

UTILIZING *SIRA NABAWIYA* TO PROMOTE MORAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

These days, the state of youth's moral concerns us greatly. Some of them show no respect for the elderly while some others legalize plagiarism. This is why moral education is quite crucial to teach. Our newest curriculum, Curriculum 2013, also requires teachers to assess students' moral which is reflected through their attitudes. Teachers are not only to assess students' moral but also to promote moral education itself. To do so, teachers call for an appropriate medium to make use. *Sira Nabawiya* is the one to take into consideration. *Sira Nabawiya* is life stories of Prophet Muhammad SAW where everyone can reflect and, in turn, practice the teachings in daily life. *Sira Nabawiya* provides us with a huge number of moral values. Unfortunately, Muslim youth tend to adore celeb idols and imitate their attitudes. Yet, Prophet Muhammad is the best man to learn and copy. Not knowing every single facet of their Prophet allows them to seek other idols. To make matter worse, they spend most of their time on gadget. They prefer chatting on social media to reading books of Islamic figures. They know Korean and Hollywood celebs better than their own Prophet. In fact, celeb idols are far from being good role models. Thus, citing *Sira Nabawiya* before start teaching or in the midst of teaching is hoped to promote moral education for students.

Keywords: *Sira Nabawiya, moral education.*

Introduction

Moral is a sign of civilization. Moral comes from the Latin *moralis*, meaning customs or manners. Moral points to the relationships between human beings. Moral distinguishes human beings from animals. It lets us know what to do and what to avoid in terms of right and wrong. Civilized society is successfully established when moral reigns. A developed country is characterized by the presence of moral where corruption, bribery, and collusion no longer dominate everyday life of the citizens. Eventually, prosperity comes as the result. To gain so, moral should be embedded and continuously maintained from early age. Thus, a country is supposed to seriously encourage the moral of the youth.

Let's see how Japan nourishes moral education as described by McCullough (2008). At first, moral education was introduced to the school curriculum as an independent subject. *Dotoku* (the path of virtue) was taught for an hour per week to all students in compulsory education. The central aim was described as being one of ensuring that the 'spirit of human respect' should be supported. Moral education was separated from social studies which shifted away from experiential investigations toward academic explanations of Japanese society and culture. Currently, moral education becomes an official subject. It has six fundamental objectives: a) to foster a spirit of respect for human dignity and awe of life; b) to nurture those who endeavor to inherit and develop traditional culture, and create a culture that is rich in individuality; c) to nurture those who endeavor to form and develop a democratic society and state; d) to nurture those who can contribute to realizing a peaceful international society; e) to nurture those who can make independent decision; and f) to foster a sense of morality. Moral education in Japanese schools is divided into four major areas of study. These are self-awareness (include moderation, courage, freedom & order, love for

truth, diligence, sincerity, and self-improvement), relations with other people (include courtesy, thanks and respect, friendship, and modesty), relations with groups and with society (include public duty, group participation, industry, respect for teachers, respect for tradition, respect for other cultures, justice, responsibility, respect for family, contribution to society, and love of nation), and finally, relations with nature and the universe (include respect for nature, aesthetic sensitivity, respect for life, and nobility). Indonesia needs to learn from Japan to make better generation and better nation starting from maintaining the moral education of the young generation.

Lately, the case of a teenager jeering pregnant women on a busy commuter line brought about our concern. She argued on her social media account that pregnant women are nuisance because very often they ask for seat to other passengers. In addition, she questioned why they are reluctant to wake up earlier to catch the first morning train. This case worsens the other existing violations of moral among the youth across the country like plagiarism, violence, pre-marital sex, and so forth.

Those facts rise an awakening that something has to be taken into action. Adults cannot simply blame youth. In my point of view, some of their faults result from the ignorance from the adults around them about what to do and what to avoid. For example, most teachers separate moral teachings from the subject he/she is teaching. Moral values are rarely encouraged during class activities.

Through the newest curriculum government tries to ensure that morality gains its position as one of points to judge students' achievement at school. A successful student is the one who is morally and academically good. Teachers are to assess to what extent students reach certain moral qualities required by curriculum.

