

**Guru Sekumpul's Character Education Thoughts:  
An Analytical Study of the Concept of Morality and the Formation of Insan Kamil**

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**Abstrak**

Artikel ini membahas konsep pendidikan akhlak Islam dalam pemikiran KH. Zaini Abdul Ghani, atau yang lebih dikenal dengan Guru Sekumpul, sebagai respons terhadap dinamika sosial modern yang ditandai dengan degradasi moral di kalangan generasi muda. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi pustaka, yang menelaah ceramah, karya, serta praktik pendidikan beliau. Guru Sekumpul menawarkan pendekatan pendidikan karakter berbasis akhlak mulia yang berakar pada nilai-nilai sufistik dan spiritualitas Islam dengan tujuan membentuk manusia paripurna (insan kamil). Pemikiran dan konsep akhlak Guru Sekumpul juga membawa pengaruh sampai sekarang. Beberapa temuan seperti munculnya komunitas relawan sosial Abah Guru pada acara haul seolah menjawab problematika sosial modern yang semakin jauh dari sifat humanis. Temuan tersebut juga memiliki relevansi tinggi untuk menjawab tantangan moral masyarakat modern melalui penekanan pada keteladanan, kelembutan, dan pembinaan spiritual yang holistik.

**Kata Kunci:** *Pemikiran Guru Sekumpul, Dinamika Sosial Modern, Komunitas Muslim Banjar, Karakter Islam, Insan Kamil.*

**Abstract**

This article discusses the concept of Islamic moral education in the thought of KH. Zaini Abdul Ghani, or better known as Guru Sekumpul, as a response to modern social dynamics characterized by moral degradation among the younger generation. This research uses a qualitative approach with the literature study method, which examines his lectures, works, and educational practices. Guru Sekumpul offers a noble morality-based character education approach rooted in sufistic values and Islamic spirituality, with the aim of forming a perfect human being (insan kamil). His thoughts were chosen because of their wide influence and are still felt today. Some findings, such as

the emergence of the Abah Guru social volunteer community at the haul event, seem to address modern social issues that are increasingly distant from humanistic values. These findings are also highly relevant to addressing the moral challenges of modern society through an emphasis on exemplary behavior, gentleness, and holistic spiritual guidance.

**Keywords:** *Guru Sekumpul's Thoughts, Modern Social Dynamics, The Banjar Muslim Community, Islamic Character, Insan Kamil.*

## **Introduction**

Humans are indeed complex and dynamic beings, as they are endowed by God with reason and desire. These two elements cause the social structure of human life to continuously evolve along with the changing times. Therefore, education becomes a crucial component in the development of a nation's civilization, directly impacting human mindset and character (Cahyani & Bakar, 2022). The human tendency to imitate important figures in their lives (Hamid, 2020) underscores the need for selectivity in choosing role models who serve as exemplars in character formation.

In Islam, the concept of the best role model is emphasized in the Qur'an through the term *uswah hasanah* (role model), which is only mentioned in three verses, namely Surah al-Ahzab verse 21, and Surah al-Mumtahanah verses 4 and 6. Allah SWT emphasizes that the Prophet Muhammad SAW and the Apostles are the best figures because their lives reflect human life until the end of time. This is reinforced by the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW narrated by Abu Hurairah ra., which states that he was sent to perfect human morals (Al-Bayhaqi, 2013). Ash-Sheikh Hasan bin al-Fadhil Al-Thibrisy also emphasized that taking the Prophet Muhammad and his family as role models is enough to achieve true life (Al-Fadhil, n.d.). This universal Islamic moral characteristic can also be found in practice in Western countries where the majority are non-Muslims (Mahmud, 2019).

However, moral decline has become a global problem, which is exacerbated by the unwise use of technology (Megahantara, 2017; Bakar & Sirajuddin, 2023). Therefore, humans must be intelligent not only in reasoning, but also in morals (Bakar, 2016) so that civilization is not destroyed due to the uncontrolled flow of technology. Data from Kompas Research and Development (2024) revealed that criminal acts of minors are increasing, which emphasizes the urgency of character education as a solution.

In that context, a concept of moral education is needed that can shape an *insan kamil*, that is, a complete human being who not only master's science and technology but also has strong faith and piety. Noble character education will strengthen the nation's civilization, as

the quality of character is directly correlated with the nation's dignity (Assingkily & Rangkuti, 2020). Jared Diamond (2005) also reminds us that the collapse of civilizations is often triggered by the poor character of society, a fact that is also reflected in the stories of the Qur'an about the destruction of the people of Prophet Lot and the people of 'Ad and Thamud.

To address the issue, synergy between the government, society, and religious scholars is essential (Bakar et al., 2024). Ulama, as successors of the prophetic mission, not only inherit knowledge but also the morals and struggles of the prophets (Romzi, 2012). Thomas Lickona (1992) emphasizes that true education focuses more on attitude change rather than just intelligence. Therefore, the integrity and personality of religious leaders greatly influence the success of noble character formation in society (Rodiyah, 2018).

