with Islamic education proposed as a solution.<sup>31</sup> The concept of forgetfulness in prophets and righteous individuals is examined, emphasizing that prophets may forget in non-legislative matters.<sup>32</sup> Arrogance is presented as a demonic attitude leading to disobedience, as exemplified by Satan's expulsion from divine mercy.<sup>33</sup> While not directly addressing Roni Nugraha's statement, these papers provide context for understanding forgetfulness and arrogance in religious teachings, particularly in Islam, and their potential role in moral degradation.

Forgetfulness, or *nisyan* in Arabic, is a complex concept explored in Islamic thought and the Qur'an. It can refer to leaving something or failing to preserve memories. While forgetfulness is natural for humans, including prophets, excessive forgetfulness can lead to moral degradation and neglect of religious duties.<sup>34</sup> Imam Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of remembering death to maintain spiritual awareness and prevent moral decline.<sup>35</sup> The concept of *tazkiyatun nafs*, or purification of the soul, is proposed as a means to combat moral degradation, especially among youth.<sup>36</sup> Islamic scholars suggest various remedies for forgetfulness, including *dhikr* (remembrance), maintaining a balanced diet,

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<sup>28</sup> Arijo, F., and M. Memon. *The Role of Arrogance in Islam: The Consequences of Rejecting Truth and Belittling Others* (2023).

<sup>29</sup> Arijo, F., and M. Memon. *The Role of Arrogance in Islam: The Consequences of Rejecting Truth and Belittling Others* (2023).

<sup>30</sup> Thaib, *Forgetfulness in Islamic Thought: Understanding Nisyan and Its Impact on Moral Degradation* (2020).

<sup>31</sup> Alfani et al., *Arrogance, Power, Materialism, and Online Hatred: Contemporary Manifestations of Evil Attitudes* (2024).

<sup>32</sup> Mohaj, A., *Prophets and Forgetfulness: Human Experience and Responsibility in Delivering Divine Messages* (2023).

<sup>33</sup> Özkan, *Arrogance in Islamic Thought: Satan's Refusal to Prostrate and the Consequences of Pride, Disobedience, and Ingratitude* (2022).

<sup>34</sup> Thaib, *The Concept of Forgetfulness in Islam: Prophet Adam's Disobedience and the Human Trait of Neglecting Responsibilities* (2020); Thaib, *The Concept of Forgetfulness in Islam: Prophet Adam's Disobedience and the Human Trait of Neglecting Responsibilities* (2020).

<sup>35</sup> Hajriansyah, *Imam Al-Ghazali on the Importance of Remembering Death to Prevent Moral Decline* (2017).

<sup>36</sup> Bayhaqi, M., and S. Masnawati. *Tazkiyatun Nafs and the Purification of the Soul in Islam: Combating Moral Degradation Among Youth* (2024).

reading, memorizing the Quran, and regular prayer.<sup>37</sup> These practices are believed to strengthen memory and spiritual awareness, helping to prevent the negative consequences of forgetting Allah and one's religious obligations.

This collection of papers explores the Islamic perspective on forgetfulness, negligence, and deviant behavior. Forgetting Allah and death can lead to moral decay, including underestimating sin, living in negligence (*ghaflah*), and excessive love for the world.<sup>38</sup> The Qur'an distinguishes between natural forgetfulness and intentional forgetfulness due to negligence.<sup>39</sup> Prophetic traditions address various types of forgetfulness and suggest remedies, such as remembering Allah and seeking His protection (سعاد بنت صالح باقى, ٢٠٢١). To mitigate deviant behavior in students, Al-Ghazali's perspective on spiritual values emphasizes four methods: *Uswatun Hasanah* (role modeling), *Ta'wid* (habituation), *Mau'idzah* (advice), and *Qishshah* (storytelling), focusing on Aqidah, Syari'at, and Morals.<sup>40</sup> These approaches aim to cultivate fear of Allah, gratitude, and proper use of human faculties to avoid negligence and maintain spiritual identity.

