Journal of Educational Sciences
Journal homepage: https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES

P-ISSN 2581-1657
E-ISSN 2581-2203

Character Education Values in Surah Ash-Shaffat Verses 102–110 According to M. Quraish Shihab's Interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 23 Sept 2025
Revised: 13 Oct 2025
Accepted: 25 Oct 2025
Published online: 05 Nov 2025

Keywords:

Character Education,
Qur'anic Perspective,
Tafsir Al-Misbah

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Article Doi:

https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.6.p.5575-5586

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A B S T R A C T

This study is driven by a moral crisis within the contemporary Islamic education system, particularly in the realm of character education, which calls for reconstructing value-based learning rooted in the Qur'an. This condition indicates a reasoning gap in comprehending and implementing character values that align with current global realities. The objective of this research is to analyze M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of Surah Ash-Shaffat (verses 102–110), to examine the distinctive style and thematic orientation of Tafsir Al-Misbah, and to identify the embedded values of character education found within these verses. This study employs a qualitative approach using library research, with data collected from primary sources—namely, Tafsir Al-Misbah—and supported by secondary references related to Qur'anic interpretation and Islamic education. The findings reveal three key points: (1) the verses illustrate the exemplary character of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail in their patience, spiritual resilience, and obedience to divine commands; (2) the interpretive model of Tafsir Al-Misbah adopts a socio-cultural and literary approach with an emphasis on the relevance of Qur'anic teachings in daily life; and (3) character values identified include faith, respect, responsibility, compassion, and sincerity. These values are fundamental in constructing a character education framework that reflects Qur'anic principles and addresses the challenges of modern Islamic education.

1. Introduction

The era of globalization is characterized by rapid advancements in information and communication technology, making the internet an inseparable part of human life. However, without adequate filters, this influx of information tends to have more negative than positive impacts, particularly on the younger generation (Arifin, 2021). In this regard, education plays a strategic role in filtering information, distinguishing between content that should be accepted and that which must be

rejected (Yusuf, 2022). Education is not merely a vehicle for the transmission of knowledge but also a critical foundation for character formation (Muhaimin, 2018). Within this context, character education becomes highly relevant. Since the time of Plato, moral education has been a central component of educational systems, alongside literacy and knowledge development (Fauziah, 2021). In Indonesia, character education has deep historical roots, from the visions of the nation's founders to the early post-independence moral education curricula (Rahmat, 2020). However, as society evolves, students face serious challenges, including moral degradation manifesting in violent behavior, technological misuse, and cybercrime (Sutrisno & Kurniawati, 2022).

In facing the moral and ethical challenges of globalization, education must not only transmit knowledge but also cultivate values that shape students' character and worldview. The increasing moral degradation among youth, exacerbated by technological misuse, highlights the inadequacy of education that neglects spiritual dimensions. Therefore, character education grounded in religious values becomes crucial to balance intellectual progress with moral integrity. Within the Islamic framework, the Qur'an and Sunnah serve as the ultimate sources of guidance for moral development. This foundation offers timeless principles that can be contextualized to address modern ethical dilemmas through meaningful and spiritually rooted education.

The challenges of globalization and technological disruption necessitate a strong, spiritually grounded character education. Ironically, moral violations have also been reported in institutions expected to model character development, such as Islamic boarding schools (Fitriani, 2023). This highlights a fundamental issue in the implementation of character values within educational environments. Thus, it becomes essential to return to the primary sources of Islamic teachings—the Qur'an and the Sunnah to build a comprehensive and contextualized system of character education (Hidayat, 2021). One of the most prominent figures in contemporary Qur'anic interpretation in Indonesia is M. Quraish Shihab, through his seminal work *Tafsir Al-Misbah*. This tafsir employs a *tahlili* method with an *adabi ijtima'i* (socio-cultural) approach, making it especially relevant for exploring character education values (Shihab, 2020; Nurhayati, 2022). Surah Ash-Shaffat verses 102–110, which narrate the exemplary story of Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail, serve as a profound foundation for cultivating character in the current generation (Fadlullah, 2021).