In this context, the Banjar people in South Kalimantan greatly admire KH. Zaini Abdul Ghani, better known as Guru Sekumpul, as a role model ulama who has brought significant changes to his community. The selection of Guru Sekumpul's thought as the focus of this study is based on several reasons. Firstly, he is a charismatic cleric who is not only knowledgeable but also has strong exemplary behaviour in real life. Secondly, his influence has expanded from local to national and even international levels, which is reflected in thousands of students and haul pilgrims who continue to grow. Third, his teachings are very relevant in responding to the moral crisis of today's young generation in an effort to form an insan kamil. Fourth, in-depth studies on Guru Sekumpul's moral education thoughts integrated with the concept of insan kamil are still very limited, so this research is important as a preservation and development of the Nusantara's Islamic intellectual heritage.

Thus, this article aims to analyse Guru Sekumpul's concept of character education with a focus on the formation of insan kamil. This research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions in the development of holistic and contextual character education, as well as enriching the Islamic Nusantara's scholarly repertoire, especially related to character and moral education.

## **Research Method**

The type of research in this article is descriptive using a qualitative approach. The object/focus of this research is the study of the thoughts of a prominent figure, in this case the character education thoughts of KH. Zaini Abdul Ghani or Abah Guru Sekumpul. Therefore, this research will use the literature study method. The types of literature used in

this research include books, scientific journals, previous research articles, and several media reports related to the research theme (Rubani, 2023). Using the literature review method, the researcher will endeavor to examine documents relevant to the research problem and objectives (Hanida Listiani, 2025), particularly those related to the character education philosophy of Abah Guru Sekumpul.

This study uses several primary data sources, particularly those related to the thoughts of Abah Guru Sekumpul or the concept of insan kamil. The primary data sources related to the thoughts of Abah Guru Sekumpul were obtained from several of his lectures that are widely available on the internet and can be accessed via YouTube. Additionally, they come from books summarizing Guru Sekumpul's lectures, such as the book "17 Maksiat Hati: Inspirasi Pengajian Abah Guru Sekumpul." This study also utilizes several secondary data sources, including books, articles, or other documents related to the research theme. From these sources, a comprehensive overview of the research findings regarding Guru Sekumpul's educational philosophy and the concept of the insan kamil can be obtained.

Then, to facilitate data collection, this research will be organized into a series of stages. First, the stage of collecting the works of Guru Sekumpul, particularly recordings of his lectures. Second, the stage of listening to Guru Sekumpul's lectures while noting down important points related to the research theme. Third, conducting content analysis using a thematic approach. Fourth, mapping Guru Sekumpul's thoughts. Fifth, formulating conclusions or identifying Guru Sekumpul's educational philosophy on character development within the insan kamil framework.

Several previous articles that discuss the thoughts of Guru Sekumpul. One such article is by Raiyah (2019) discusses the objectives of Islamic education according to KH. Zaini Abdul Ghani, which are then linked to the context of education in the Banjar community. Next is the article by Alaika M. Bagus Kurnia et al., (2025), which discusses the relationship between Guru Sekumpul and the Sammaniyah Sufi community within the framework of character education. Finally, there is the dissertation by Muhammad Yusran (2017), which explores Guru Sekumpul's thought in a broader context, namely Islamic education with a systemic approach.

In general, several of these articles basically raise the theme of Abah Guru Sekumpul's educational thinking, but explicitly the theme raised does not make the concept of insan kamil the landscape of his research. Therefore, the articles discussed in this study differ in

context from several articles from previous studies. So it can be interpreted that the research discussed in this article is classified as novelty.

## **Research Finding**

### **Profile of Abah Guru Sekumpul**

Abah Guru Sekumpul, real name KH. Muhammad Zaini Ghani is the 8th descendant of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari. His lineage is KH. Muhammad Zaini Ghani bin Abdul Ghani bin Abdul Manaf bin Muhammad Samman bin Saad bin Abdullah Mufti bin Muhammad Khalid bin Khalifah Hasanuddin bin Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari (Datu Kalampayan) (Anwar, 2018). He was born on the night of Wednesday, 11 February 1942 (27 Muharram 1361 H) in Tunggul Irang Seberang Village, Martapura, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan (Author, 2006).

Since childhood, he was known as Qusyairi, which was later changed to Muhammad Zaini because he was often sick (Raiyah, 2019). Born into a simple family, his father worked as a diamond polishing labourer, so the family's economic conditions were quite limited. However, he received a good education from his family and scholars. At the age of five, he began learning to read the Qur'an, and continued his religious education until he received guidance from various great teachers, both at home and abroad, including in Makkah (Anwar, 2018; Mirhan, 2016).

After gaining knowledge, Abah Guru Sekumpul taught at the Darussalam Islamic Boarding School before finally focusing on da'wah activities which began with a small recitation at his house, then developed into a large recitation centre in Sekumpul, Martapura (Abas et al., 2024). He passed away in 2005 and his grave is now a pilgrimage site that is always crowded with pilgrims (Anwar, 2018).