One thing that teachers should remember is that students need to be given moral education before they are finally assessed. Teachers can integrate the discussed subject and intended moral values. Based on my personal teaching experience, students are pleased when their teacher serves as a motivator, giving them spirit through religious words or stories. The class becomes less intimidating because they are spiritually supported. Even, some of them feel relieved and have better enthusiasm to learn the subject.

Moral education for students of university

Is moral education relevant for students of university? The answer is yes. Students of university will be the future leaders, future teachers, and future parents. Every single job requires moral acts. In addition, students of university are not fully mature. They need encouragement and support to strengthen good personality to appear. Moral education ideally starts at home. It is the responsibility of the parents to teach their children how to morally behave. Unfortunately, more and more working parents find it hard to intensively take care of the children because of the workloads. Meanwhile, children spend plenty of time at campus. As a result, campus is supposed to take the duty.

Sjarkawi (2006) states that the objective of education is to develop both intellectual and moral competence. Teachers are in charge to allow moral education flourish at campus. Moral education must definitely first start from teachers' personality. Al Ghazali (in Rusn, 1998) argues that teachers should be role models and center of attention for the students. Their attitudes are reflections of what they preach. There are four ways to promote moral education at campus: teaching, modeling, reinforcing, and habituating.

Lickona (1991: 50) points out that there are some considerations why moral education is important to teach: a) It is the best way to ensure that students have good personality in their life; b) It is one of the ways to boost academic achievement; c) It prepares students to respect other people in the society; d) It is the response from the moral problems like rudeness, dishonesty, violence, etc.; e) It serves as a preparation for students to face life at work; and f) It teaches moral values that shape civilization.

Why *Sira Nabawiya*?

Morality is mainly shaped through what we read, what we hear and what we see. Books that we read might influence our way of thinking. The music played every day can change our mood and encourage us to do either good or bad acts. Meanwhile, the idols that we often see may dramatically change our life. Among those three influential things, idols apparently bring the most significant impacts especially for teenagers.

Students of university are at their late teens. They are so absorbed in movies or dramas on TV starring their idols. Much of the attention is paid on idols' private life and lifestyle. Even, many blindly idolize those celebrities. They will easily get mad when other people say something bad about their idols. They know more about Korean or Hollywood celebs rather than religious figures. The titles of movies and songs of their idols are easily remembered rather than the Hadith or Qur'an verses.

It is understood that teenagers seek role models. Role models help them find their own personality. The problem appears when they choose the wrong idols. Wrong idols will bring about problems in a teenager's future.

What about Muslim idol? Most Muslim students will say that their idol is Prophet Muhammad SAW. Yet if they are asked to show how they love him, they cannot answer. Why does this happen? It is because they do not really know every single facet of their Prophet's life. As a result, they find it necessary to look for other idols. As a matter of fact, nothing can be seen from our Holy Prophet but noble character.

How can we know our Prophet's life? We can read *Sira Nabawiya*. *Sira Nabawiya* means the history of Prophet Muhammad. It tells us about the history of Islam, how Islam first spread in Arab countries. Most importantly, it describes thoroughly about the Prophet's life and the moral lessons that we can learn and practice in everyday life.

What students can learn from *Sira Nabawiya*

Noble character of Prophet Muhammad included in *Sira Nabawiya* as Mutahhari (2000) points out is as follows:

1. Loving and forgiving

Prophet Muhammad SAW advised his companions not to inflict harm upon the injured enemies, their women, children, and the old disabled persons and those who also could not fight, having lost their limbs, and not to deprive them of water. Even concerning the Quraish

unbelievers, who were not only literally in enmity with the Prophet, but who also fought him for about twenty years, leaving no stone unturned, killed his dear ones, tormented him and his beloved companions as much as they could during the Prophet's stay in Mecca (before his immigration to Medina) and broke his teeth and forehead, the Prophet adopted a just attitude toward those who survived after the Conquest of Mecca, when the Muslims had absolute authority over their enemies.