This study aims to address a research gap in Qur'an-based character education by analyzing M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of Surah Ash-Shaffat:102–110 in *Tafsir Al-Misbah*. The objectives are: (1) to explore Quraish Shihab's interpretation of these verses; (2) to examine the style and features of *Tafsir Al-Misbah*; and (3) to identify the character education values embedded in the verses. As the basis for problem-solving, this study employs a library research approach, referring to theories of character education and thematic Qur'anic interpretation. Previous literature has shown that character in the Islamic perspective is not merely the result of rational thought but is intimately connected to intellect, spirit, heart, and life purpose, all rooted in *Qur'anic* ethics (Suhada, 2019; Halimah, 2023). Therefore,

this research is expected to contribute to the understanding and application of character values within the framework of contemporary Islamic education.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a library research design, which emphasizes textual analysis and literature review as the primary sources of data. This method is deemed appropriate, considering that the objects of study are texts and interpretative works related to the *Qur'anic* verses and Islamic education. Library research involves collecting data exclusively from published sources, such as books, journal articles, and other documented materials relevant to the research focus. The primary object of this research is the interpretation of Surah *Ash-Shaffat* verses 102–110 as found in *Tafsir Al-Misbah* by M. Quraish Shihab. Accordingly, the primary data source consists of the *Tafsir Al-Misbah*, while secondary sources include books, journal articles, and other scholarly works that discuss *Qur'anic* interpretation and character education in Islam.

The data collection technique used is document analysis. As a library-based study, the researcher collected data through systematic reading, note-taking, and extraction of key information from the relevant literature (Arikunto, 2014). The data collection process consisted of the following steps: first, editing – Verifying the completeness and clarity of the collected data to ensure accuracy and consistency. Second, organizing – Structuring and categorizing the data according to the predetermined framework aligned with the research objectives. Third, data Analysis – Interpreting the data through theoretical, thematic, and contextual analysis to draw meaningful conclusions based on the research questions (Arikunto, 2014).

To analyze the data, the researcher employed the *tahlili* method of interpretation. This method involves examining the meanings conveyed by the *Qur'anic* text verse by verse and chapter by chapter, in accordance with the order of the *mushaf*. Etymologically, *tahlili* refers to an analytical approach that explores the linguistic, contextual, and thematic dimensions of each verse, reflecting the exegete's interpretative framework and scholarly orientation. This method enables a comprehensive understanding of the character values conveyed in the selected verses, while remaining faithful to the textual and theological structure of the Qur'an. The application of this approach is aimed at ensuring both the depth and relevance of the interpretation to contemporary educational contexts, especially in the domain of character development in Islamic education.

3. Results and Discussion

a. The Position of Surah *Ash-Shaffat*

Surah *Ash-Shaffat* was revealed prior to the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina, classifying it as a Makkiyah surah. Its name is derived from the opening verse, "*Ash-Shaffat*," meaning "those who line up," referring to the angels. While a

similar word appears in Surah *Al-Mulk*, it does not occur at the beginning, and *Ash-Shaffat* was revealed earlier than *Al-Mulk*. Thematically, this surah aligns with other *Meccan* chapters by affirming the Oneness of Allah (*tawhid*), highlighting the marvels of His creation, affirming the truth of prophet hood through the narratives of several prophets, and underscoring the certainty of the Day of Judgment. These stories illustrate divine justice and the ultimate reward or punishment awaiting the obedient and the defiant. The central objective of the surah is to reaffirm the concluding message of Surah *Yasin*, namely the transcendence of Allah from all forms of deficiency and the inevitable return of all human beings to Him for final and just judgment. This reinforces the necessity of monotheism. The surah's title, *Ash-Shaffat* (those who stand in rows), symbolizes the disciplined ranks of angels and alludes to divine order and authority (*Thalib*, 2012).

b. Asbabun Nuzul (Context of Revelation)

