

RENEWAL OF THE SOUL ACCORDING TO SHEIKH HAMZA YUSUF (1958-2025)**Alifia Haqqul Yaqin, Mohammad Zakki Azani**

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Abstract

Education is a fundamental aspect of shaping the human personality as a whole, including the soul, which serves as the center of consciousness and morality. This study aims to describe the concept of soul education as well as other aspects of soul renewal found in The Agenda of Soul Renewal by Sheikh Hamza Yusuf (January 1, 1958). This research employs a qualitative descriptive method using library research. The main data source is the book Agenda of Soul Renewal, supported by relevant books and journals. The findings indicate that the agenda not only presents soul education as a process of purification and personal development but also elaborates a broader concept of soul renewal, including introspection, spiritual reform, and strengthening social roles. According to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf, soul renewal encompasses moral, emotional, and social dimensions that are interconnected in shaping a holistic human being. Besides internal obstacles such as egoism and unsupportive environments, the agenda emphasizes practical improvement steps through the implementation of Islamic values such as the pillars of faith and Islam, virtuous character, da'wah, charity, remembrance (dhikr), and empathy.

Keywords: Soul education; Sheikh Hamza Yusuf; Soul renewal.

INTRODUCTION

Education has changed by combining various theologies, ways of thinking, and life orientations to increase knowledge, which in turn influences exclusive, mystical, and individualistic human thinking and growth with good results obtained in the form of knowledge, values, and talents (Zubaedi, 2017). Human life would not exist without education. According to Jalaluddin, education has various purposes in society, including providing advice, preparing humans to face life, and forming life discipline. Some people view education as the transfer of knowledge, whether in the form of science, art, or skills, from one person to another. The efforts of older beings to help immature individuals become adults are known as education. Education is the deliberate direction by teachers towards the spiritual and physical growth of students towards the development of their main personality (Khamid, 2019).

To ensure the sustainability and progress of a country's life, education has a crucial and essential function. In a situation like this, education needs to be able to equip society to face the future. Therefore, it is natural for society to assume that there will be a gap in the future because the current level of education of a nation greatly influences its future (Herwati & As' ari, 2019). Education is a system because the education system consists of a number of elements, such as goals, teachers, students, resources, media-based learning strategies, and learning environments. Each component affects every other component and has a specific purpose. Currently, there are many different types of changes, including social, cultural, and technological changes, which can cause problems that affect the progress and advancement of education (Yulasri, 2019). So it is necessary to pay attention to the success of educational goals.

According to Warsono et al., (2023) the way human cognition evolves to determine the boundaries of the meaning and purpose of education continues to change. These modifications are based on a number of research findings and developments in the field related to the increasing

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Article History | Submitted: 29 March 2025 | Revised: 4 June 2025 | Accepted: 15 June 2025 | Publish: 3 July 2025

HOW TO CITE (APA 6th Edition):

Yaqin, Alifia Haqqul., Azani, Mohammad Zakki. (2025). Renewal of the Soul According to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf (1958-2025). *Juspi: Jurnal Sejarah Peradaban Islam*. 9(1), page.129-136

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30829/juspi.v9i1.23768>

number of elements in the current education system that foster the mentality of educators who create new theories, such as managers, experts, and observers. Advances in technological instruments have also caused a shift in the definition of education. The process of education and learning never stops when the same thing happens. Because differences in meaning and understanding of education are indeed irrelevant in different eras and places, it could be someone's opinion about what education means or defines for a particular nation. As stated by Hidayat & Wakhidah (2015) that education is a system that needs to be integrated with other existing systems in order to achieve goals and improve the standard of living of people in all areas of life. Based on this process, education will occur continuously with the dynamics of shifting social contexts and cultural norms from time to time. According to Hamka, education is a tool that can help advance research and become the foundation for many advances in science. It combines two mutually supportive principles, namely courage and intellectual freedom (Susanto, 2015).

Al-Tarbiyah al-Nafs, or education of the soul, is an effort to foster, heal, maintain, care for, guide, and purify the soul from vile traits towards *al-Nafs al-Muthma'innah* (a calm soul), so that humans become mature towards perfection and return to their innate nature as determined by Allah Swt (Firdaus, 2011). The meaning of self which includes the ability to be pious and skeptical, is philosophically contained in *an-nafs* or the soul. Allah Swt guarantees that it will be easier to grow the potential for piety, in contrast to the potential for disbelief caused by environmental forces, humans are aware of the soul's ability to elevate itself, which makes it increasingly vile. In essence, lust is a subtle nature created by Allah Swt. This can be a source of inspiration for human survival and lead to virtue, but sometimes it can also produce negative results or bad traits (Perdana, 2019).

