

## **THE BROTHER'S AL-SHAFI'S PERSPECTIVE ON HUMANS**

**Azizah Hanum OK**

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia

### **ABSTRACT**

Humans are God-created creatures who have been extensively studied by experts from various disciplines. Humans as one of God's creatures on Earth have always piqued the interest of researchers. Almost all higher education institutions research humans, their work, and the effects of that work on themselves, society, and the environment. However, despite numerous studies on humans, the essence of science, which is the result of human creation, has yet to be answered by science. This study is one of many that seek to discuss the concept of humans as defined by the Ikhwan al-Shafa. This study employs a descriptive method, taking inventory of the Brotherhood's work on humans and describing it as it is. Meanwhile, data analysis was carried out using content analysis, specifically by analyzing the meaning contained in the Ikhwan Al-overall Shafa's thinking.

**Keywords: Human, Ikhwan al-Shafa, Rasail**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans, according to Paulo Freire, are the only creatures who have a relationship with the rest of the world. Humans differ from animals that have no history and exist in the eternal present, have uncritical contact with the world, and exist only in the world. Humans differ from animals in their ability to reflect (including the operations of intentionality, directionality, temporariness, and transcendence), and they are related in their ability to convey relationships with the world. Human actions and consciousness are historical in nature; humans form epic connections with their world, demonstrating that they relate here to there, now to the past, and now to the future. History is created by humans, and history creates humans. (Denis Collin, *Paulo Freire*, 2002: 5)

As described by Allah in His word Q.S. Al-Israa (17), humans are creatures created by Allah SWT and are most honored by Him above all other creatures. ("And indeed, We have honored Adam's children, We have carried them on land and in the sea, We have given them sustenance from the good, and We have given them a perfect advantage over most creatures whom We have created.")

Humans are God's creation that many experts from various disciplines study. Almost all higher education institutions research humans, their work, and the effects of that work on themselves, society, and the environment. Similarly, experts have studied humans in their respective fields. However, despite numerous studies on humans, science has yet to answer the question that is the result of human creation itself.

This paper seeks to participate in the study of human beings, with the author focusing on the ideas developed by a group of Muslim scholars known as the Ikhwan Al-Shafa.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is a descriptive method, in which an inventory of the Brotherhood's thoughts on the subject matter discussed is taken and described as is. In this regard, the Ikhwan's ideas as contained in the main reference material relating to the issues discussed will be explored.

Meanwhile, content analysis was used to analyze the data. (David L. Sills, 1972: 72). That is, by analyzing the meaning contained in the Ikhwan Al-overall Shafa's thought. This prompted further investigation into the potential significance of these ideas in modern Islamic education thought.

In this study, data was gathered through library research, specifically by reading and reviewing Ikhwan al-work Shafa's as primary data. The manuscript used in this study was published in 1376 Hijriyah/1957 AD by Dar Shadir in Beirut. Books and works by other authors related to the Ikhwan and its ideas, as well as books on education and morals, are used to supplement the information and sharpen the analysis. Other people's research on the Ikhwan is intended to understand the Ikhwan's movements and thoughts. Meanwhile, research on education and morals books is being conducted in order to find material for comparison of the Ikhwan's thoughts, with the hope that the Ikhwan's views on moral education will be known.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The expression "human nature" refers to certain tendencies in human understanding. The term "nature" implies a constant, namely the essential identity that causes something to be itself and distinguishes it from others. (Murad Wahbah, dkk., 1971: 84, 99, 202) In determining something that is the characteristic or essential identity of a being called human, various concepts and points of view emerge. (Kattsoff, 1986: 53, 304).

On the other hand, there is a school of thought that holds that humans do not have a distinct identity known as essence. According to this group, humans are historical creatures because they have a history that sets them apart from

other creatures. The course of history can help us understand humans. (Louis Leahy, 1984: 6) What emerges from historical experience is a set of anthropological constants, namely the impulses and orientations that persist in humans. ( M. Sastrapratedja, 1983: ix)

The religious philosophical group Ikhwan al-Shafa also discussed human nature. According to the Ikhwan, humans are made up of two parts: the physical body and the spiritual soul. Despite the fact that the two substances have different, even contradictory properties, they cannot be separated in order to carry out an action. Every human activity is the result of a physical and spiritual interaction. As a result, the two cannot exist independently when carrying out an activity.