Anyone granted knowledge of the secrets of God's servants, yet fails to embody divine mercy by concealing the faults of wrongdoers, exercising patience toward oppressors, forgiving the ignorant, showing kindness to the wicked, and extending compassion to fellow human beings risks turning such knowledge into a source of spiritual trial. This may even result in divine retribution if one oversteps their bounds and imitates God's majesty and judgment. This is a severe form of spiritual trial, as Al-Ghazali notes, the essence of knowledge is not merely to know but to humble oneself before God and reflect His attributes of mercy (al-Ghazali, 2005). It is narrated that when Allah allowed Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to witness the dominion of the heavens and the earth, he observed someone committing sin and prayed for that person's destruction. After repeating such prayers, Allah reprimanded Ibrahim, reminding him not to hastily pass judgment upon His servants. This rebuke reflects God's exclusive right to forgive or punish and that humans are not granted this authority (Quraish Shihab, 2007).

Some scholars also argue that this divine reprimand became the pretext for God's command to Ibrahim to sacrifice his son a profound test of his love for God and a reminder of the compassion humans must cultivate toward one another. The unveiling of people's hidden realities (*mukāshafah*) is a divine favor, which should be received with gratitude by forgiving others' faults and maintaining their dignity (Nasr, 2006). Trials and hardships are manifestations of divine love, serving as tests of human faithfulness, as indicated in the Qur'an (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 155). Even prophets are not exempt from misjudgment, and divine correction ensures they remain on the path of righteousness. At times, a sinner might be on a sincere path toward repentance, enduring an inner journey far more valuable in God's sight than the arrogance of a self-righteous worshiper (Ibn Qayyim, 2013). Therefore, approaching others with empathy and mercy is integral to noble character and a true understanding of *tawhid*.

c. M. Quraish Shihab's Interpretation of Surah Ash-Shaffat Verses 102–110 (in Tafsir Al-Misbah)

Surah Ash-Shaffat verse 102 describes a pivotal event that marks the emergence of various character education values in Islam. When Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) shared his dream with his son, Prophet Ismail (Ishmael), he did not impose his decision unilaterally but instead invited him into a thoughtful dialogue. This interaction reflects a democratic and compassionate approach to family communication (Shihab, 2020; Abdullah, 2021). The use of present-tense verbs such as *inni arā* ("I see") and *adhbaḥuka* ("I sacrifice you") conveys the continuity and urgency of the divine command. Ismail's calm and obedient response illustrates qualities of faithfulness, spiritual maturity, and self-awareness an outcome of the successful transmission of aqidah (creedal education) from his father (Zarkasyi, 2020; Nasution, 2019). Verse 103 emphasizes the complete submission of both Ibrahim and Ismail to Allah's will. The phrase *fa lammā aslamā* ("when they had both submitted") signifies not only physical but also spiritual surrender. This event exemplifies *tazkiyatun nafs* (soul purification) through patience, trust in God, and sincerity. Their composure in the face of an intense trial reveals the depth of their faith and serves as a timeless model in Islamic character education (Jannah, 2022).

Verse 104 illustrates divine intervention, as Allah calls out to Ibrahim, indicating that the test has reached its conclusion. The phrase "O Ibrahim!" is a direct acknowledgment of his sincerity and obedience. This moment offers a profound lesson: that divine assistance comes to those who are sincerely devoted and often arrives at the most critical moments. It reflects the importance of instilling faith in God's promises as a vital educational value in Islam. In verse 105, Allah affirms Ibrahim's success in fulfilling the vision. The statement *ṣaddaqta ar-ru'yā* ("you have fulfilled the vision") reflects the importance of aligning intentions with actions an essential principle in moral and character education. Allah also highlights the reward for those who do good (*al-muḥsinīn*), reaffirming that every righteous act will be rewarded in this world or the Hereafter (Rohman, 2017; Rahmawati, 2021).

Verse 106 explicitly defines the event as *al-balā' al-mubīn* ("a manifest trial"). This test is neither symbolic nor superficial it demands extraordinary strength of faith. In the educational context, it teaches that students must be prepared to face life's challenges with patience and perseverance. Tests are not punishments but mechanisms for spiritual elevation and personal growth (Harun & Sari, 2022). Verse 107 describes how Allah replaced Ismail with a great sacrifice, symbolizing that God does not seek literal human sacrifice, but rather the willingness to forsake worldly attachments in pursuit of divine love and acceptance. The meaning of *qurban* (sacrifice) here teaches personal and social responsibility surrender to Allah and empathy toward others (Fauzan, 2020; Suhartini, 2023).