#### *The Integration of Arrogance and Forgetfulness as Causes of Moral Degradation*

The concept of adab, or proper conduct and awareness of one's place in life, is central to addressing moral degradation in contemporary society. Al-Attas identifies the loss of adab as a root cause of societal issues, stemming from corrupted knowledge and false leadership.<sup>41</sup> This degradation is partly attributed to the adoption of Western education systems based on secular worldviews, which prioritize material prosperity over moral and spiritual development.<sup>42</sup> The integration of adab in education is proposed as a solution to the spiritual void and ethical crisis of the postmodern era.<sup>43</sup> Citizenship Education is highlighted as crucial in preventing moral degradation among millennials in the face of globalization's negative impacts.<sup>44</sup> These perspectives emphasize the importance of education rooted in transcendental values to address the moral challenges of contemporary society.

The papers explore arrogance and forgetfulness as roots of moral degradation in Islamic thought. Arrogance, exemplified by Satan's refusal to prostrate before Adam, is characterized by pride, disobedience, and ingratitude. It leads to cruelty, envy, and ignorance,

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<sup>37</sup> Usman, M., and A. Abdullah. *The Role of Forgetfulness in Moral Decline and the Remedies in Islamic Teachings* (2023).

<sup>38</sup> Rizani Adawiyah et al., *The Islamic Perspective on Forgetfulness and Negligence: Moral Decay and the Consequences of Forgetting Allah and Death* (2022).

<sup>39</sup> Zamakhsyari Bin Hasballah Thaib, *Forgetfulness in the Qur'an: Natural vs. Intentional Forgetfulness* (2020).

<sup>40</sup> Muhammad Mushfi El Iq Bali & Devi Ruzifah, *Al-Ghazali's Approach to Mitigating Deviant Behavior: Uswatun Hasanah, Ta'wid, Mau'idzah, and Qishshah in Islamic Education* (2021).

<sup>41</sup> S. Fitri & Dinie Anggraeni Dewi, *Citizenship Education and Preventing Moral Degradation Among Millennials in a Globalized World* (2021).

<sup>42</sup> Sanusi, *The Impact of Western Education on Islamic Values: Secular Worldviews and the Prioritization of Material Prosperity* (2017).

<sup>43</sup> Aireni Ratnasari & Ujang Miftahudin, *Integrating Adab in Education: A Solution to the Ethical Crisis of the Postmodern Era* (2025).

<sup>44</sup> S. Fitri & Dinie Anggraeni Dewi, *Citizenship Education and Preventing Moral Degradation Among Millennials in a Globalized World* (2021).

ultimately resulting in expulsion from divine mercy.<sup>45</sup> Forgetfulness, as seen in Prophet Adam's disobedience, is a human trait that can neglect responsibilities. The Quran mentions various forms of forgetfulness, including forgetting Allah and His signs.<sup>46</sup> Humility is presented as the antithesis to arrogance, fostering love and social solidarity. The papers suggest that arrogance and evil attitudes are still relevant today, manifesting in phenomena like the pursuit of power, materialism, and online hatred.<sup>47</sup> Remedies for arrogance and methods for cultivating humility are discussed to address these moral challenges.

This collection of papers explores various aspects of Quranic interpretation and Islamic history. The concept of *šamrah* (fruit) in the Quran is examined using Toshihiko Izutsu's semantic approach, revealing both literal and metaphorical meanings.<sup>48</sup> The story of Adam's fall from Paradise is analyzed as a cycle in human civilization, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and obedience to God.<sup>49</sup> The concept of "Satanic verses" is discussed in relation to Salman Rushdie's controversial work and its presence in Islamic literature, particularly in the interpretation of Surah al-Hajj verse 52.<sup>50</sup> These studies highlight the complexity of Quranic interpretation and its relevance to contemporary life, emphasizing the importance of context and scholarly analysis in understanding religious texts.

