

IKRIMAH BIN ABU JAHAL: AN EXAMPLE OF SELF-TRANSFORMATION IN ISLAMIC HISTORY

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Abstrak – Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal merupakan salah satu sahabat Nabi Muhammad saw. yang perjalanan hidupnya menggambarkan proses transformasi diri yang sangat drastis, dari seorang penentang keras dakwah Islam menjadi pembela dan pejuang yang gigih membela agama Allah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap proses transformasi diri Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal serta nilai-nilai pendidikan karakter yang dapat diteladani dari kisah hidupnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi kepustakaan (library research) yang bersumber dari literatur sejarah Islam (sirah dan tarikh) serta artikel-artikel jurnal terkini. Data dianalisis secara deskriptif-analitik dengan pendekatan historis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa transformasi diri Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal berlangsung melalui beberapa fase, yaitu fase permusuhan pada masa jahiliah, fase titik balik pascaperistiwa Fathu Makkah, dan fase pengabdian penuh kepada Islam hingga gugur sebagai syahid dalam Perang Yarmuk. Pembahasan menunjukkan bahwa transformasi tersebut sejalan dengan konsep psikologi perubahan dan taubat dalam Islam, konsep islah, serta tazkiyatun nafs dalam tasawuf, dan dapat dijadikan model pendidikan karakter bagi generasi muda, khususnya dalam pembelajaran Sejarah Kebudayaan Islam di tingkat Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa keteladanan Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal relevan diintegrasikan melalui metode kisah untuk menumbuhkan kesadaran bahwa setiap individu memiliki kesempatan untuk berubah menjadi pribadi yang lebih baik.

Kata Kunci: Ikrimah Bin Abu Jahal, Transformasi Diri, Sahabat Nabi, Pendidikan Karakter, Sejarah Islam.

Abstract – Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal was a companion of the Prophet Muhammad whose life journey illustrates a drastic process of self-transformation, from a fierce opponent of the Islamic mission into a devoted defender and fighter for the faith. This study aims to reveal the process of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal's self-transformation and the character-education values that can be drawn from his life story. This research employs a descriptive-qualitative method with a library-research approach, drawing on classical Islamic historical literature (sirah and tarikh) as well as recent journal articles. The data were analyzed descriptively and analytically through a historical approach. The findings show that Ikrimah's self-transformation occurred through several phases: hostility during the pre-Islamic period, a turning point following the Conquest of Mecca, and full devotion to Islam until his martyrdom at the Battle of Yarmuk. The discussion shows that this transformation aligns with the Islamic concepts of psychological change, repentance (taubat), islah, and tazkiyatun nafs in Sufism, and can serve as a character-education model for the younger generation, particularly in the teaching of Islamic Cultural History at the elementary madrasah (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) level. The study concludes that the exemplary character of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal is relevant to be integrated through the storytelling method to cultivate awareness that every individual has the opportunity to change for the better.

Keywords: Ikrimah Bin Abu Jahal, Self-Transformation, Companion Of The Prophet, Character Education, Islamic History.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Islamic civilization is colored by various inspiring stories of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) which show how the guidance of Allah can fundamentally change a person. One of the most interesting stories to study is the life journey of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal, the son of Amr bin Hisham better known as Abu Jahal, a Quraysh leader who became the fiercest enemy of the Prophet Muhammad's preaching. Ikrimah initially inherited his father's hostile attitude and was active in various wars against the Muslims, ranging from the Battle of Badr, the Battle of Uhud, to the Battle of Khandaq. However, after the Fathu Makkah (Liberation of Mecca), his life underwent a very drastic change, from an opponent of Islam became a believer and mujahid who died as a martyr in the Battle of Yarmuk (Hasbullah, 2022; Iqbal, 2022).

The story of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal is interesting to study because it contains a whole dimension of self-transformation, including cognitive aspects (changes in beliefs), affective aspects (regret and gratitude), and behavioral aspects (changes in behavior and real actions in defending Islam). This kind of transformation is in line with contemporary studies of the psychology of change in the Qur'anic perspective, which explain that a sincere process of repentance can guide a person towards a better transformation of oneself in relation to Allah and fellow human beings (Rawzalgina & Hadi, 2025).