Verses 108 and 109 reveal how Allah immortalized praise and blessings upon Ibrahim. This enduring spiritual legacy illustrates that noble character and moral conduct will be remembered across generations. It affirms the long-term goal of character education: to instill values that endure and inspire beyond one's lifetime (Asiyah, 2021). Finally, in verse 110, Allah declares that Ibrahim is among *al-muḥsinīn* and *al-mu'minīn* those who excel in good deeds and possess firm belief. In Islamic pedagogy, the ultimate goal of character education is to reach the state of *ihsan* worshiping Allah as though one sees Him. This verse confirms that

education must aim not only for cognitive mastery but also for the holistic development of integrity and spiritual consciousness (Wahyuni, 2022).

In summary, verses 102–110 of Surah Ash-Shaffat encompass a comprehensive array of character education values including *aqidah* (faith), *ibadah* (worship), *akhlaq* (ethics), *shari'ah* (divine law), *musyawarah* (consultation), *sabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *ridha* (contentment), *sidq* (honesty), and *taqwa* (God-consciousness). The integration of these values in Islamic education helps shape individuals who are faithful, righteous, and morally upright embodying the concept of *insān kāmil* (the complete human being) (Maulana, 2023).

d. Character Education Values Contained in Surah Ash-Shaffat Verses 102–110

This study identifies a rich set of character education values derived from the story of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail as narrated in Surah Ash-Shaffat verses 102–110. These verses go beyond historical narration; they serve as theological, ethical, and psychological models for character formation in Islamic education. First, the value of aqidah (faith) is strongly emphasized. The unwavering belief of both Ibrahim and Ismail in God's command forms the foundation for their actions. Ibrahim trusted his dream as divine revelation and acted upon it without hesitation, while Ismail responded with remarkable faith and patience despite the personal cost. This illustrates the central importance of internalizing *tawhid* (divine oneness) in character education. Second, the value of worship (ibadah) is reflected in their total obedience to Allah.

Worship here is not merely ritual but a sincere expression of submission and love toward the Creator. Ibrahim’s prayer for a righteous son and both figures' full surrender during the trial illustrate that worship must be understood as complete dependence on God. Character education thus requires a spiritual approach that integrates humility with devotion. Third, the value of *shari’ah*, particularly through the command of sacrifice, conveys the principle of obedience and meaningful sacrifice. The command to sacrifice a child was not meant to be executed literally but symbolically demonstrates the importance of being ready to surrender what is most cherished for divine values. Fourth, the value of *akhlaq* (morality) is vividly present in their behavior. Ibrahim showed wisdom and tenderness in communicating with Ismail, while Ismail replied with respect, sincerity, and acceptance. These behaviors serve as ethical models for fostering harmony in family and educational settings.

Values such as trust in God (tawakkul)**,** sincerity (ikhlas)**,** and patience (sabr) reinforce their spiritual resilience. Tawakkul is seen in their reliance on divine will after doing their part. Ikhlas is shown in their wholehearted acceptance of God’s command. Sabr is the emotional and spiritual strength that sustains their actions, and is vital in overcoming life's trials. From an Islamic educational standpoint, Ibrahim’s success in raising a spiritually mature and resilient child emphasizes the fundamental role of the family. The family, as the first and primary school (*madrasah*), is essential for the internalization of religious values.

Ethical and aesthetic values are also evident in the tender language used. The phrase *"Yā bunayya"* ("O my beloved son") reflects affection and honor, while Ismail's gentle response reveals intergenerational empathy and grace in communication. The value of consultation (musyawarah) is embodied in the decision-making process. Despite the divine origin of the command, Ibrahim consulted Ismail, showing openness and shared responsibility—key democratic values in character education. Taqwa (God-consciousness) is the culminating value of this spiritual journey. It entails not only external obedience but internal awareness, sincerity, courage, and humility. Islamic education must place *taqwa* at the center of its character formation efforts. Other values such as honesty**,** contentment**,** and forgiveness can also be inferred. Ismail's response was not feigned; it was sincere and spiritually mature. His willingness to accept divine decree and support his father exemplifies emotional intelligence and depth of faith.