Human nature is prone to mistakes and sin, with the devil constantly tempting individuals through various means.<sup>51</sup> This moral struggle is rooted in the coexistence of good and evil within human nature.<sup>52</sup> While prophets may be free from sin, most people oscillate between righteousness and wrongdoing.<sup>53</sup> The pattern of falling into sin begins with temptation, processed through the senses, mind, and heart. Modern manifestations of the devil's influence include the pursuit of power, materialism, and online hatred. To combat moral defects, individuals must guard their hearts with God's Word and engage in repentance. Moral education should focus on overcoming selfishness, addressing defence

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<sup>45</sup> Özkan, Arrogance in Islamic Thought: Satan's Refusal to Prostrate and the Consequences of Pride, Disobedience, and Ingratitude (2022).

<sup>46</sup> Thaib, The Concept of Forgetfulness in Islam: Prophet Adam's Disobedience and the Human Trait of Neglecting Responsibilities (2020).

<sup>47</sup> Alfani et al., Arrogance, Power, Materialism, and Online Hatred: Contemporary Manifestations of Evil Attitudes (2024).

<sup>48</sup> Parbo, The Concept of *šamrah* (Fruit) in the Quran: A Semantic Analysis Using Toshihiko Izutsu's Approach (2024).

<sup>49</sup> Saihu, The Fall of Adam from Paradise: Knowledge, Obedience, and the Cycle of Human Civilization (2019).

<sup>50</sup> Abu Khaer, A., and Mubin, The Concept of "Satanic Verses" and its Interpretation in Islamic Literature: A Study of Surah al-Hajj Verse 52 and Salman Rushdie's Controversy (2022).

<sup>51</sup> Sugianto, Human Nature, Temptation, and Moral Struggle: The Influence of the Devil and the Path to Repentance (2025); Alfani et al., *Modern Manifestations of the Devil's Influence: Power, Materialism, and Online Hatred* (2024).

<sup>52</sup> Jeong, The Coexistence of Good and Evil in Human Nature: A Study on Moral Defects and the Role of Education (2023).

<sup>53</sup> Nurbani, The Struggle Between Righteousness and Wrongdoing: The Role of Repentance in Human Morality (2019).

mechanisms, and distinguishing between moral defects and errors. Ultimately, God's grace is necessary to resolve the damaged relationship between humans and the divine.<sup>54</sup>

#### *The Origin and Characteristics of Arrogance and Forgetfulness*

Arrogance (*takabbur*) is a spiritual disease characterized by rejecting truth, belittling others, and feeling superior. It can manifest as arrogance towards Allah, prophets, or fellow humans. The Quran condemns arrogance and warns of divine punishment for the arrogant. Factors contributing to arrogance include knowledge, ancestry, beauty, and power. Arrogance is considered a root cause of other vices like cruelty and disobedience. In contrast, humility is praised as a virtue that fosters love, mental peace, and social solidarity. Islamic education emphasizes modeling exemplary behaviors and reminding students to avoid arrogance. To combat arrogance, Rashid (2021) offers seventeen remedies for self-improvement. Overall, these studies highlight the importance of cultivating humility and eradicating arrogance in personal and social life.<sup>55</sup>

The Qur'an addresses forgetfulness (*ghaflah*) as a spiritual and psychological phenomenon. *Ghaflah* is characterized by deliberate negligence of Allah's guidance, blessings, and signs.<sup>56</sup> It weakens one's spiritual connection and makes individuals vulnerable to external influences. The Qur'an mentions various forms of forgetfulness, including forgetting Allah, oneself, and the. While prophets may experience forgetfulness as humans, it does not affect their responsibility to deliver divine messages. The Qur'an suggests remedies for forgetfulness, including adherence to its teachings, frequent remembrance of Allah (dhikr), avoiding oppressors, seeking good company, and praying for forgiveness<sup>57</sup>. Gratitude and dhikr are presented as counter terms to *ghaflah*, emphasizing the importance of maintaining awareness of Allah's blessings and presence.<sup>58</sup>

#### *Implications/Impact of Arrogance and Forgetfulness in the Context of Education*

Al-Ghazali's educational philosophy emphasizes holistic character development alongside academic knowledge. His approach focuses on moral, spiritual, and intellectual growth to foster independent, ethical individuals.<sup>59</sup> Al-Ghazali identifies several "diseases of knowledge," including arrogance and hypocrisy, which can hinder true learning and character formation.<sup>60</sup> He advocates for education that balances worldly and spiritual aspects,

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<sup>54</sup> Sugianto, Human Nature, Temptation, and Moral Struggle: The Influence of the Devil and the Path to Repentance (2025).