The soul (*nafs*) is not only understood as an abstract entity, but as the center of human consciousness, morality, and will. The soul is a meeting place for good and bad impulses that influence a person's behavior in everyday life. The agenda of soul renewal as raised by Sheikh Hamza Yusuf is important to examine because it offers a holistic approach in educating the soul towards purity and tranquility (*nafs al-muthma'innah*). Within this framework, soul education not only aims to form intellectually intelligent humans, but also spiritually and emotionally intelligent, so that they are better able to live a balanced life physically and mentally. The agenda of soul renewal compiled by Sheikh Hamza Yusuf places the soul as the main center of human development. The soul does not stand alone, but is closely tied to human behavior, values, and life orientation. In his teachings, the soul is the main target of the education process because this is where all human tendencies and decisions come from. By understanding the conditions and dynamics of the soul, individuals will be able to map out a path to self-improvement consciously, continuously, and in accordance with Islamic values sourced from the Al-Quran and Hadith (Firdaus, 2011).

Research conducted by Nurhadi & Rozi (2020) states that the quality of Islamic education in Buya Hamka's work on modern Sufism, it can be said that the book has very good spiritual wisdom that is beneficial for global education in today's era and in line with today's education which is experiencing a spiritual crisis in the field of education, then several principles of soul education contained in Buya Hamka's writings can be a guide and medicine for spiritual growth for those who work in the field. The values of Soul Education in Buya Hamka's Modern Sufism Book, according to the results of data processing are as follows: Interacting with intelligent people; 2. Developing the habit of thinking about work; 3. Control your lust and anger; 4. Tadbir, thinking about everything before acting (working regularly); 5. Examining one's own shortcomings (disgrace); 6. Angry; 7. Ujub; 8. Fighting and throwing out bad words. 9. Joking and teasing; 10. Zuhud; 11. Fair; 12. Fear of death; 13. Revenge and break your oath.

Research conducted by Wahyuddin (2018) states that to achieve salvation in the world and the hereafter, Imam al-Ghazali and al-Zarnuji define education as an effort of the soul to understand the meaning of something as an effort to form noble morals to get closer (*taqarrub*) to Allah. Both al-Zarnuji and al-Ghazali emphasize moral criteria as the main basis for their learning concepts, but Al-Ghazali tends to be a teacher (*al-Mu'allim*). Al-Zarnuji's concept of education, on the other

hand, places great emphasis on moral obligations for both educators and students. In Abdillah (2024), it is stated that according to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the concept of education is: a) developing the character of each person, which includes the unification of will and mind to produce energy; b) advancing the human mind by freeing itself from ignorance by considering reality, intelligence, and intelligence; and c) it is clear from Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts that this still applies today.

Based on the research above, no research has been found that discusses the concept of soul education according to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf in the soul renewal agenda book. Therefore, the researcher is interested in researching this. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf is one of the main supporters of classical learning in Islam. He has promoted Islamic sciences and classical teaching methodologies throughout the world. He is also a strong supporter of social justice, peace, and harmony between communities and places. The purpose of this study is to describe the concept of soul education according to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf in the soul renewal agenda book.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive research type. The descriptive approach is a technique for analyzing data by characterizing or characterizing the data that has been collected as it is (Sugiyono, 2009). This research is included in library research. According to Sugiyono (2016) library research is theoretical research and other references to values, culture, and norms that emerge in the social context being studied, literature reviews are very important. This is important for research because scientific literature will always be part of research. The data collected in this study were books by Hamza Yusuf and Zaid Shakir entitled "Agenda Pembaharuan Jiwa", in addition, data was obtained from previous literature studies, including books, journals, papers, and previous researchers, related to the problems being investigated.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Sheikh Hamza Yusuf

American ulama Sheikh Hamzah Yusuf is one of the founders of Berkeley, California's Zaytuna College. He is one of many proponents of the study of ancient Islamic sciences and has advocated for them and their pedagogical approach globally. Yusuf was born in Walla Walla, Washington, USA on January 1, 1958 to parents Mark Hanson who grew up in Northern California and taught in Washington State. He is the middle of seven children and the second son. His mother was a student at the University of California at Berkeley, while his father taught social sciences at a university in Northern California.