The story also reflects filial piety (birrul walidain)**.** Ismail did not simply obey; he also empathized and supported his father wholeheartedly. Islamic education must cultivate this value early to nurture generations that embody empathy, respect, and familial responsibility. Ultimately, the narrative of Ibrahim and Ismail in Surah *Ash-Shaffat* verses 102–110 presents a holistic integration of spiritual, moral, social, and emotional values. It offers a concrete model for implementing value-based education in Islamic institutions an approach rooted in divine guidance and universal human dignity.

e. The Relevance of Quraish Shihab's Interpretation to Character Values in Surah Ash-Shaffat Verses 102–110

One of the significant aspects of Quraish Shihab's thought is his call for Muslims to rise from backwardness by fully utilizing their spiritual, intellectual, and physical potential to become ideal Muslims as envisioned in Islamic teachings. Through his scholarly works, Shihab encourages continuous personal growth and lifelong learning as a form of striving for goodness. He recognizes that one of the greatest barriers to knowledge acquisition lies within the individual often due to reluctance to ask questions, whether caused by pride or shyness. In his writings, Quraish Shihab highlights the urgency of Islamic education by interpreting various aspects of life through the lens of the Qur'an, including the issue of character education. According to his analysis, the Qur'an addresses several key components of Islamic education: its objectives, methods, characteristics, and content. The Qur'an serves as a clear guide for all humanity, particularly educators, in instilling character values that shape strong personal integrity. As a complete religion, Islam provides detailed frameworks for character education, with the Qur'an frequently discussing noble traits and virtuous personality formation.

In Islam, the primary aim of character education is to ensure that individuals live within the bounds of truth and remain on the straight path in accordance with divine guidance. This, ultimately, leads to happiness in both this world and the Hereafter. Quraish Shihab's interpretation of Surah Ash-Shaffat verses 102–110 affirms these principles by presenting a model for moral character grounded in Qur'anic teachings. The values emphasized in this context include religious (spiritual)

values, ethical values, aesthetic values, and logical values each of which contributes to the development of a well-rounded, righteous individual.

f. The Implications of Educational Values in Surah Ash-Shaffat Verses 102–110 for Islamic Education (Individual and Social Piety)

The story of Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Ismail in Surah Ash-Shaffat verses 102–110 illustrates the integration of individual and social piety. Individual piety is demonstrated through unwavering faith, submission, sincerity, and patience in fulfilling Allah's commands. In contrast, social piety is reflected in compassion, respect for parents, dialogue, and deep empathy in interpersonal relationships. Verse 102 initiates the portrayal of core individual character. Ibrahim said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think." Ibrahim's choice to invite dialogue rather than impose his will highlights a high standard of social ethics. Ismail's obedient response reveals profound personal character shaped by strong *hablum minallah* a relationship with God characterized by obedience and submission. In verse 103, as both surrender and Ibrahim lays down his son, they exhibit complete obedience and unconditional devotion to Allah. This represents core Islamic virtues such as patience, trust in God, and courage in upholding truth. This heart-based faith, as opposed to ritualistic religiosity, forms the foundation of authentic piety.

Verses 104–105 mark the turning point in this profound trial. Allah calls upon Ibrahim, confirming that he has fulfilled his vision. In the context of Islamic education, this indicates that true faith, when combined with practice, will earn divine recognition. This reinforces the notion that piety must be expressed through real actions, not merely theoretical knowledge. Social piety is evident in Ismail's treatment of his father. He did not merely obey but responded with compassion and sensitivity. He chose submission not only out of obligation but to protect his father from prolonged grief. This illustrates Islamic social ethics, which prioritize care, respect, and emotional responsibility toward others, especially one's parents. Verse 107, in which Allah ransoms Ismail with a great sacrifice, conveys a crucial symbolic message: sacrifice (*qurban*) is a pathway to divine closeness. This act is not merely a ritual but a spiritual journey toward *maqām mahabbah* (a station of divine love). In the social realm, sacrifice implies acts of generosity and charity serving the community for collective welfare. *Qurban* thus reflects a harmonious balance between *ḥablum minallah* (relationship with God) and *ḥablum minannās* (relationship with fellow humans).

