

## **Islam and Human Psychology**

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### **Abstract**

Psychology plays a vital role in human personality. Islam itself is deeply interested in human psychology. The article discusses the connection of human psychology with Islam. When we discuss psychology, it comes the concept of spirit, self, heart and wisdom. Islam discusses these aspects of human personality and their role in life in Holy Quran. The article also reveals the opinion of different scholars, scientists and psychologists about faith and psychology. Islam lays stress on doing good deeds and avoiding of committing sins. The article also gives an idea how good deeds and attributes make an individual personality good or bad.

### **1. Introduction**

Islam is a monotheistic religion that centers on the belief in one God. This belief is in fact the key to optimal human functioning. This is evident within the meaning of "Islam" itself, an Arabic word the root of which is SLM (pronounced sa-la-ma). From this root comes three basic words (istilam) or to be surrender, Salam (peace) and salama (purity).<sup>i</sup>

Islam carries these three meanings and it means that if a person fully surrenders himself/herself to Allah Almighty alone and worship Him purely he/she will live in peace not only in this world but the life hereafter.

It is why Quran says:

أَدْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَافَّةً"

"O ye who be live! Enter into Islam wholly"<sup>ii</sup>

On the other hand the human mind is a complex phenomenon, an area where all the scientific research and development have failed to understand and grip. The role of human psychology in Islam is the same role of major denominator in any question.

This is why, William James the African scientist says:

"Faith is the greatest cure for anxiety".<sup>iii</sup>

Allah's remembrance banishes psychological fear.

Quran says:

إِنِ انْزِلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٌ فَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ اللَّهُ لَا خَوْفَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“Lo! Verily the friends of Allah’ No fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve”.<sup>iv</sup>

The holy Quran and Sunnah of Holy prophet is deeply interested in the human psychology. Holy Quran’s special concern with human psychology provides correct knowledge about it is as well as guides to the means of protection and cure from psychological disturbance such as anger, anxiety, fears, sadness, disappointment and confusion etc.

Allah Almighty created human beings and guided to the right and wrong. However He left human beings to judge between right and wrong, the good and bad and permitted and forbidden. We must understand that everything comes from Allah. He has all the divine power.

Allah Almighty says in Holy Quran:

سنريهم آياتنا فى الآفاق وفى انفسهم حتى يتبين لهم انه الحق

“Anon! We shall show them our signs in the regions and their own selves until it becometh manifest upon them it is truth”.<sup>v</sup>

Allah is the creator of human beings which is best of all his creators and has supremacy over them. It is created on its best. It is why that Allah SWT said:

لقد خلقنا الانسان فى احسن تقويم

"Assuredly we have created man in goodliest mould"<sup>vi</sup>

And He SWT said:

“And assuredly we have honored the children of Adam. And we have borne them on the land and the sea, and we have provided them with clean things, and we have proffered over many of them whom we have created with a preferment”.<sup>vii</sup>

Allah almighty not only created the human beings but also blessed him with a number of abilities. Human being is indeed, a collection of these abilities.

Walton (1879-1952) was the first amongst the western scholars, who defined psychology as science of behavior. According to him human personality is the combination of our character and has no psychological relation concern with his /himself.

Cad orgers is an American psychologist. He presented the theory of human personality of mentality standard people and guidance of healthy human beings.

According to him there is a force of self-actualization in all human beings which guides him in the process of development of his skills. He also states that each human being himself plays an important role in the development of his personality and he chooses the suitable way to follow out of all possible ways before him.<sup>viii</sup>

Mac Dagfull says that natural inclination and inherited attributes collectively from the human personality.

Ibn e seena (980-1037) one of the eminent Muslim scholars in his book named al Shifaa (الشفاء), which deals in multi collective sciences, specified a complete chapter about the human psychology and named it kitabunnafs (كتاب النفس).

A discussion in Kitaabunnafs which is indeed an epitomized of Al Shifa, its 6<sup>th</sup> chapter in 2<sup>nd</sup> volume is related with human psychology.

Four very important terms have been used in this booklet. These are:

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|---------------------|-----|
| 1. Spirit           | روح |
| 2. Soul             | نفس |
| 3. Heart            | قلب |
| 4. Wisdom/intellect | عقل |

All these signify a spiritual entity and are specifically discussed in it.<sup>ix</sup>

Iman Ghazali (1058-1111) defines soul and says:

الجوهر القائم في الانسان من حيث هو حقيقته

Self has inherent yearning for an ideal.