Conceptually, self-transformation can be interpreted as a process of change that involves a person's thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors to achieve more positive and meaningful personal development (Rawzalgina & Hadi, 2025). This definition affirms that self-transformation is not just a momentary event, but an ongoing process that involves awareness, decisions, and real actions. The story of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal is one of the most representative examples of such a process in the history of Islam, because the changes he experienced did not stop at the moment of reciting the creed, but continued with a long-term commitment in the form of devotion, jihad, and spiritual closeness to the Qur'an until the end of his life.

Based on this background, this study seeks to answer two main questions, namely: (1) how the process of self-transformation experienced by Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal from the time of ignorance to become an Islamic mujahid, and (2) what values of character education can be exemplified from his life journey for the educational benefit of the younger generation. In line with the formulation of the problem, this study aims to describe the stages transformasi Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal historical self and analyzes its relevance to the concepts of the psychology of change, repentance, and character education in Islam.

Several previous studies have discussed the theme of self-transformation in Islamic perspectives from various perspectives. Rawzalgina and Hadi (2025) examine the psychology of change in the Qur'an by emphasizing the role of repentance as a bridge to self-transformation. Al Mustaqim (2023) explains that self-transformation can be built through the process of *islah* to achieve mental and spiritual balance, while Arrasyid (2023) and Setiawan et al. (2022) highlight the transformation of Sufism thought as a means of character formation and an antidote to moral damage. On the other hand, the historical study of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal specifically is still limited; Nabilata (2023) alludes to the figure of Ikrimah in the context of the tradition of kissing the mushaf of the Qur'an, while Hasbullah (2022) and Iqbal (2022) review the Fathu Makkah event which became a turning point in Ikrimah's Islam without specifically focusing on the process of self-transformation. This research seeks to fill this gap by focusing on the study as a whole on the process of self-transformation of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal as an exemplary model.

The urgency of this research lies in the need for a concrete model of example in character education, especially for students of the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education Study Program (PGMI) who will later play the role of educators and conveyers of exemplary

stories to students at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. The story of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal can be used as teaching material in the subjects of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) and Moral Faith to instill values such as the courage to admit mistakes, sincerity in repentance, and seriousness in improving oneself (Fuzta, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a type of library research combined with a historical approach. This approach was chosen because the object of study is in the form of past historical events that cannot be researched through direct observation, so that data is collected and analyzed through tracing written sources, as is commonly used in literature-based Islamic history studies (Hasbullah, 2022; Iqbal, 2022).

The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is in the form of classic books of sirah and dates that contain the life history of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal, such as *al-Ishabah fi Tamyiz al-Shahabah* by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Mu'jam al-Kabir* by ath-Thabarani, and *al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an* by As-Suyuthi. Secondary data is in the form of articles from national scientific journals published in the range of 2022 to 2025 and is relevant to the themes of self-transformation, repentance, Sufism, and the Fathu Makkah event.

The data collection technique is carried out through the documentation method, namely by searching, collecting, and recording data from printed literature and electronic journals using keywords such as "Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal", "self-transformation", "repentance in Islam", and "Fathu Makkah". The research instrument in this literature research is the researcher himself who acts as the main instrument in selecting and interpreting data.

The data that has been collected is then analyzed descriptively-analytically through content analysis techniques with data reduction stages, data categorization based on the character's life phase, presentation of data in the form of narratives and tables, and drawing conclusions to answer the formulation of research problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal, or in full Ikrimah bin Amr bin Hisham, was born into a prominent noble family of Quraysh. His father, Abu Jahal, is known as one of The leaders of the Quraysh were the most vehemently opposed to the preaching of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), even calling him the "Pharaoh of this people" because of his cruelty. Growing up in an environment that was very hostile to Islam, Ikrimah inherited this hostile attitude. He was known as one of the valiant and skilled leaders of the Quraysh cavalry, and took part in the Battle of Badr as deputy leader after his father died. His hostility to Islam continued in the Battle of Uhud and the Battle of Khandaq, when he even recklessly stormed the Muslim trenches with 'Amr bin Wud, although his efforts ended in defeat and he had to flee.