Yusuf was raised in a Greek Orthodox Christian home and attended schools on both the East and West sides of the United States. His maternal grandfather took Hamzah and his sister Nabila to an Orthodox camp in Greece when he was twelve so that they could study Catholicism (he was apparently groomed to become a priest in his teens). In addition to a near-fatal car accident in 1977, he began reading the Quran and researching the afterlife. He eventually converted to Islam and his only sibling to convert was his sister Nabila.

For ten years, Hamzah Yusuf studied abroad. Shortly after converting to Islam, Yusuf moved to Granada in Spain, London in England. To study Islamic sciences in depth, he went to Spain and then Al-Ain in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. He spent four years there as a mu'adhdhin at a nearby mosque while also learning Arabic. He began studying classical Islamic sciences, such as the Maliki school of jurisprudence, in depth after getting to know several Islamic scholars from Mauritania. This eventually prompted him to travel to Mauritania to do more in-depth studies with Sidi Muhammad ould Fahfu al-Massumi, also known as Murabit al-Hajj, one of the country's most renowned scholars. During his three years there, Yusuf lived and studied under Murabit al-Hajj. In addition to his Islamic degree, he earned a Bachelor of Arts (AA) in English literature from Imperial Valley, California, in 1990, and a degree in nursing from the same university.

Sheikh Shadhili Naifer, dean of Zaytuna University in Tunis, awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1991. He is currently a doctoral candidate in the Islamic studies program at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. In addition, Hamzah Yusuf serves as an advisor to the Center for Islamic Studies at the Graduate School of Theology at Berkeley and the Islamic Studies Program at Stanford University. In addition, he serves as an advisor to the board of One Nation, a national charity led by George Russell, which advocates inclusivity and pluralism in the US. In addition, he was appointed vice president of the Center for Global Guidance and Renewal, founded and led by Abdullah bin Bayyah. A Common Word Between Us and You, an open letter from Islamic scholars to Christian leaders advocating peace and communication, was signed by Hamzah along with others. According to the British Guardian newspaper, Hamzah Yusuf is an Islamic scholar from the West (Musonnif, 2018).

Introducing this agenda note is relevant to convey because the note is not just a spiritual text, but the result of Hamza Yusuf's long and reflective journey towards the condition of the people. This agenda cannot be separated from the author's social, cultural, and intellectual background, who lives in the intersection of Western civilization and classical Islamic tradition. Thus, it is important to review the socio-historical context in which this agenda for soul renewal was born, because understanding this background also influences how readers capture the messages contained therein (Musonnif, 2018).

The Meaning of Soul Renewal in Sheikh Hamza Yusuf's Agenda

Renewal of the soul in this context is an effort to purify oneself that includes spiritual, moral, and social dimensions. The agenda highlights the importance of humans returning to nature, cleansing the heart from inner diseases, and always improving relationships with Allah SWT and with fellow human beings. Renewal of the soul is not merely interpreted as a scientific or ritualistic activity, but includes character formation and daily life management. In the agenda, Sheikh Hamza Yusuf invited Muslims to identify sources of soul damage such as arrogance, envy, laziness, and pleasure in things that are negligent. He emphasized that a soul that is not renewed will become spiritually dull and easily fall into sin.

In addition to the educational aspect, this note also underlines the urgency of routine muhasabah (self-introspection) as part of the renewal of the soul. Humans are required to reflect on their inner condition, acknowledge their shortcomings, and make continuous improvements. This is emphasized through the recommendation to increase istighfar, dhikr, and good deeds that bring us closer to Allah. Thus, renewal of the soul in Hamza Yusuf's view requires the active involvement of individuals in the process of self-purification. Furthermore, renewal of the soul also touches on the social realm. Sheikh Hamza Yusuf encourages Muslims to become agents of social change through commendable behavior and noble morals. A renewed soul will radiate in the form of concern, empathy, and real contribution to society. He invites people not only to focus on personal piety, but also to spread benefits to the surrounding environment (Musonnif, 2018).