Abah Guru Sekumpul's thoughts are very relevant to be used as an object of study in the context of character education and the formation of a perfect person. He emphasised that the core of religious education is the formation of noble morals, not just the mastery of knowledge. In one of his lectures, he stated: "Knowledge without morals is like a tree without fruit, so don't just seek knowledge, but also instil noble morals in yourself". Abah Guru Sekumpul taught that Muslims should emulate praiseworthy traits such as patience, humility, and compassion as foundations of character that should be formed early on. He emphasised, "A strong character is the foundation for knowledge to be practised properly" (A. Z. Mubarak, 2011).

### **Guru Sekumpul's Character Education Thought**

All the people of South Kalimantan must not be unfamiliar with Guru Sekumpul. Yes, he is KH Muhammad Zaini Bin Abdul Ghani, a charismatic ulama from Banjar land, whose photo is always installed epic in almost every citizen's house, even his haul event is always attended by millions of worshipers both from within the country and abroad. Several prominent figures and state officials also attended his haul. Some malls and shopping centres are also filled with worshipers who pray in congregation and dhikr together (Mahfudz, 2024). Uniquely, every haul pilgrim who attended always received excellent service, ranging from free petrol, food and drink, parking, masseurs, lodging, pick-up from the port or airport, and all of that was free without charging a penny (Triono, 2025). Of course, this is a beautiful sight that reflects the nobility of morals that Guru Sekumpul has instilled in the Banjar community in the form of character education.

Character education will forever be the main issue in education. Character education is expected to be the main foundation in improving the degree and dignity of the Indonesian nation (Marzuki, 2022). Even since 2500 years ago, a Greek philosopher, Socrates, has expressed his idea that the main purpose of education is to produce a good and smart person (S. Zuhri et al., 2022). Socrates believed that the main purpose of education is to stimulate the ability to think critically and form mental discipline, while being able to encourage sustainable intellectual development and have high moral standards (Istiqomah, 2024). Thomas Lickona as the father of character education in America also hints at the close relationship between character and spirituality (Lickona, 1992). Of course, all of these concepts are in line with the vision of the main mission of the Prophet Muhammad, namely in order to perfect noble morals.

Thomas Lickona, based on the results of scientific research he has conducted, concluded that education in all corners of the world essentially has only two goals, namely: 1) to guide the young generation to become a smart generation; and 2) so that they have good behaviour or character (Lickona, 1992). However, building the nobility of morals and character of society is not easy. That is why the main purpose of Guru Sekumpul's opening of the religious recitation assemblies was to create people who believe in God and have noble character (Sahriansyah et al., 2014).

Related to character education. According to (Muhtadi, 2016) there are at least five basic functions of moral education, among others: First, the psychological function, which means that moral education functions to shape humans to have independence and

responsibility; Second, the paedagogical function, which means that moral education functions to develop the basic potential of humans to develop properly and optimally; Third, the philosophical function, which means that moral education functions to shape humans to have broad knowledge, have a big soul and be able to think rationally; Fourth, the sociological function which means that moral education serves to hone the basic human potential in order to live in society well; Fifth, the religious function which means that moral education serves to maintain the religious and divine nature brought from birth, therefore through this religious function it is intended that human religious nature can develop properly and correctly.

Humans as the khalifah of Allah on earth are endowed with various powers, such as the power to think, behave and act. These powers must always be guarded and developed so that the level of empowerment is optimal (Mas'ud, 2022). Zakiah Darajat argues that the purpose of Islamic education is to form a pious human being and die in a state of surrender to Allah as a Muslim and this is what is called insan kamil (Darajat, 2014). From here, a strong relationship is obtained between moral education and its relationship in the formation of insan kamil.

O Therefore, our parents, ulama and teachers always teach the importance of having good morals (Rambe et al., 2023). So in this case the existence of a teacher plays a very important role in building the morals of his students (Nasution & Pohan, 2024). Morals are also not only about good behaviour, but also include all attitudes, intentions, and actions carried out on the basis of faith and piety (Bakar, 2024). In connection with this, Guru Sekumpul in every recitation on average raises themes related to strengthening faith and morals (Sahriansyah et al., 2014). In his study, Guru Sekumpul usually packaged and delivered it from the point of view of Sufism studies. While the essence of the study of Sufism itself is to direct humans to noble traits and keep them away from despicable traits. This is the true purpose of the teachings of Sufism (Mas'ud, 2013).