The turning point in Ikrimah's life occurred at the Fathu Makkah event in 8 Hijri. When the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) led a Muslim army into the city of Mecca peacefully and granted a general amnesty to its inhabitants, Ikrimah was among the few people who remained against and tried to resist, so that his name was included in the list of people who could be fought (Hasbullah, 2022). Realizing the threat, Ikrimah fled to Yemen by boat. On the way, the ship he was on was hit by a great storm, and the captain called for each passenger to pray to his god because their idols would not be able to save anyone in the middle of the sea. At this critical moment, Ikrimah vowed in her heart that if Allah saved her, she would return to the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and embrace Islam. On the other hand, his wife, Ummu Hakim bint al-Harits, who had previously

converted to Islam, asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) for her husband. The request was granted, and the Prophet even ordered the companions not to denounce the deceased Abu Jahal, because denouncing the deceased could hurt the living. When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said:

After embracing Islam, Ikrimah showed a very significant change in attitude. He swore before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) that he would spend more money fighting in the cause of Allah than he had ever spent to obstruct the preaching of Islam. Ikrimah then actively played a role in the spread of Islam, including in the conquest of the region of Sham and the Battle of Yarmouk against the Roman army. In the battle, even though Khalid bin Walid advised him not to be too reckless, Ikrimah still insisted on making amends for his past by stating that he and his father had been the hardest enemies of the Prophet (saw), so he wanted to cleanse himself of this sin (Iqbal, 2022). Ikrimah was eventually martyred in the Battle of Yarmouk with two of his companions, al-Harits bin Hisham and 'Ayyasy bin Abi Rabi'ah. One of his best-known forms of spiritual transformation was his habit of taking the Qur'anic mushaf, putting it on his face while crying, and saying, "The Book of my Lord, the kalam of my Lord", as an expression of gratitude for not dying in a state of disbelief during the Battle of Badr (Nabilata, 2023). This custom is then transmitted and becomes one of the postulates in the literature of fiqh and manners towards the Qur'an, as recorded in al-Itqan fi Ulum al-Qur'an by As-Suyuthi (Nabilata, 2023).

Table 1. The Phase of Self-Transformation of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal

Phase	Key Events	Emerging Values
The Time of Ignorance	Battles of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq	Hostility, physical courage
Turning Point	Fathu of Makkah, escape, storm at sea	Hope, Hope, and Hope
Post-Apocalypse	The Oath of Jihad, the Battle of Yarmuk	Repentance, dedication, devotion
End of Life	Martyrdom, the habit of kissing mushaf	Gratitude, love for the Qur'an

Discussion

When examined using the psychological framework of change in the perspective of the Qur'an, the process of self-transformation of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal can be understood as a series of stages that involve behavior, repentance, and continuous self-transformation (Rawzalgina & Hadi, 2025). In the early phase, Ikrimah's hostile behavior towards Islam was a product of the influence of the family environment and the social pressure of the Quraish which was very thick with ignorant values. External pressure in the form of the threat of defeat and fear of death in the storm event in the ocean then triggered the emergence of inner awareness (insight) that prompted him to repent. The moment is in line with the view that in order to achieve true change, the individual must undergo a sincere process of repentance, which in turn leads to a better transformation of the self in relation to Allah and fellow human beings (Rawzalgina & Hadi, 2025).

Ikrimah's self-transformation can also be understood through the concept of *islah*, which is an effort to improve oneself to achieve mental and spiritual balance (Al Mustaqim, 2023). After converting to Islam, Ikrimah not only stopped at verbal confessions of faith, but showed consistent behavioral changes through her earnestness to fight in the way of Allah,

even vowing to spend more wealth and energy than when she was hostile to Islam. This kind of consistency illustrates that the self-transformation experienced by Ikrimah is not just a momentary cognitive change, but a long-term behavioral change that has an impact on the balance of the soul and her daily actions.

From the point of view of Sufism, the transformation experienced by Ikrimah can be seen as a form of *tazkiyatun nafs* or purification of the soul, which is the basis for the formation of Islamic character as affirmed by Arrasyid (2023). The confession of sins, regret, and determination to atone for past mistakes shown by Ikrimah are a reflection of the process of self-purification that is the core of the teachings of Sufism. In line with this, Setiawan et al. (2022) explain that the actualization of Sufism values can act as a psychotherapy that counteracts violence and radicalism in a person, a picture that is relevant to the change in Ikrimah's attitude from a person who used to use violence to be hostile to Islam to a fighter who devotes his strength to defending Islam, no longer to spill hatred.