2. Respectful

When Prophet Muhammad decided to set out for a place, he would not allow his companions to escort him. If he rode a horse, he would enjoin others not to follow him on foot and ask them to either go in advance or come later or to ride the same horse if possible. He never permitted anyone to follow him on foot while he was riding on horseback, considering it as improper behavior. Whenever he held meetings with his companions, he would ask them to sit in a circle so that everyone would be in an equal position. He would never take the seat of honor to prevent others from feeling inferior to him.

3. Patient

Once someone stopped the Prophet and claimed that the Prophet owed him some money and that he would not let him go unless he received the amount back right here. The Prophet said, "I don't owe you anything, but even if I do, let me go home to get you your money." The man said that he would not let the Prophet take another step. Ignoring how gently the Holy Prophet had behaved, the man acted fiercely, to the point that he took the Prophet's gown off and wrapped it around his neck and pulled him, such that the Prophet's neck was bruised. The Prophet was on his way to the mosque and when people noticed that he was late, they went in search of him and found a Jew obstructing him in the way. The Muslims wanted to slap and punish this rude fellow, but the Prophet said, "No. You people don't interfere. I know what to do with my friend." Observing so much leniency, the Jew became a Muslim right here and said, "You are so powerful yet you are so lenient, and this is not possible for an ordinary man. I bear witness that certainly Muhammad is the Messenger of God and there is no God except Allah."

4. Modest

The Prophet chose the principle of simplicity and artlessness in all walks of life and applied it in all and everything such as food, dresses, association with others and so forth. Some of the Prophet's wives had complained to him about the very simple life they were leading and asked him to provide a big share of the booty that he had received. The Prophet told them that his life would be a simple one up to the end, and that they had to get along with it; otherwise, he would divorce them and fulfill their demand. They unanimously said that they preferred to live a simple life.

5. Kind

Prophet Muhammad SAW was so kind and lenient to Muslims that they all loved him. A woman came to him and said, "O Prophet of God! Please take my six-month old baby into your lap so that he will have good destiny in the future. Do pray for him." The Prophet did so. Scenes like this occurred often and the babies would sometimes wet the Prophet's lap. Their parents would get worried about it and run about their babies, but the Prophet would tell them, "Leave them in peace."

6. Consistent

When the Prophet entered Mecca after that city had been conquered, a woman from the Quraish aristocrats has stolen something and according to Islamic rules, her hand had to be cut off. The woman was an influential Quraish and her relatives tried to save her by recommending to the Prophet that she was the daughter of the noble family and if her hands were cut off, a whole family would be disgraced. The Prophet said that he could not do so. He could not forgive her. The laws of God would never be suspended and nor recommendations will be accepted.

7. Morale-raising

Another aspect of the Prophet Muhammad's gentleness was his consultations with others. The Prophet did not need advice from others, but he did so to impose this principle on everyone who wielded power after him without considering himself superior to others and not in need of counsel and advice. Moreover, by consulting his people, the Prophet increased the morale among them and raised their prestige. If a leader doesn't consult his men, even if he is one hundred percent sure about his decisions, his men will feel inferior and debased, thinking they are only tools in the hands of their leader. If on the other hand, they are consulted and are involved in decision-making, they will be aware of their personality and obey better.

8. Hospitable

Once a desert Arab man went to the Prophet to ask him for something. On approaching him, he began trembling, having heard about the exalted personality of the Prophet. The Prophet got worried and asked him why he felt so. Then he embraced the man intimately and told him, "Be bold and courageous. What are you afraid of? I am not a despot. I am the son of a woman who used to milk lamb with her own hands. I am like unto your own brother so tell me whatever your troubled heart wants to."

9. Steady

The Prophet has discretion and great wisdom which even the non-Muslims cannot deny. He is also persisted in his decisions and policies under all conditions. Many happening during his lifetime apparently seemed so pessimistic that anybody else would have lost hope and surrendered, but the Prophet remained steady and stable like a mountain.