As we can observe from the content of Abah Guru Sekumpul's lecture in the youtube channel [youtube.com/@papadahanabahguru](https://www.youtube.com/@papadahanabahguru) (Guru, 2024), in Banjar language he said:

*“Jangan lupa kacang dari pada kulitnya, nang asal melajari itu siapa dulu? Itu, nang asal meunjuki makanan tajadi sehingga merasa kanyang, jangan lupa wan asal unjuki makanan, jangan bah sudah kanyang kada ingat lagi asal makan menanam, makan asal tadi. Lupa kacang dari pada kulitnya itu* (Don't forget the peanut's shell. Remember who first taught you. The one who first gave you food when you were

hungry — don't forget that. Sometimes people feel full and forget who fed them first, who planted the food they now enjoy. Don't be like the peanut that forgets its shell)". *-fainnahu Salla Alla>hu 'Alayhi wa a>lihi> wa sallama manba'u al-asra>ri al-ghaybiyyah wa al-anwa>ri al-malaku>tiyyah- karena S{alla Alla>hu 'Alayhi wa a>lihi> wa sallama adalah seperti sumber dari ilmu-ilmu rahasia yang kada bisa dilihat dan cahaya-cahaya yang dinisbahkan kepada alam-alam yang tidak dapat dilihat dengan mata. Maka setiap orang yang sampai kepada orang itu setetes daripada ilmu batin tadi maka tidak bisa sampai ke orang itu kecuali timbul dari lautan Rasulullah S{alla Alla>hu 'Alayhi wa sallam yang dalam dan rahasia Rasulullah S{alla Alla>hu 'Alayhi wa sallam yang lebar. Jadi semua orang yang alim, semua orang yang ahli ibadah melainkan ilmunya itu dan ibadahnya itu adalah datang dari Rasulullah S{alla Alla>hu 'Alayhi wa sallam karena kalau tidak datang dari Rasulullah maka semua ilmu dan ibadah itu di tolak, sama dengan sasat. Apabila yang datang dari Rasulullah semuanya benar."* So, every pious person, every worshipper— indeed their knowledge and acts of worship come from the Messenger of Allah (Salla Allahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam). If they do not come from the Messenger, then all such knowledge and worship are rejected, and they lead to misguidance. Whatever comes from the Messenger is always true."

In his lectures, Guru Sekumpul often emphasized the importance of respecting religious scholars and maintaining love for the Prophet Muhammad by reciting more shalawat (Sahriansyah et al., 2014). Even good human character can be built by strengthening emotional ties with the Prophet Muhammad. As Guru Sekumpul has stated - using metaphorical language- he said, "A peanut must not forget its shell; when eating, do not just seek to be full, but also remember where the food comes from." This statement conveys the message that the source of all knowledge lies with the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, knowledge and wisdom can be more easily attained by cultivating love for the Prophet Muhammad through frequent recitation of the shalawat.

In today's modern world, love for the Prophet can be expressed in various ways. Some people express their love by reciting many prayers for the Prophet. Others express their love by happily attending gatherings to recite prayers for the Prophet or celebrate his birthday.

### **The Concept of Insan Kamil in the View of Muslim Scholars**

*Al-Insa>n al-ka>mil*, or perfect being, was first reviewed in writing by Ibn al-Arabi (Chittick, 2020) in one of his most phenomenal works entitled *Fus}u>s} al-H{ikam* (Al-

Arabi, 1946). Insan kamil in Ibn al-Arabi's thought is inseparable from the concept of *wah{dat wuju>d* yakni bersatunya Tuhan dengan manusia. namely the union of God with humans. Ibn al-Arabi argued that insan kamil is a duplication of God (*nuskhah al-haqq*) and is the most comprehensive incarnation (*tajalli*) of God's *Asma>* and *Dha>t* ('Afif, 1989). More specifically, Ibn al-'Arabi argues that God manifests perfectly through the essence of Nur Muhammad (A. Zuhri, 2023). Ibn al-'Arabi argues that to achieve unity with God, humans need to explore themselves with two paths namely *al-Fana>'* dan *al-Baqa>'* (Asmaran, 1996). *Al-Fana>'* means the condition of the self's disappearance of despicable qualities and *al-Baqa>'* means the condition of the self's permanence in noble qualities (al-Hakim, 1981).

To much different from Ibn al-Arabi, the 14th century Sufi Abd al-Karim al-Jili developed this concept further in his work *al-Insa>n al-Ka>mil*. He described insan kamil as an individual who has achieved perfect union with God, so that his human traits fully reflect divine traits (Hakiki, 2018). The concept of insan kamil in the views of Ibn al-Arabi and Abd al-Karim al-Jili is inseparable from the style of Sufism of both which is characterised by falsafi Sufism.

Related to their views in interpreting the concept of insan kamil, KH. Salih Darat gave the opposite response by prohibiting ordinary people from studying the book of insan kamil. The prohibition is because the book of insan kamil, both the work of Ibn Arabi and the book of insan kamil by Abd al-Karim al-Jili, both parse the doctrine of falsafi Sufism, especially those related to the position of man as emanation of God (Mas'ud, 2012). According to At-Taftazani, falsafi Sufism cannot be categorised as Sufism in the true sense because its theories are always found in philosophical discussions and are more oriented towards pantheism (Kholik, 2023).

This trend of Sufism with Sufi typology that emphasises falsafi reasoning is also what al-Ghazali feared would dominate the trend of Islamic thought at that time (Mas'ud & Fuad, 2018). Therefore, Imam al-Ghazali has a much different view from Ibn al-Arabi and Abd al-Karim al-Jili. Imam al-Ghazali believes that insan kamil is a civilised and dignified Muslim person. So that the measure of insan kamil is quite based on the height of morals. Therefore, moral development is a fundamental aspect in shaping a civilised and dignified human person (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015).