The following are relevant legal opinions that provide a clear description of the physical body and spiritual soul's substance:

بأن الانسان لما كان هو جملة مجموعة من جسد جسماني ونفس روحانية، وهما  
جوهران متباينا في الصفات، متضادان في الأحوال ومشتركان في الأفعال  
العارضة والصفات الزائلة

{Indeed, man is made up of two substances: physical and spiritual bodies. The two elements are two different substances with opposing, even contradictory properties. However, they are both united in doing an outward deed.}. (*Rasail*, Juz I, h. 259)

According to the Ikhwan, human nature is a combination of the physical and the spiritual, as stated above. Humans are not only limited to bodies that are without or only in the nathiqah soul, with the body serving as a complementary element, as some other philosophers believe, but humans include both physical and spiritual bodies. (Al-Ghazali, 1968: 19, 24)

In more detail, the Ikhwan explained that the human body is a physical realm made up of four elements: fire, air, water, and earth, all of which are formed by natural processes. In relation to this, Ikhwan and explain:

ان الحسد جوهر جسماني طبيعي. هو متكون من الأخلاط الأربعة المتولدة من الغذاء  
الكانن من الأركان الأربعة التي هي النار والهواء والماء والأرض ذوات الطبائع الأربع  
التي هي الحرارة البرودة والرطوبة واليبوسة، وهو منفس أعني الجسد ونبغي

رومستحيل وراجع الى هذه الأركان الأربعة بعد الموت الذي هو مفارقة النفس الجسد  
وتركها استعماله

{ In reality, the body is a physical physical substance composed of four types of mixtures derived from food and consisting of four elements, namely fire, air, water, and earth, each of which has four properties, namely hot, cold, wet, and dry. When the soul separates from the body and the body no longer uses it, the body will disintegrate and change, returning to this fourth element. }  
(Lihat Rasail, juz II, h. 260)

Furthermore, the Ikhwan stated that the human body is made up of various body parts such as hands, feet, head, back, bones, muscle tissue, blood vessels, flesh, skin, and so on. The body is made up of perfect substances that complement one another. (Rasail, juz II, h. 458)

They go on to say that the human body has negative qualities, as follows:

لأن جوهر الأجسام عاجزة، جاهلة، ميتة ناقصة الحال منفعة حسب...  
{"... Because the body's substance is weak, stupid, dead, and in a state of deprivation, and is only a place for actions to occur...."} (Rasail, juz II: 57)

According to the above description, the human body is a physical realm composed of fire, water, air, and earth that is composed of food through natural processes. The human body is made up of various body parts such as flesh, blood, bones, muscle tissue, blood vessels, feet, hands, head, and other body parts that together form a substance known as the body. However, the body is an inanimate object, and lack of knowledge is a means or location for human actions to take effect. The body has meaning only when the soul is still connected to it. It is preferable if the soul has separated from the body, as the body will be destroyed and returned to its original element, earth.

Humans, in addition to their bodies, have a soul (al-nafs). Here are some more khwan opinions that are important to understand about their views on the soul (al-nafs):

وجوهر النفس خير من جوهر الجسد، وحياة الجسد إلى مدة ما ثم ادتنقطع وتضخل،  
وحياة النفس في الدار الآخرة تبقى

{The substance of the soul is superior to the substance of the body, and the life of the soul is superior to the life of the body, because the life of the body is finite, it will end and perish, whereas the life of the soul in the afterlife will be eternal.}.(Rasail, juz IV: 54)

"Know that the substance of the soul is a heavenly substance, its nature is the spiritual realm, and the soul is self-sufficient, requiring no food, drink, clothing, or shelter," the Brotherhood says elsewhere. (Rasail, juz III: 51)

The Brotherhood, still in touch with the soul, says:

اعلم ان الجواهر النفوس عند الله منزلة و كرامة ليست لجواهر الأجسام، و ذلك لقرب نسبها منه و بعد نسبة الأجسام، و ذلك أن جواهر النفوس حية بذاتها علامة و فعالة و جواهر الأجسام ميتة منفعة لامثال لها

{ Know that the substance of the soul has degrees and honors in the eyes of Allah that the substance of the body does not have. This is due to the soul's close relationship with God, whereas the body's relationship with God is distant. Furthermore, the soul is alive, knows, and can do, whereas the body is only a place for action to take place.} (Rasail, juz II: 461)

The Ikhwan further said:

و أما الصفات المخصّصة بالنفس بمجردة فهي أنها. جوهرة روحانية سماوية نورانية حية بذاتها علامة بالقوة فعالة بالطبع قابلة للتعالم فعالة في الاجسام و لها مستعملة لها و متممة للأجسام الحيوانية و النباتية إلى وقت معلوم، ثمّ أنها تاركة لهذه الأجسام و مفارقة لها، و راجعة إلى عنصرها و معدنها و مبدئها ما كانت إما بريح و غبطة أو ندامة و حزن و خسران

{The soul is a luminous divine spiritual substance that lives by itself, has potential knowledge, has the character to act (active), can receive teachings, carry out activities on the body, and use and perfect the animal body. and vegetable until a certain point, at which point the soul departs and separates from the body, returning to its original element and location. Perhaps he will return with good fortune and kindness, or perhaps with regret, sadness, and loss.}. (Rasail, juz I: 260)

According to some of the quotes above, the Ikhwan believes that the substance of the soul is superior to the substance of the body, and that the life of the soul is superior to the life of the body. This is because the body's life has a time limit that ends when the soul departs. The life of the soul, on the other hand, will continue to be eternal even after the body is no longer united with it. Furthermore, the soul's substance has a degree and glory in the eyes of Allah. This glory is due to a closer disjunction relationship with Allah, because the soul belongs to the divine's spiritual age, whose creation process precedes the physical world.

Another feature of the soul is that it is a living substance with the ability to know, act, and is eternal. However, if the action requires the use of a limb as a means. As a result, humans are both physical and spiritual beings.

According to the Brotherhood, humans include both physical and spiritual bodies, based on the information presented above. Although the Ikhwan believes in dualism, it appears that the Ikhwan is more concerned with the soul element. The soul contains the essence of human nature. This is why the Ikhwan elevates the soul to a higher and more important position. Because the human soul is alive, thinks, and has the capacity to grasp the meaning of reality, Ikhwan believes that the soul contains the essence of human nature. Humans have a privilege that other creatures do not have: the ability to think. The Ikhwan defines humans in this context as living beings who think and die. (Rasail, juz I: 390, 259, 263).

According to the Ikhwan, the above definition of the nature of living and thinking is a trait aimed at the substance of the soul. While death is a characteristic of the body's substance. (Juz I of Rasail: 390, 259, 263) Although the soul has the nature of life, the soul still requires the body as a means of action realization. The body is the driving force, whereas the soul determines human actions. The soul can direct the body to perform good deeds and vice versa. As a result, the actions that result may be good deeds that bring luck or bad deeds that bring loss and misery. As a result, humans have the freedom to choose the actions they want to take.

Although humans have the freedom to choose their actions, it is important to remember that humans are fundamentally holy because they are substances derived from spiritual reality derived from God. "In fact, the parable of the human mind before gaining knowledge or adopting a certain belief is like a white paper that has not been written in writing," the Ikhwan said in this case. (Rasail, juz IV: 51)

Humans, on the other hand, are special creatures with their own distinct characteristics. Humans are unique because they possess all of the special characteristics that other humans possess. Other creatures lack the unique

characteristics that humans have. Humans, like plants, require food and grow. Humans have the ability to feel and move like animals. Humans are unique in that they can speak (al-muthq), think (al-fikr), and provide arguments/hujah (istikhraj al-burhan).

Other creatures lack these three characteristics. Furthermore, the Ikhwan stated that humans, like angels, have the option of not dying. (Juz II: 473) (Rasail) It's just that, in addition to the characteristics mentioned above, humans are creatures of all possibilities, which means that humans may be able to reach high levels like angels if he uses the advantages bestowed upon him. Humans, on the other hand, can fall to the level of animals if these benefits are ignored. As a result, every human being should understand the significance of his or her existence so that human existence in this world can be valued.

The meaning of human existence in this world is the meaning of human existence as long as the spiritual soul is still united with the physical body. This explanation of the meaning of existence is critical in providing a clear picture of education's purpose. The debate over the meaning of human existence cannot be separated from the debate over the purpose of human life itself. Because every human being has a life goal to achieve.