It is the جوهر found in the inner self of each human being and it is his real soul. Imam Ghazali says that it is called as rational soul and soul (روح) in Quran. Sufia use the term of heart for it.

According to Imam Razi (1149-1209), this جوهر is indeed the soul of a human being. In his opinion, نفس has a strong relationship with his heart and a person rules over his body (physical frame) by it.<sup>x</sup>

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|--------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Self that tends to do evil  | نفس امارة  |
| 2. Self-reproaching conscience | نفس لوامة  |
| 3. Self at peace               | نفس مطمئنة |

According to the eminent National poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal Human personality has two aspects. One is physical and other is spiritual, and the human personality comprises with second one.

Indeed the human personality is the collective frame of attributes and characteristics. These characteristics or attributes differentiate the one human being to other. These attributes can be good or bad. It is why those two aspects of human personality (good or bad) form attributes.

Holy Quran uses the term Nafs for the human personality. It is frequently used in it and represents complete picture of human personality.

It is very much important to state that Quran lays great stress on Good deeds (اعمال صالحه) and forbids from bad practices sins (السيئات) as it has bad impacts on human personality as good deeds enhance the human personality.

According to holy Quran every person is responsible for himself and his own bad or good deeds. To bridge the gap between good and bad keep the level of good is in fact the aim of one's life and is the identity of human being.

Allah SWT says

Every soul will be a pledge by the use he made of his will when in the world. These disposes of all theories of vicious atonement.<sup>xi</sup>

And a bearer of burthen will not bear another's burthen.<sup>xii</sup>

It is also mentionable that Allah has bestowed his creation, the human being the ability to recognize good or bad, so he can differentiate the good and bad. It is why Allah Almighty said:

And inspired it with the wickedness thereof and the piety thereof.<sup>xiii</sup>

Hadhrat Abu Huraira RA narrates that the holy prophet SAW said:

كل مولود يولد على الفطرة فابواه يهودانه ويمجسانه وينصرانه<sup>xiv</sup>

Imam Bousauiri, an eminent poet says in his ode:

النفس كالطفل ان تمهله شب على حب الرضاع وان تطفمه ينفطم

Nafs is like an infant you continuously feed him, it will be habitual to it, but when you try to stop feeding him he will leave easily.

Human being is always uncertain between the right and wrong, sin and pious deeds that results in three conditions of nafs; these are according to sharia scholars:

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|--------------------------------|------------|
| 1. Self that tends to do evil  | نفس امارة  |
| 2. Self-reproaching conscience | نفس لوامة  |
| 3. Self at peace               | نفس مطمئنة |

Nafs e Mutmaenna (نفس مطمئنة) is well defined by Pir Karam shah Al Azahri. He says:

النفس المطمئنة هي التي تنورت بنور القلب حتى تخلت عن اوصافها المذمومة وتجلت باخلاق حميدة

Nafs e Mutmaenna is enlightened by the divine light and is associated with good habits. It is from evil practice and sins.<sup>xv</sup>

It is well known that man has come to this world with a free will. There are possibilities before him of going against him. That's why to send prophets (messengers) were necessary for his guidance. They acted as warners and givers of good tidings to humanity.

A fair chance is given to every Muslim (man) before he is taken to task for his misdeeds on the Day of Judgment.

All kinds of worships in Islam have very positive effect on his life, mental and physical state.

For example prayer is made obligatory in Islam and to pray five times a day along with fellow Muslims. Its value has been clearly elaborated in Holy Quran:

ان الصلاة تنهى عن الفحشاء والمنكر

Verily Prayer preventeth man from indecency and that which is disreputable.<sup>xvi</sup>

The Holy Quran recognizes the yearning of the human soul to pour out its love and gratitude to Allah Almighty in direct communication with him. Its aim and purpose is to bring the anxious hearts nearer to comfort.

Next to prayer is the institution of fasting. The idea attached to fasting is more of patience than of abstinence.

Third institution is Zakat, or charity (which has not been enjoyed by any other institution before Islam.

Last comes the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. It is obligatory only on those who can afford it and possess sufficient means to support the family during the absence on pilgrimage.

It not only consequences into unity and brotherhood but also impacts on the social setup of human/ followers which can be elaborated in social psychology.

Islam lays great stress on personality development of its followers. It has very much concern with the health of a person both mental and physical.

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