<sup>55</sup> Hasiah, The Spiritual Disease of Arrogance: Takabbur and Its Manifestations (2018).; Solihin, *The Role of Islamic Education in Combating Arrogance: The Importance of Modeling Exemplary Behaviors* (2020).

<sup>56</sup> Muhammad Syawaluddin Nur et al., Ghaflah in the Qur'an: Spiritual and Psychological Negligence of Allah's Guidance and Signs (2024).

<sup>57</sup> S. Dangor, Remedies for Ghaflah: Dhikr, Gratitude, and Seeking Forgiveness (2021).

<sup>58</sup> Muhammad Syawaluddin Nur et al., Ghaflah in the Qur'an: Spiritual and Psychological Negligence of Allah's Guidance and Signs (2024).

<sup>59</sup> Al-Ghazali et al., Al-Ghazali's Educational Philosophy: Holistic Character Development and Ethical Growth (2024).

<sup>60</sup> M. U. Azmi et al., *Diseases of Knowledge in Al-Ghazali's Thought: Arrogance and Hypocrisy as Barriers to True Learning* (2024).

addressing contemporary moral challenges in education.<sup>61</sup> Al-Ghazali's concept of character education comprises two main elements: soul character, reflected in sincere worship, and physical character, manifested in good morals and useful knowledge acquisition. This approach aims to cultivate a clean heart and encourage positive behaviors towards oneself and others, including discipline, hard work, responsibility, and social harmony (Arri Salaeh et al., 2023). These principles offer valuable insights for modern education systems seeking to develop knowledgeable and morally upright individuals.

The person-centered approach, developed by Carl Rogers, emphasizes empathy, acceptance, and positive regard in education. This approach can address disruptive behavior and promote student growth by fostering open relationships and trust between teachers and students.<sup>62</sup> Rogers viewed teachers as facilitators of learning, prioritizing student needs and empathetic involvement. Similarly, Maslow advocated for student-centered learning and creativity, though he maintained a more disciplinary approach in graduate education.<sup>63</sup> Teachers play a crucial role in accessing the spiritual dimension in classrooms, with relationships at the core of their practice. By exploring their own spiritual autobiographies, teachers can model transformative learning and engage students holistically.<sup>64</sup> Research has shown significant links between Rogerian constructs and the Community of Inquiry framework, particularly in online education.<sup>65</sup>

Moral degradation among students is a significant concern in education, requiring effective strategies from educators and guardians. Islamic education offers potential solutions through functional, integral, and progressive approaches, emphasizing religious teachings beyond mere memorization. Strengthening students' awareness of their role as servants of Allah and developing their fitrah (innate disposition) can help prevent despicable behavior.<sup>66</sup> Islamic Education teachers play crucial roles as educators, role models, and evaluators in improving students' morality.<sup>67</sup> Effective strategies include instilling moral values based on religious guidance, facilitating communication with parents, and creating a supportive learning environment. Challenges such as the negative effects of globalization and inadequate counseling facilities must be addressed to enhance moral rehabilitation efforts.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Khusnul Nur Azizah & Zainal Abidin, *Balancing Worldly and Spiritual Aspects in Education: Addressing Contemporary Moral Challenges in Al-Ghazali's Educational Approach* (2025).

<sup>62</sup> Khusnul Nur Azizah & Zainal Abidin, *Balancing Worldly and Spiritual Aspects in Education: Addressing Contemporary Moral Challenges in Al-Ghazali's Educational Approach* (2025).; Khusnul Nur Azizah & Zainal Abidin, *Balancing Worldly and Spiritual Aspects in Education: Addressing Contemporary Moral Challenges in Al-Ghazali's Educational Approach* (2025).

<sup>63</sup> Feigenbaum, Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow on Student-Centered Learning: Empathy, Creativity, and Discipline (2023).