Happiness (al-sa'adah) is the goal of human life, according to the Ikhwan. According to them, happiness is divided into two categories:

- a. Internal happiness This happiness is divided into two types: happiness in the body, such as health and beauty, and happiness in the soul, such as intelligence and good character.
- b. Happiness from without. Happiness is also divided into two types: happiness in having things like wealth and possessions and happiness in having relatives like husband and wife, children, relatives, friends, teachers, leaders, and others. (Rasail, Chapter IV, page 49)

The Ikhwan explained the happiness of this world and the hereafter as follows:



اعلم يا اخي ان الناس ينقسمون في سعادة الدنيا والأخرة وسقائهما أربعة أقسام: فمنهم سعداء في الدنيا والأخرة جميعا، ومنهم أشقياء فيهما جميعا، ومنهم أشقياء في الدنيا وسعداء في الأخرة، ومنهم سعداء في الأخرة

[Know, my brother, that human beings are actually divided into four groups in terms of happiness in this world and the hereafter and misery in this world and the hereafter, namely those who are happy in this world and the hereafter, those who are miserable both in this world and in the hereafter, and those who are miserable. those who are unhappy in this world but happy in the afterlife, and those who are happy in this world but unhappy in the afterlife].(Rasail, juz I: 331)

Furthermore, the Ikhwan explained that those who have good luck in this world by being blessed with wealth and health are those who will be happy in the hereafter. Furthermore, they are always grateful for the favors bestowed upon them. They are always good in preparation for the afterlife.

The second group is the one that is happy in this world but unhappy in the next. This is a group of people who are given the pleasure of material possessions, but they lose sight of themselves, cross boundaries, and always live in luxury.

The third group is those who are unhappy in this world but happy in the next. They are people who are given a long life, but their lives are always colored by various types of disasters. They have no pleasure in this world, but they are patient and always carry out Allah's commands and avoid His prohibitions.

The fourth group is the one who suffers in both this world and the next. These are people who are always unhappy in their lives, whose souls are filthy, and who do not want to do good deeds in this world. These are the people mentioned as losers in the Qur'an (khusran al-mubin). (Juz I:331) (Rasail)

According to the explanation above, the Ikhwan wishes for humans to achieve perfection and happiness, both physical perfection and happiness and spiritual perfection and happiness. Physical and spiritual happiness is the path to eternal happiness, or hereafter happiness. It takes effort to achieve the desired happiness. The effort can be divided into two categories: physical and spiritual development. Physical development is accomplished by maintaining and feeding the body nutritious foods. While spiritual development is achieved

by providing necessary knowledge (al-ma'arif al-haqiqiyah), having good morals (al-akhlaq al-jamillah), holding the correct viewpoint (al-ara al-shahihah), and performing good deeds (al-a'mal al-zakiyyah). Rasail (juz I: 286) Humans are expected to be able to carry out their roles on this planet with this physical and spiritual development.

The Ikhwan explained that humans play the role of servants who must always give the best to their fellow servants and strive to prosper the entire universe.

Humans, in addition to serving Allah, serve as His caliph (representative of Allah) on this earth. This is clear from the Ikhwan's explanation: "Indeed, the human form is Allah's representative on earth." (Rasail, juz II: 179).

Humans are required to prosper, preserve, and control the contents of the universe as Allah's caliph. The following quotation serves as an example:

والغرض من هذه كلها هو أن يتمكن الإنسان وتهياله الشبهه بإله وبارية الذي هو خليفته في أرضه، وعامر عالمه، ومالك ما فيه، وسائل حيوانه، وطربي بناتها، و مستخرج معادنها، ومتحكم ومتسلط على ما فيها، لي دبرها تدبيرات سياسية وسوسها سياسة ربوبية، كما رسم له الوصايا النانوية والرياضات الفلسفية

{ All of this is done to enable and prepare man to identify with his God as his creator, who created man to be his representative on this earth, as an inhabitant and ruler of His natural contents, controller of animals, caretaker of plants, and processor of goods. The mining goods contained within it govern and control everything on this planet, allowing them to be managed in a rububiyyah manner as required by religious and philosophical teachings.} (Rasail, juz I: 298).

As Allah's servants and caliphs, humans are responsible for maintaining order by carrying out various tasks. Humans bear this heavy responsibility because they have been endowed with various abilities. Furthermore, as Allah's servants and caliphs, humans must always strive to identify with God (al-tasyabbuh billah) to the best of their abilities. (Rasail, juz I: 427-428).

This is consistent with Langgulung's belief that human potentials are summed up in al-asma' al-husna, or Allah's 99 attributes. Human development of these qualities is worship in the broadest sense, because humans were created to worship Allah. To achieve this level of "worship," the attributes of

God contained in al-asma al-husna must be developed in humans as fully as possible. According to Islam, this is education. The 99 attributes of God are human potentials that must be fully developed. So, unlike Sparta and Athens education, Islamic education seeks to develop the whole human being, not just fragments of the potentials that God has given to humans. (langgulung, 1995: 263-264).