The Concept of Soul Education According to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf

Education is an effort in spiritual development and development that individuals need to have. In this case, education is used as a process to be able to socialize values and abilities in life. Every individual has a need to be able to obtain education so that they are able to face challenges and threats in the future. The process of self-development is said to be something new and can provide great benefits for each individual (Izurrohan, Azani, & Salim, 2023). In Islam, it is taught about the truth as a form of surrender. In essence, every individual has a need to develop themselves according to the truth. In this case, there is a great responsibility on an individual. The concept of education is based on the results of human thought. What is conveyed from human life is taken from Islamic figures by bringing the Qur'an and As-Sunnah so that humans can be more pious. The goal of Islamic education is to create spiritual material that is in accordance with the life of society (Labib & Azzani, 2023). The human soul is known as a spiritual soul because it is manifested as one of the traits that cannot be seen from the outside. Operationally, the concept of soul education in

the Qur'an is an understanding of the importance of qalb and 'aql in regulating the mental self (nafs) and the ability to maximize potential. In Islamic education, this means that the quality and quantity of input and output can be guaranteed (Mardianah, 2016). Below is the concept of soul education according to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf in the book of the soul renewal agenda;

First, supplies. Soul education is an effort made by an individual to cleanse the soul from despicable traits. In this case, the individual must obtain sufficient provisions to be able to instill good things in the soul. The human mind must be controlled along with the development of the times. Every individual is taught to give love to others and not to cheat and violate Allah's commands in the Qur'an. Humans are taught not to ignore obstacles in life. Allah always commands humans to be able to maintain everything He has given. Allah wills that humans are very easy to incite. However, with the word of Allah, humans can escape from the whispers of the devil and pay attention to the path they take in life. Physical and spiritual changes through jihad are related to fighting lust. In this case, each individual experiences changes in themselves to become a better person. Changes against evil are aspects that can damage society. The provisions provided in soul education require the role of the family as one of the social parts that fosters and prepares the generation to be able to carry out the mandate properly. The provisions given to humans are from four aspects of piety, namely carrying out physical and spiritual obligations, avoiding physical and spiritual prohibitions. In this case, humans need to understand the need to understand what needs to be done as a good individual. Every human being must be able to fear Allah in order to obtain blessings, safety, victory and the promise of heaven. Allah commands humans to always act as believers with complete sincerity. Every human being must be able to have a sense of sincerity in order to become a better person (Yusuf & Shakir, 2024:10-25).

Second, damage. Soul education is formed because of the human inner state that shows honesty. In this case, humans use their tongues to speak and interact. However, sometimes some individuals can damage their souls with some destructive behavior such as lying, gossiping, spreading doubts and getting involved in meaningless matters. Lying is prohibited in religion, but it can be permitted if the situation reconciles the two parties, is used as a tactic in war and while playing with children. Even though it is permitted, lying cannot be used carelessly because it can hurt others. Backbiting is an act that is prohibited in the Qur'an because it talks about other people. This can be slander when what is conveyed is not true. Slander is a great evil and will cause injury to others. An individual who spreads doubt is also a part that can damage personality. In this case, it is important for individuals to be able to understand what situations can damage themselves. Not only that, the situation where an individual jokes at a serious moment is also one of the acts that can damage themselves. Joking is said to be an act of belittling others and considering others not too important. If humans can control themselves to speak, then it will be easier to avoid damage to the soul. Education of the soul is taught through behavior that is shown every day. Imam Malik said do not give your hearing to someone whose heart is lost, because you do not know what will be able to stick to it. Some major sins that can damage oneself are divided into sins of the heart, sins of the tongue, sins of the stomach, sins of the genitals, sins of the hands, sins of the feet and sins of the whole body such as sins of the heart, sins of the tongue, sins of the stomach, sins of the genitals, sins of the hands, sins of the feet, sins of the entire body (Yusuf & Shakir, 2024:30-39).