As for insan kamil in the view of Sheikh Nuruddin ar-Raniri is the essence of Muhammad, because he is the first essence born from the *tajalli>* process. The essence of

Muhammad gathers all existing reality, because all natural reality is a container for the asma and dhat Allah (Rahardjo, 1987). Meanwhile, insan kamil in the view of Sheikh Muhammad Nafis Al-Banjari leads to someone who has achieved ma'rifat (knowing God closely) through the attainment of tauhid af'al, tauhid asma', tauhid sifa and tauhid dhat (Rodiah, 2015). Therefore, a person who is born in the human nature and then perfects his or her maturity to the first dignity is given the title insan kamil (Budi Handoyo, 2022).

In contrast to Sheikh Muhammad Nafis Al-Banjari, Sheikh Abdus Shamad Al-Falimbani believed that the insan kamil was a human being who had attained perfection of knowledge (ma'rifah) through a process of tajalli using a method of purifying the heart by subduing the desires of the flesh. The perfection of knowledge (ma'rifah) can be attained by subduing the lower desires (nafsu ammarah), followed by lawwamah, then mulhamah, mutmainnah, radhiyah, mardhiyyah, and finally kamilah (Rodiyah, 2015). Although Sheikh Nafis Al-Banjari and Sheikh Abdus Shamad Al-Falimbani have differences in interpreting the concept of insan kamil, they both share a common understanding of the concept of insan kamil, namely a person who has attained ma'rifah as an effort to elevate spiritual dignity and the process of tajalli of God.

In the study of Sufism, the dignity of insan kamil is the last dignity (peak) and this dignity can only be achieved after going through several maqam (levels of spirituality, plural: maqamat) (Mahmud, 2014). In discussing this, there are two terms commonly used, namely tanazzul and taraqqi. These two terms are often used by Sufis in describing the relationship between a servant and his Lord. Tanazzul, which is a journey or movement from top to bottom, when God will see Himself then He manifests Himself into another form which is then called tajalliy. Meanwhile, taraqqi is defined as the spiritual journey of a servant to climb closer to his Lord.

The dignity of the insan kamil in this case is the result of the process of tajalli Allah. In the process of taraqqi towards Allah, this only happens to the Prophets, Messengers and trustees of Allah because they are truly insan kamil. While other humans in general have not reached the degree of insan kamil but are trapped by lust and fall into the puddle of sin and sinfulness. So that to be able to achieve the degree of insan kamil, the way is to really try (muja'adah) to defeat his own lust (Langit, 2018) and try to keep away from all forms of sin. Every individual has the opportunity to achieve this level if they strive earnestly to develop good character and deepen their relationship with God (Z. Mubarak, 2021).

In the view of the Greek philosopher, Plato defines the perfect human being (*insan kamil*) as a human being who loves wisdom more than anything else even though he himself is not a wise person (Mihri, 2004). Meanwhile, according to Aristotle, the perfect human being (*insan kamil*) lies in his daily life which is based on the intellectual aspect (Aji, 2009). Both Greek philosophers viewed the perfect human being (*insan kamil*) as someone who loves wisdom and bases every aspect of their life on intellectuality.

Muhammad Iqbal, a contemporary Islamic philosopher and thinker, also developed the concept of *insan kamil* in the realm of Islamic education. He argues that Islamic education should focus on the formation of a complete individual, ongoing throughout life, through various stages, until it reaches its best potential and continues to develop dynamically (Hasanah, 2024). Muhammad Iqbal views the perfect human being (*insan kamil*) as the goal of education, namely a person who has a complete personality and is able to develop to their full potential

The perfect human being, as understood by Sufi scholars, is a spiritual achievement, while in Greek philosophy, the perfect human being (*insan kamil*) is measured by intellectual perfection. Contemporary Muslim scholars, however, view the perfect human being (*insan kamil*) as the goal of education. From these various perspectives, it can be understood that the perfect human being is one who possesses perfection in spiritual, moral, and intellectual aspects. As a manifestation of God's vicegerent on earth.

### **The Perspective of Guru Sekumpul Regarding the Concept of *Insan Kamil***

The concept of *insan kamil* in Guru Sekumpul's view has several differences from the previous concept. Ibn al-'Arabi and al-Jili tended to associate *insan kamil* with the concept of *wahdat al-wujud*. Meanwhile, according to Sheikh Nafis al-Banjari and Sheikh Abdus Shamad al-Falimbani, the concept of *insan kamil* is more closely associated with the perfection of *gnosis (ma'rifah)* attained through the process of *tajalli*. Although ultimately, both have different methods in achieving the process of *tajalli*.