<sup>64</sup> Sunley, *Spiritual Dimensions in the Classroom: Teachers as Facilitators of Transformative Learning* (2009)

<sup>65</sup> Swan, K., et al., *The Person-Centered Approach and Its Link to the Community of Inquiry Framework in Online Education* (2020).

<sup>66</sup> Muthohar, A., *Islamic Education and Its Potential Solutions to Moral Degradation: A Functional, Integral, and Progressive Approach* (2016).

<sup>67</sup> Muis, A., et al., 'The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Morality: Educators, Role Models, and Evaluators (2019).

<sup>68</sup> Lessy, D., et al., *Moral Degradation Among Students: The Role of Educators and Guardians in Addressing the Issue* (2024).; Muthohar, A., *Islamic Education and Its Potential Solutions to Moral Degradation: A Functional, Integral, and Progressive Approach* (2016).

### *Muhasabah as a Preventive Measure Against Moral Degradation*

The research papers collectively address moral degradation and propose solutions rooted in Islamic teachings. Muhasabah (self-evaluation) is highlighted as an effective approach to increase self-awareness and improve social behavior among madrasah students.<sup>69</sup> Sufism teachings, implemented through stages of takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli, are suggested as a resolution to moral degradation.<sup>70</sup> Madrasah Diniyah plays a crucial role in moral education through exemplary and habitual education strategies.<sup>71</sup> Self-purification through dhikr, as emphasized by Imam Al-Ghazali, is presented as a means to cleanse the soul, adorn oneself with praiseworthy morals, and achieve noble positions. The practice of dhikr is associated with forgiveness, prevention of forgetfulness and negligence, and reassurance of the soul, ultimately leading to a closer connection with Allah.<sup>72</sup>

Recent studies highlight the importance of character education and emotional intelligence in addressing moral degradation among students. Emotional intelligence and blended learning have been shown to significantly influence students' character values, with blended learning having a particularly strong impact.<sup>73</sup> Value-based learning in schools can enhance student character by integrating ethical principles and social responsibilities into the curriculum.<sup>74</sup> To combat moral decadence, researchers suggest implementing supervision, character education, law enforcement, and improved religious education.<sup>75</sup> An Islamic education and character-based learning model grounded in emotional intelligence has been developed and found to be highly effective in improving students' morality, particularly in fostering respect and obedience towards parents and teachers.<sup>76</sup> These findings underscore the critical role of integrating character education and emotional intelligence in learning environments to cultivate morally upright and well-rounded individuals.

Thomas Lickona's concept of character education emphasizes three interconnected aspects: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. This comprehensive approach aims to develop students' understanding, love, and practice of good character. Lickona's theory draws inspiration from ancient Greek and Islamic philosophy, particularly Ibn Miskawaih's work on ethics. The implementation of character education requires continuous guidance from teachers and support from parents, creating a collaborative effort known as the tri education center. Additionally, integrating religious principles and prophetic moral examples, such as those of Muhammad, can enhance character development. Effective

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<sup>69</sup> Muis, A., et al., *The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Morality: Educators, Role Models, and Evaluators* (2019).

<sup>70</sup> Amin, S., *Sufism as a Solution to Moral Degradation: The Stages of Takhalli, Tahalli, and Tajalli* (2019).

<sup>71</sup> Mainuddin, *The Role of Madrasah Diniyah in Moral Education: Exemplary and Habitual Education Strategies* (2023).

<sup>72</sup> Sari, M., and Marhaban, *Self-Purification Through Dhikr: Cleansing the Soul and Achieving Noble Morals According to Imam Al-Ghazali* (2023).

<sup>73</sup> Fadlilah, A., et al., *The Influence of Emotional Intelligence and Blended Learning on Student Character Values* (2020).

<sup>74</sup> Thebar, M., and Upadhyay, R., *Value-Based Learning and Its Impact on Student Character Development in Schools* (2023).

<sup>75</sup> Aryani, N., and Yuliarti, A., *Combating Moral Decadence: Implementing Supervision, Character Education, Law Enforcement, and Religious Education* (2023).