Humans have been given various tools to help them identify with God. "Indeed, Allah is the most praised when combining the soul with the body... providing and strengthening it with various tools and provisions," the Ikhwan said in this case. (Rasail, juz I: 312).

The Ikhwan also explained that the equipment consisted of natural powers, innate morals, body forms and members, feelings, thoughts, movements, actions carried out by one's own will, actions carried out by one's own choice, and many other powers. given to humans in order for them to carry out their roles on earth, both as Allah's servants and as His caliph (Rasail, juz I: 412-413).

Humans are also endowed with the following mental abilities:

1. The power of imagination (al-quwwah al-mutakhaiyyilah), or the soul's ability to receive information from the five senses. This is located in the frontal lobe of the brain.
2. Thinking power (al-quwwah al-mufakkirah), which is the power of the soul in the midbrain and functions as an information processor given the power of imagination. This power is in charge of sorting through the information received by the imagination from the five senses, determining what is right and wrong, good and bad, and sending the processed results to the storage power (al-quwwah Al Hafizah).
3. Storage power (al-quwwah al-hafidzah), which is found in the back of the brain and serves as a repository for processed thinking power.

4. Disclosing power (*al-quwwah al-nathiqah*), which is the power located in the throat and tongue that is in charge of retrieving information stored in the storage power and then revealing it through the tongue.
5. Creative Power (*al-quwwah al-shani'ah*), which is the soul's power in charge of all actions. Humans use this power to express all of their knowledge through actual works. 414 (*Rasail*, Juz II).

Thus, the Ikhwan explained human power and its relationship to physical activity as a provision for carrying out their role on this earth, both as servants and as caliphs of Allah.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

According to the Ikhwan, humans are made up of two substances: physical and spiritual bodies. Although physical and spiritual substances have different, even contradictory properties, they work together to perform an external action. The human body is a physical realm made up of fire, water, air, and earth. The human body is an inanimate object with no knowledge that serves as a means or location for human actions to take effect. If the human body is still connected to the soul, it has meaning. As a result, the Ikhwan believe that the soul is superior to the body. The life of the soul is superior to the life of the body because the life of the body has a time limit after which it will die, whereas the life of the soul will be eternal. Aside from that, another reason why the soul is superior to the body is because the soul has a close relationship with Allah, whereas the body has a distant relationship. Humans' uniqueness lies in their ability to speak (*al-muthq*), think (*al-fikr*), and provide arguments / arguments (*istikhrāj al-burhan*). Other creatures do not have this distinction.

The Ikhwan divides human power into four categories: 1) The power of imagination (*al-quwwah al-mutakhaïyyilah*), or the ability of the soul to receive information from the senses, 2) Thinking power (*al-quwwah al-mufakkirah*), or the power of the soul in the midbrain, which serves as an information processor, 3). Storage power (*al-quwwah al-hafidzah*), which is found in the back of the brain and serves as a repository for processed thinking

power. 4). The revealing power (al-quwwah al-nathiqah), which is located in the throat and tongue and is in charge of retrieving information stored in the storage power. 5) Creative Power (al-quwwah al-shani'ah), which is the soul's power in charge of all actions.

## REFERENCES

- Al-Ghazali, Ma'arij al-Quds fi Ma'darij Ma'rifah al-Nafs (Kairo: Maktabat al-Jundi, 1968).
- Al-Ghazali, Mi'raj al-Salikin (Kairo: al-Saqafat al-Islamiyyah, 1964).
- Gordon D. Kaufman, *Relativism, Knowledge and Faith* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968).
- Hartoko, *Kamus Populer Filsafat* (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986).
- Hasan langgulung, *Manusia dan Pendidikan, Suatu Analisa Psikologi dan Pendidikan* (Jakarta: PT. Al-Husna Zikra, 1995).
- Ikhwan al-Shafa, *Rasail*, juz I, II, III, & IV (Beirut: Dar Shadir, 1376 H/1957 M
- Kattsoff, *Pengantar Filsafat*, terj. Soejono Soemargono (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1986).
- Louis Leahy, *Manusia Sebuah Misteri* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1984).
- M. Sastrapratedja, (Ed), *Manusia Multi Dimensional* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1983).
- Murad Wahbah, dkk., *al-Mu'jam al-Falsafi* (Kairo: al-Tsaqafah al-Jadidah, 1971).
- Qumair, Yuhanna, *Ikhwan al-Shafa'* (Beirut: al-Matba'at al-Katsulikiyyat, 1950).