In a study that was recorded and later uploaded on a TikTok account under the name *andyka\_spu*, Guru Sekumpul clearly explained his views on the definition of *insan kamil* (Saputra, 2018). Guru Sekumpul said:

*"If Jala>l and Jama>l is put together, gathered, they are called kama>lu Alla>hi. Has it been recorded? Has it? Well, the one who collects Jala>l and Jama>l is only the most perfect, one person only, our lord Rasulullah S} alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam. Because of this, the Prophet Muhammad S {alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*

*is called Insan Kamil. Only one Insan Kamil, only one perfect human, namely Rasulullah Muhammad S {alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam. That is why we are told to recite s{alawat and sala>m to our beloved Messenger of Allah Muhammad S {alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam.”*

The concept of insan kamil defined by Guru Sekumpul is very clear that it only refers to the Prophet Muhammad, and no one else. This opinion is reinforced by the phrase “one person only” as if it has become something non-negotiable. The definition of insan kamil expressed by Guru Sekumpul has similarities with the concept of insan kamil put forward by Sheikh Nafis al-Banjari.

Syekh Nafis al-Banjari in his work *al-Durr al-Nafi>s* argues that what is meant by insan kamil or perfect human is a servant in whose soul the Jala>l Nature (glory) dan Jama>l Nature (greatness), have been collected, which is evident in the Prophet Muhammad S {alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (Budi Handoyo, 2022). Although Guru Sekumpul (d. 2005) and Sheikh Nafis al-Banjari (d. 1812) are about 200 years apart in time. The similarity in perspective is not surprising because both of them have the same scientific sanad path, namely from Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari. Guru Sekumpul is the 8th descendant of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari (Anwar, 2018) while Sheikh Nafis al-Banjari is a direct student of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari (Handy & Fatimah, 2019).

Although in his lectures Guru Sekumpul explicitly states that the only perfect person is the Messenger of Allah, he implicitly provides tips to achieve the degree of perfect person, namely by multiplying the recitation of salawat to the Prophet Muhammad S {alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (Saputra, 2018). Mentioned in some literature, from the results of research proves that reading more shalawat to the Prophet Muhammad will have a positive impact on those who read it (Muhtarom, 2016). From this, we can certainly understand that one of the ways to achieve the degree of insan kamil is to strengthen the love for the Prophet Muhammad S {alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam.

The moral perfection that characterizes a kamil person, simultaneously also means the cleanliness of the soul from despicable traits (Z. Mubarak, 2021). In (Anwar, 2018) Guru Sekumpul mentions there are 17 sins of the heart that must be abandoned as contained in the video recording of his lecture (Salman, 2020). including: 1) Riya> with worship; 2) 'Ujub (forgetting Allah's favor); 3) Doubt with Wahdaniyah Allah; 4) Feel safe with the istidraj ; 5) Despair of the grace of Allah; 6) Boasting over the servants of Allah; 7) Underestimating other people's selves; 8) Feeling in your heart better than some of Allah's creatures; 9) Revenge (hiding hostility); 10) Envy and spite; 11) Mentioning your own goodness; 12)

Penitence for sin; 13) Prejudice against Allah; 14) Evil to Allah's creatures; 15) Denying destiny; 16) Love to sin; 17) Deceiving others.

In his explanation, Guru Sekumpul believes that the only perfect human being (*insan kamil*) is the Prophet Muhammad. Reciting many prayers (*salawat*) for him will bring forth love (*mahabbah*) and strengthen the emotional connection with the Prophet Muhammad. Reciting many prayers will also make it easier for a person to obtain the radiance of a perfect human being, which will encourage them to always have good character and avoid bad behavior.

The concept of *insan kamil* offered by Guru Sekumpul indirectly encourages people to love the Prophet Muhammad. This perspective naturally connects Prophet Muhammad as the ideal model with the Islamic moral concept that emphasizes the importance of character education. Through Guru Sekumpul's version of the concept of the perfect human being, Prophet Muhammad as the sole prototype of the perfect human being/ideal model will strive to be present in every soul that regularly recites the Prophet's prayers.

#### **Analysis of the Concept of Akhlak and the Formation of Insan Kamil**

The study of theoretical analysis of the thoughts of KH Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani, known as Guru Sekumpul, in character education emphasizes the formation of noble morals as a means towards *Insan Kamil*. According to him, morals are the main foundation in the life of a Muslim. Not only limited to outward behavior, but morals also reflect the inner state that must always be kept pure to achieve a perfect degree.

Imam Al-Ghazali, a leading Islamic scholar, highlighted the importance of moral education in achieving *Insan Kamil*. According to him, moral development is a fundamental aspect in shaping a civilized and dignified human personality. In the era of growing globalization, moral values face various challenges. In this case, Imam Al-Ghazali's ideas on moral education provide deep and relevant guidance in maintaining morality and ethics in everyday life (Suryadarma & Haq, 2015).

Abah Guru Sekumpul has deep thoughts on character education. In understanding the purpose of education, Guru Sekumpul believes that the main purpose of Islamic education is to know Allah truly, so that in every situation an individual does not forget Him. He argued that life is intended for three things: seeking knowledge, practicing knowledge, and worshipping Allah (Adolph, 2016). This concept seems simple but for Muslims it is essential and holistic.