<sup>76</sup> Aryani, N., and Yuliarti, A., *Combating Moral Decadence: Implementing Supervision, Character Education, Law Enforcement, and Religious Education* (2023).

character education aims to foster good habits, encouraging learners to understand, feel, and act upon moral values, ultimately shaping responsible and self-aware individuals.<sup>77</sup>

Teachers play a multifaceted role in education, requiring not only subject knowledge but also an understanding of student behavior and psychology. Recognizing the factors influencing student behavior is crucial for effective teaching and addressing deviant conduct. These factors may include family, peers, and community influences. To manage diverse student behaviors, teachers should enhance their psychological pedagogical knowledge. Reflective practices can significantly improve pre-service teachers' pedagogical abilities and professional development. By engaging in reflection, teachers can better understand the teaching-learning process and construct meaning from their classroom experiences. This comprehensive approach to understanding student behavior and reflecting on teaching methods enables educators to identify root causes of problems and implement appropriate strategies, ultimately leading to more effective instruction and student management.<sup>78</sup>

Recent studies highlight the importance of *mubasabah* (self-reflection) and Islamic values in character education and moral development. Raikhan (2024) found that consistent application of *mubasabah* in madrasas can increase students' self-awareness and improve social behavior. Habibie & Cahyadi (2024) suggest that *mubasabah* can help teenagers overcome self-confidence crises by following Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's three-step approach. Tohir (2023) emphasizes the integration of Islamic character values in university education to enhance student self-reflection, while Ramdani (2022) argues that character formation is more effective when rooted in religious awareness. These studies propose various methods for implementing self-reflection and character education, including daily prayers,<sup>79</sup> spiritual practices, and consistent attitude assessments.<sup>80</sup>

## Conclusion

Moral degradation or moral decline is a fundamental problem deeply rooted in the spiritual dimension of human beings. From an Islamic spiritual perspective, arrogance and forgetfulness are two main factors that trigger moral destruction. Arrogance signifies defiance of the values of monotheism, closing the heart to truth, and driving humans to make themselves the centre of everything (*self-centered*), which is contrary to the value of servitude to Allah. As for forgetfulness, especially in the context of forgetting Allah, it causes humans to lose spiritual control, leading them to engage in behaviour that deviates from moral values.

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<sup>77</sup> Susanti, Lusia. *The Impact of Hedonism and Materialism on Moral Degradation in the Millennial Generation*. 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Dagdag, R., and Bandera, F., *The Multifaceted Role of Teachers in Education: Beyond Subject Knowledge to Understanding Student Behavior and Psychology* (2021).; Dagdag, R., and Bandera, F., *The Multifaceted Role of Teachers in Education: Beyond Subject Knowledge to Understanding Student Behavior and Psychology* (2021)., Dagdag, R., and Bandera, F., *The Multifaceted Role of Teachers in Education: Beyond Subject Knowledge to Understanding Student Behavior and Psychology* (2021).; Rodman, T., *Reflective Practices in Teacher Development: Improving Pedagogical Abilities and Professional Growth* (2010)

<sup>79</sup> Tohir, N., *Integrating Islamic Character Values in University Education to Enhance Student Self-Reflection* (2023).

<sup>80</sup> Habibie, M., and Cahyadi, T., *Using Mubasabah to Overcome Self-Confidence Crises in Teenagers: A Three-Step Approach by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya* (2024).; Raikhan, A., *The Role of Mubasabah in Increasing Self-Awareness and Improving Social Behavior in Madrasas* (2024).

The importance of spiritual awareness is key to protecting oneself from moral degradation. Moral education instilled through a spiritual approach is not merely normative; it must begin with nurturing the heart and existential awareness of human beings as creatures who are subject to the Creator. Therefore, strengthening the values of tawhid (monotheism), remembrance of Allah (*zikrullah*), and continuous self-reflection through *mubasabah* are essential for building a strong moral character. By understanding the root causes of moral issues from a spiritual perspective, the solutions offered can more effectively address the deepest aspects of human personality.

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