The story also underscores that religious rituals do not stand alone they carry a broader social mission. Acts of worship like Hajj, prayer, and sacrifice should lead to social transformation. Hajj, for example, is not just a set of rituals like *tawaf* and *wuquf*, but also a call for global solidarity, empathy, and a willingness to sacrifice for others. Verses 108–110 reflect the spiritual legacy of Prophet Ibrahim, whose name is remembered and honored for his righteousness and piety. This demonstrates that authentic piety leaves a lasting impact on society and future generations. It reinforces the idea that noble character is not only a personal virtue but a public good that contributes to communal well-being. It is essential to

emphasize that genuine piety cannot be limited to ritual observance it must also inspire social change. In today's reality, there is often a disconnect between ritual worship and moral behavior. Many who pray regularly still harm others through slander, dishonesty, or injustice. Therefore, Islamic education must foster the integration of faith, righteous deeds, and social responsibility into a unified value system.

Ultimately, implementing these values should lead to the strengthening of social responsibility, environmental consciousness (*ecopedagogy*), and active community engagement. Islam strongly emphasizes environmental stewardship as part of humanity's responsibility as *khalifah* (custodians of the earth). Thus, righteous deeds extend to actions such as maintaining cleanliness, conserving nature, and preventing harm reflecting that piety is not only theocentric but also *ecocentric* and *anthropocentric*. In conclusion, the story of Ibrahim and Ismail in Surah *Ash-Shaffat* presents a holistic model of balanced ritual and social worship. Islamic education must aim not only to produce individuals who are spiritually pious, but also those who are compassionate, just, and committed to sustaining life on Earth.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the interpretation of Surah *Ash-Shaffat* verses 102–110 by M. Quraish Shihab reveals a profound framework for character education rooted in Qur'anic values. The loyalty of Prophet Ismail to his father and his unwavering obedience to God reflect his deep spiritual awareness and moral maturity, shaped by the nurturing of Prophet Ibrahim. Their patience, sincerity, and readiness to face divine trials demonstrate that righteous character is not merely inherited but cultivated through faith, education, and example. The analysis also affirms that *Tafsir Al-Misbah* adopts a socio-cultural literary style (*adabi ijtima'i*), combining detailed textual analysis with real-life moral applications. Quraish Shihab's approach using the *tahlili* method emphasizes verse-by-verse interpretation, while integrating elements of thematic and comparative tafsir. His interpretive style enables a contextual and accessible understanding of the Qur'anic teachings, particularly in the realm of character development.

The educational values found in Surah Ash-Shaffat verses 102–110 such as faith, obedience, sacrifice, patience, trust, consultation, honesty, and devotion serve as foundational pillars for Islamic character education. These values, as reflected in the lives of Prophet Ibrahim and Ismail, offer a timeless moral compass for addressing contemporary challenges in education. They also highlight that divine trials are not forms of punishment, but opportunities to refine the soul and strengthen one's relationship with God. Ultimately, the findings of this study contribute to the discourse on Qur'an-based character education by offering a clear model of *akhlaq karimah* (noble character), grounded in prophetic narratives. It reinforces the need for a return to Qur'anic guidance in developing educational curricula that nurture integrity, empathy, and holistic human excellence. By internalizing and applying these values, Islamic education can foster a generation of *insān kāmil* individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, and morally complete.

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How to cite this article:

Firdaus., Suryani., & Karnedi, R. (2025). Character Education Values in Surah Ash-Shaffat Verses 102–110 According to M. Quraish Shihab's Interpretation in Tafsir Al-Misbah. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, *9(6)*, 5575-5586.