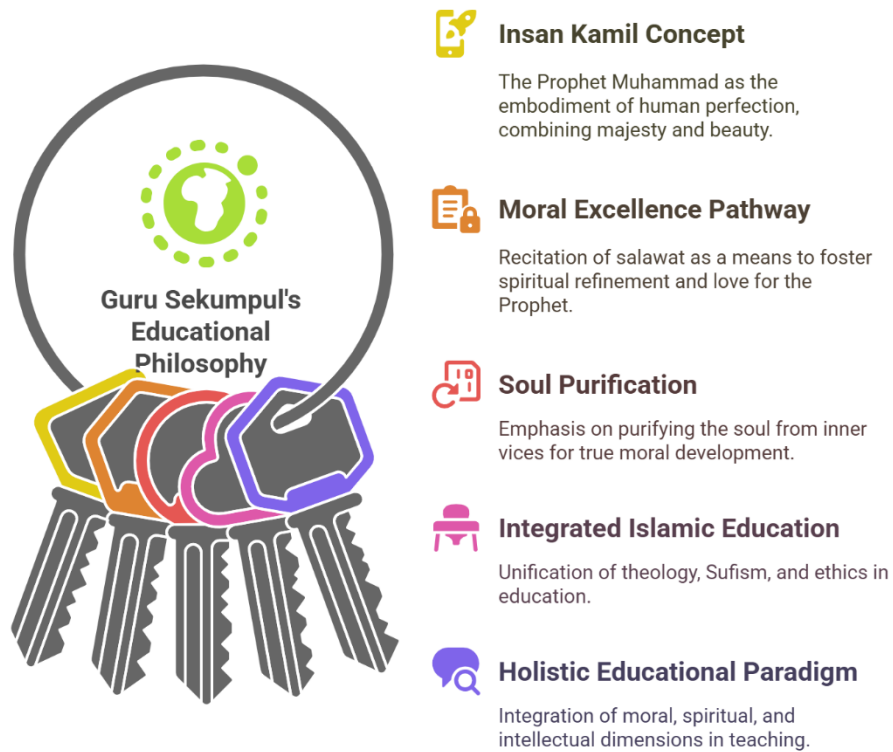
An educator, in his view, is an individual who is responsible for changing student behavior for the better. Educators must be able to guide students towards noble morals and a deep understanding of religion (Raiyah, 2019). Therefore, Abah Guru Sekumpul emphasized the importance of exemplary and habituation methods in character education. He showed patience, openness, inclusiveness, sympathy, simplicity, restraint in his speech, and was always ready to help his students. These attitudes are used as real examples for students to follow in their daily lives (Sahriansyah et al., 2014).

Guru Sekumpul also views the need for integration between *aqidah* (belief) and *akhlak* (moral) education in the learning process (Sahriansyah et al., 2014). Therefore, Guru Sekumpul's recitation is not only focused on the theoretical domain of religious knowledge but also on the implementation of noble moral values in daily life. The concept of moral education built by Guru Sekumpul by integrating *aqidah* and morals turns out to have similarities with the concept of character education initiated by Thomas Lickona who believes that (Lickona, 1996) character must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling and behaviour. to develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.

By using a holistic approach, the recitation that he fostered grew rapidly and became a learning center for the community, this shows his dedication in spreading knowledge and shaping the character of the people is very high (Hartati, 2024). This needs to be done because knowledge is not only seen as an objective and rational achievement, but must also be driven by clear moral goals (Bakar & Mustaqim, 2025). In this regard, Abah Guru Sekumpul succeeded in integrating spiritual, moral and intellectual aspects in an ideal educational concept in the character building of the people. Therefore, Sufism needs to be integrated in the Islamic religious education curriculum, because it can affect the process of forming students' attitudes, behavior and character (Abitolkha & Mas'ud, 2021)

Based on the above discussion, the basics of character education according to Abah Guru Sekumpul can be described as follows.

### The Basics of Guru Sekumpul's Character Education



### The Implication of Guru Sekumpul's Thought in the Integration of Akidah, Akhlak, and Local Wisdom of the Banjar Community

The thought of KH Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani, better known as Guru Sekumpul, offers an important contribution to Islamic education, especially in the aspect of moral education and the preservation of local wisdom in South Kalimantan. In every lecture and recitation, he consistently emphasizes the importance of character building. According to Guru Sekumpul, moral education does not only target external behavior, but also purification of the heart (*tazkiyatun nafs*) through a Sufistic approach that can be implemented in daily life.

The Banjar community itself has unique characteristics as an ethno-religious group, where religion and culture are seen as two sides of an inseparable coin (Supriansyah, 2019). Islam for them is not only a spiritual belief, but also a cultural identity embedded in social life. It is in this context that noble values such as patience, compassion, humility, and helpfulness taught by Guru Sekumpul are able to shape a civilization and become an integral part of the Banjar people's local wisdom.