10. Inspiring

For Fatima's wedding (the Prophet's daughter), only one new shirt was bought, and she had an old one too. On the same night, a beggar knocked on her door and said, "I am naked. Isn't there anyone to dress me?" None bothered to give her anything. Fatima, who was the bride, immediately took off her new shirt in privacy, wore the old one and gave the new shirt to the beggar, for these and other means of glory were of no significance to her. If she once tried to take back Fadak, it was only on the ground that Islam prescribes administration of justice. It was not due to the economic worth of that land. Had she not endeavored to oppression, which is a sin. Fadak was in fact worthy for Fatima, but merely from legal point of view, not from a material standpoint. If Fadak was of the least material value to Fatima, it was only to help the poor and the needy from its income; otherwise, she, her father, her husband, and her children had all such magnanimity as to sacrifice bounties many times the value of Fadak to please God. Thus, we see that Fatima also followed the ways and manners of her honorable father throughout her short lifetime.

11. Logical and truth-revealing

Abraham was a favorite son of the Prophet from Mariah Qibtiyah. He died when he was 18 months old age. The Prophet, a very sentimental man, was moved to tears, saying, "O Abraham, our heart is broken and we shed tears in sorrow for you, but we can never utter a word against God's will." All the Muslims were touched upon seeing the Prophet's mourning. Accidentally, there was an eclipse of the sun right on the day of Abraham's death. The Muslims attributed it to a harmony between the world, the earth, and the Prophet. They attributed the eclipse of the sun to the death of the Prophet's son. This, of course, does not matter in itself. Even the whole world may get upset for the sake of the Prophet. Thus, rumor took wings, and all men and women of Medina attributed the sun's eclipse to the sorrow that rested in the Prophet's heart. Consequently, their faith in the Prophet became stronger. The Prophet, however, did not want to take advantage to people's ignorance and weakness; he was willing to use only strong points, their knowledge, and intellect while calling them to Islam. He did not want to realize his goals through any means possible. Thus, he mounted the pulpit and told the

people, "The eclipse of the sun is not for my son." He rejected this illogical reasoning. He would not take advantage of such reasoning by remaining silent because in Islam, there is no room for such cunning.

12. Giving ease

When Prophet Muhammad sent his companion to Yemen to propagate the word of God, he said, "O Ma'adh! Give people good tidings and do not impose trouble on them. Make it easy for them and not cumbersome. God sent me with a religion which is forgiving and generous."

13. Noble companion

Once in Abu Hurairah's reign in Mecca, a man brought onions for sale, but no one bought them. Then he met Abu Hurairah and asked him to do a good act worthy of recompense by saving his property from ruin. He said that he was a Muslim and on learning that there was a scarcity of onions in Mecca, he had sold all his possessions and purchased onions and brought them to Mecca, but his onions were getting decayed and putrified since Meccans would not buy them. Abu Hurairah asked him to take the onions to a certain place at the time of the Friday prayers. On Friday, when people assembled for prayers, Abu Hurairah addressed them, "O people! I heard from my beloved Messenger of Allah, that whoever ate onions of Akka in Mecca would definitely be qualified to enter paradise." Hearing this, the people bought all the onions within an hour and Abu Hurairah's conscience was satisfied for having saved a Muslim believer from bankruptcy.

How to use *Sira Nabawiya* in the classroom

Students can actually read *Sira Nabawiya* at home or at library. Unfortunately, student's reading interest is very low. A research at one of the leading universities in Indonesia revealed that most university students like reading novels and comics or statuses on social media better than reading 'serious' books. As a response to this problem, citing parts of *Sira Nabawiya* before start teaching can be an alternative. Teachers can also insert some stories in the middle of teaching where students show boredom so that they can relax for a moment. Stories are always amusing to everyone both for teachers and students. The stories can be integrated with the topic discussed. At the end of the story, students can gain their enthusiasm back the main subject.

Conclusion

Moral education is the response to the moral violations across the country. Among other media, *Sira Nabawiya* comes out as an alternative. *Sira Nabawiya* promotes both religious and moral education for youth (especially in religious campuses). The ultimate objective of giving the life stories of the Prophet Muhammad SAW is to create moral students with better academic achievement.

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