In addition to internal factors in the form of inner awareness, external factors in the form of the wisdom of the Prophet Muhammad's leadership in the Fathu Makkah event also became an important trigger for Ikrimah's self-transformation. The attitude of forgiveness and general amnesty given by the Prophet to the people of Mecca, including the prohibition against denouncing the deceased Abu Jahal, showed that compassionate leadership was able to soften hearts that were previously fiercely opposed to the truth (Hasbullah, 2022; Iqbal, 2022). Without such security guarantees and a forgiving attitude, it is likely that Ikrimah will not have the courage to return and confess his Islam. This confirms that a person's self-transformation often does not occur in a social vacuum, but is influenced by the environment and leadership patterns that open up space for change.

When compared to other Quraish figures who also embraced Islam after the Fathu of Makkah, such as Khalid bin Walid who had converted to Islam before the conquest of Mecca and later became a commander-in-chief, as well as Abu Sufyan bin Harb who embraced Islam in the last moments before the conquest, Ikrimah's transformation has its own uniqueness. Unlike the two, Ikrimah embraced Islam in a desperate condition, after having escaped and had the status of a fugitive who could be fought. This condition makes his repentance process seem more dramatic and emotional, as illustrated by his habit of crying while kissing the Qur'an mushaf (Nabilata, 2023). This comparison confirms that the process transformasi The self can take place through different paths, either gradually or suddenly through the experience of crisis, but both still boil down to the same commitment, which is total devotion to Islam.

In the context of character education, the story of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal's self-transformation has high relevance to be implemented through the exemplary story method, especially in the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah environment. The method of the story of the Prophet and the Companions has been shown to be effective in fostering moral awareness and positive character in children, as shown by Fuzta (2022) in community service that uses the method of the story of the Prophet and the Messenger to form the character of exemplary children. The story of Ikrimah can be adapted into teaching materials in the subjects of Islamic Cultural History (SKI) and Moral Faith to teach values such as the courage to admit mistakes, the sincerity of repentance, and the spirit of self-improvement without despair, a message that is very relevant for students at the elementary level who are in the process of character formation.

Practically, this story can be implemented by PGMI students and teachers through several learning strategies, including the storytelling method combined with reflective discussion about the values contained in the story, the role play method to bring back important moments such as events on the ship and the meeting with the Prophet (saw), and the exemplary method (*uswah hasanah*) which emphasizes the example of the attitude after

Ikrimah repentance in the daily lives of students. The application of these strategies is expected to help students at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah understand that mistakes in the past are not an obstacle to becoming a better person, as long as they are accompanied by the seriousness to repent and change.

Ikrimah's habit of kissing the mushaf of the Qur'an while crying and expressing his gratitude also provides an additional dimension in understanding his transformation, namely the birth of a deep love for the Qur'an as a consequence of the spiritual changes he experienced. This behavior has even been transmitted as part of the tradition of manners towards the Qur'an in Muslim society until now (Nabilata, 2023). Thus, Ikrimah's self-transformation not only had an impact on changing her social and political attitudes, but also gave birth to spiritual depth that was manifested in her personal interaction with the Qur'an as the kalam of Allah.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the self-transformation experienced by Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal took place through three main phases, namely the phase of hostility during the period of ignorance which was marked by his involvement in various wars against the Muslims, the turning point phase triggered by the events of Fathu Makkah and critical experiences in the midst of the storm of the sea, and the phase of full devotion to Islam which was marked by his involvement in jihad until he died as a martyr in the Yarmuk War. The transformation does not occur instantaneously, but through an internal process in the form of sincere awareness and repentance, and is influenced by external factors in the form of the wisdom and forgiving attitude of the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). The values of character education that can be exemplified from this story include the courage to admit mistakes, sincerity in repentance, the seriousness of self-improvement, and a deep love for the Qur'an. The story of Ikrimah bin Abu Jahal is very relevant to be integrated in the learning of Islamic Cultural History and Moral Creed at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah through the method of exemplary stories, in order to foster awareness in students that every individual has the opportunity to change into a better person as long as there is seriousness and sincerity. Further research is suggested to examine more deeply the application of the self-transformation stories of other Prophet's companions as a model of character education based on Islamic historical wisdom, as well as test their effectiveness empirically in the learning environment of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

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