A striking social phenomenon related to his thought is the haul of Guru Sekumpul held annually in Sekumpul Martapura. This event is not only a spiritual expression based on local wisdom, but also a tangible manifestation of collective moral values inherited and preserved by the Banjar people. Statistical data shows that the number of haul pilgrims continues to increase significantly. At the 19th haul in 2024, the number of pilgrims is estimated to reach 3.3 million people, and increase to around 4.1 million people at the 20th haul in 2025, an increase of around 800,000 people (Rizal, 2025).

The larger and more organized hauls also show that the integration of the moral values and insan kamil taught by Guru Sekumpul is not only normative, but also very praxis and contextual. The haul is always supported by a growing number of volunteers every year. They provide various free facilities, ranging from food and drinks, pick-up from the airport, to lodging for pilgrims (Mursyidi, 2025). This reflects that Guru Sekumpul's teachings have successfully synergized classical Islamic values with local Banjar culture, thus forming a religious society based on noble morals and love for the Prophet.

The implicit meaning of Guru Sekumpul's teachings that have been applied and implemented in Banjar society reflects the deep integration between Islam and Banjar local culture. His teachings do not separate Islam from local customs, but rather harmonize them organically to create a strong ethno-religious identity. The Banjar people feel that religion and culture are inseparable, making Islam an integral part of their social and cultural life. This shows that religion does not have to abolish or negate local wisdom, but instead can enrich and deepen the meaning of existing culture (Supriansyah, 2019).

In addition, the moral education taught by Guru Sekumpul goes beyond outward aspects, emphasizing the cleansing of the heart (*tazkiyatun nafs*) and the formation of a well-rounded soul. His teachings are very relevant to people's daily lives, so that people not only perform formal religious rituals, but also develop a high moral awareness. Thus, religion plays a role in forming a complete human being (*insan kamil*) who is not only obedient to worship, but also behaves nobly and is socially responsible (Daudi, 2012; Annisa, 2021).

In the face of life's challenges, Guru Sekumpul instilled the values of patience and humility as key attitudes. The Banjar community is taught to accept reality and trials with a calm and open spirit, without allowing negative emotions to overwhelm them. This attitude strengthens inner calm and self-control as the main foundation in building a harmonious life, which is the implicit meaning of his teachings (Anwar, 2018).

Social phenomena such as Guru Sekumpul's annual haul are also manifestations of the spirit of gotong royong and social solidarity taught in his teachings. This activity shows how people are taught to help each other selflessly and strengthen social ties. Through Guru Sekumpul's teachings, religion acts as a force that strengthens social ties and builds an inclusive society full of care and togetherness (Mursyidi, 2025; Rizal, 2025)

From a social perspective, the annual Guru Sekumpul commemoration attended by millions of people seems to indicate that the character education taught by Guru Sekumpul is easily accepted and highly relevant to modern times. His emphasis on character building and solidarity has made him not only a cleric but also a spiritual and social figure capable of mobilizing the wider community (Hadi, 2015; Ali, 2003).

In terms of culture and local wisdom, the art of shalawat al-banjari, which originally only developed in Banjar, has now spread to almost all regions of Indonesia and even abroad. This seems to be a symbol of identity that the Banjar tribe is a community that not only has a good social spirit but also has a deep love for the Prophet Muhammad.

Thus, Guru Sekumpul's thinking not only enriches moral education theoretically, but has also been implemented in practice in the local wisdom of the Banjar community, which continues to develop widely as a strong religious and social tradition.

## Conclusion

Guru Sekumpul has deep thoughts about the meaning of education. In understanding the purpose of education, Guru Sekumpul believes that the main purpose of Islamic education is to know Allah SWT truly so that in any condition an individual will not forget Him.

The thought of character education taught by Guru Sekumpul is holistic although it tends to be more focused on the concept of purification of the soul. The delivery of recitation material in a simple language style with examples that are easy to understand rationally makes the recitation assembly always grow. He not only conveys moral concepts in verbal languages but is also able to become a person whose own morals or behavior are easily imitated by his students.

The only perfect person according to Guru Sekumpul is the Prophet Muhammad *S{alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*. However, the close connection of the inner side of a Muslim with the Messenger of Allah can be a means for someone to get the radiance of perfection

from the Messenger of Allah. Therefore, one of the ways is to multiply the recitation of salawat to Rasulullah Muhammad *S{alla Alla>hu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*.

The basics of Abah Guru Sekumpul's character education are summarized into five main components. Namely, 1) *Insan Kamil* Concept (The Prophet Muhammad as the embodiment of human perfection, combining majesty and beauty); 2) *Moral Excellence Pathway* (Recitation of salawat as a means to foster spiritual refinement and love for the Prophet); 3) *Soul Purification* (Emphasis on purifying the soul from inner vices for true moral development); 4) *Integrated Islamic Education* (Unification of theology, Sufism, and ethics in education); 5) *Holistic Educational Paradigm* (Integration of moral, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions in teaching). Guru Sekumpul's educational thinking was successfully implemented in the form of practical noble values and became part of the local wisdom of the Banjar people.

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