Third, Stages and Obstacles. The stage in obtaining spiritual education is by practicing achieving piety. Some stages that need to be done are by maintaining prayer and hadith. Prayer is done to provide protection to every human being. The next stage is to pay attention to ablution and ghusl where individuals must purify themselves from impurities. Imam Malik considered the Asr prayer to be like the Subuh prayer. Other stages are by guarding the tongue, hearing, sight of adultery, stomach, guarding the genitals and genitals. In Islamic teachings, humans are taught to guard the genitals and genitals (Yusuf & Shakir, 2024:64-86). This teaching teaches humans to stay away from places that bring temptation and harm. We, under no circumstances should be alone with the opposite sex who are not mahram. For believers, of course this is the easiest practice to do. We also need to stay away from spreading letters and leaving everything that shows something that is forbidden. From a human perspective, education is a process of socialization, namely

socializing values, knowledge, and skills in life. Sociologist Emile Durkheim, in his work *Education and Sociology*, said that education is a human product that builds the eternity of human life itself, which can live consistently to overcome threats and challenges in the future. The Prophet Muhammad said: "Educate your children, for they were created for their time, not for yours". So education must be oriented towards the future and futuristic. From an individual perspective, education is a development process, namely the development of potential that is maximally possessed and manifested in concrete form, in the sense of being able to create something new and useful for human life in the future, being able to dialogue with oneself, with the environment as a macrocosm, and as the ultimate goal being able to dialogue with absolute reality, namely God (Suwito, Novianti, Suparjo, Widaputri, & 'Azmi Nuha, 2022).

The perceived obstacle in seeking spiritual education is from less mature colleagues. Not all individuals of different ages have good understanding and practice. Some people can do bad and evil actions so that this becomes an obstacle in learning. In addition, spiritual friendships such as arrogance, envy and being busy with other people's business are bad things and must be avoided. Leaving rukhsah and looking for reasons to love yourself also hinders spiritual education. In this case, an individual who loves himself will forget others so that this hinders spiritual education. Every individual needs to control his egotistical attitude in order to overcome every obstacle felt in spiritual education (Yusuf & Shakir, 2024:98). Some of the obstacles mentioned can happen to anyone who cannot control themselves.

Fourth, Improvement steps. Some steps that can be applied to improve the situation are by studying the Five Pillars of Islam, da'wah activities, staying focused and establishing good cooperation. In addition, an individual must also have commendable morals, strong brotherhood, family, giving alms, reading the Qur'an, doing dhikr, giving empathy, praying, and always being obedient (Yusuf & Shakir, 2024:40:58).

Some other improvements that can be applied in achieving sincerity are by reading the Qur'an. If it is difficult to reflect on its relevance to a person or his actions, then just reading it is still better. The difference between the two is illustrated in the following anecdote: A king sent a letter to the governors. In it, he ordered them to build fortifications in their cities, guard the defense of the sultanate's territory, be fair to the people, enforce the law without discrimination, fulfill the rights of every individual and be present to solve other government problems. When the letter reached their hands, there were two types of responses. Some received it with full appreciation and respect, listened to it with full understanding and made plans to carry out the order. But others received appreciation and respect putting it above their concerns. However, they still failed to understand the contents of the letter and thus they failed to carry out the king's orders. Besides reading the Qur'an, we must also busy ourselves with prayer and dhikr at the right time and place. And only practice authentic narrations regarding these practices. We don't need to practice what doesn't have a strong justification. If Allah wills, we will be able to put this advice into practice. Allah opens us the door of His Rahman. Wisdom flows from human speech and we must be able to obey all the commands given by God.

CONCLUSION

Education is one form of learning that needs to be done by an individual to be able to gain more education and insight. In this case, education is given to be able to improve the personality of an individual's soul. In the development of human life, each individual must be able to improve the renewal of the soul in order to live a more peaceful life. Islamic education teaches humans to improve understanding and behave in accordance with the teachings of Allah. The function of education is to improve human welfare by increasing knowledge. Through education, humans can develop skills, character and culture. With education, humans are able to obtain development in attitudes and characters that are shown to society.

Based on the results of the analysis that has been presented, it can be concluded that soul education according to Sheikh Hamza Yusuf (January 1, 1958) in the soul renewal agenda book teaches humans to become a good person. Humans get provisions from the Qur'an and hadith to

be able to form a better life and personality. However, in the process of forming a good soul, there are some damages that are detrimental to an individual. Damage such as lies, gossip, spreading doubts and being involved in meaningless matters hinder the process of personality formation. Not only that, obstacles in learning soul education are also seen around humans. Immature colleagues, bad spiritual friendships, abandoning the rukhsah, loving oneself become obstacles in the education of the soul. Steps that can be taken to improve oneself are by studying the Five Pillars of Islam, da'wah activities, staying focused and establishing good cooperation, having commendable morals, strong brotherhood, family, giving alms, reading the Koran, doing dhikr, giving empathy, praying, and always being obedient.

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