

# The Quran and the personality development

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## ABSTRACT

*"This is the exalted book (The Quran) in which, there is no place for doubt, guidance for the pious." (Surah Al Baqarah (Al Quran))--*

*The best source for man's guidance in the world has been the religious scriptures and indeed the greatest among them is the holy Quran. The teachings of the Holy Quran are praised by the great personalities (scientists, psychologists, scholars etc) all over the world. The topic of "The Quran and the Personality Development" is of significant importance in prevailing circumstances of the world as a personality of a human being is the first and foremost unit of mankind, so if a man's personality is not balanced and has no tolerance, he cannot provide peace, tolerance and balance to mankind in his social and collective life and thus he has no right to imagine peace at Global level. In this paper various psychological theories (Maslow's and other theories) have been analyzed and the inferences are that none of these theories have taken all the aspects of human personality into consideration. This paper provided the detailed explanation of the verses of the Quran that emphasize a human being as an entity which contains in itself all aspects biological, social, cultural, economic, psychological, psychical, spiritual and transcendental aspects. The paper highlighted a detailed charter which the Quran has given in connection with each and every aspect of human personality as there is a verse or more in the Quran which guides a person for each and every conduct of his life. Various personality disorders commonly found nowadays are mentioned in this paper and how these disorders can be prevented in one's personality by following the teachings of the Holy Quran is also expressed. Various experimental observations conducted by non Muslims psychologists for observing the behavior of Quran reading and the non Quran reading psychic patients and the inferences of such cases are also mentioned in the paper. The conclusion of this paper emphasized the need of understanding the Quranic laws and following the guidelines provided by the Quran in the life of every human being to make the world a better place to live in.*

**Keywords:** Quran, Personality Development, Knowledge, Psychological Approaches

## INTRODUCTION

Personality is the consequences of the person's knowledge, his experiences and what he reads, hears and perceives. Every verse of the Quran, we read, comprehend and memorize can modify our life because the Quran contains the foundations and the basis to build a personality. Personality development is the course which starts from birth and continues with time. World nowadays is facing a lot of challenges in his regard. According to WHO close to 800000 people die due to suicide every year, which is one person every 40 seconds?

## PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Personality according to Kosslyn and Rosenberg is defined as "a set of behavioural, emotional and cognitive tendencies that people display over time and across situations and that distinguishes individuals from each other" According to John W. Santrock "Development is the pattern of change that begins at conception and continues throughout the human life span."

The aim of the prophet's mission and the revelation of the holy Quran is to train an individual and develop a healthy personality by forming a constructive relationship with God, one's self, society and environment. In order to achieve this sacred purpose humankind is granted revelatory teachings of the Quran and narrations from the infallibles. From The Quranic perspectives a person acts according to character, his choices, behaviours, reactions, friendships and enmities. The way a person expresses emotions are rooted in his personality and identity. The healthy personality in collective sense provides us with healthy and positive society, thus in turn contributing in making the positive and healthy sociological environment of the world. The religious teachings and psychological findings conclude that there is a permanent relationship between a proper behaviour based on the faith (the religion) and a healthy personality. The ultimate goal of modern psychology is to understand the personality and this is determined by the connection of man with God.

## Psychological Approaches of Personality Development

The four main approaches of personality Development are:

- 1) THE PSYCHODYNAMIC APPROACH
- 2) THE HUMANISTIC APPROACH
- 3) THE TRAIT APPROACH

## 4) THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE APPROACH

**Psychodynamic Approach:** the well known researchers in the field of psychodynamic theories are; Sigmund Freud, Erik Erikson, Alfred Adler and Carl Jung etc.

The psychodynamic theories attempt to understand the human behaviour by looking at the unconscious mind and its desires. **Alfred Adler's theory** is called Inferiority Theory Of Personality and this theory considers birth order as major factor personality development.

Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development emphasises on development of different attributes of personality during different stages of life;

**0---1 -----development of Trust**

**1---3 -----Autonomy**

**3-6 -----Planning and Leading activities**

**6-12 -----Development of sense of pride and Confidence**

**Further Erikson is of the view that Adolescents** must have strong sense of identity

**Young Adults** must get optimistic things around them

**Middle Adults** must get feeling of being productive materially

Lastly in late **adulthood** person must live in joyful positive environment and lead a positive life

**Drawbacks of psychoanalytical theories;**

These theories often neglect biological, cultural and social considerations.

Sigmund Freud failed to include evidence of the impact of the environment on the individual throughout this theory.

These theories fail to study culture and its impact on personality.

**HUMANISTIC APPROACH:**

The founding father of Humanistic psychology is Abraham Maslow. He created a hierarchy of needs and according to him human beings move through this hierarchy during their life time. The bottom of this hierarchy begins with basic needs and step by step needs change and a person continues to move upwards self actualization which sits at the top of hierarchy.

**Humanist psychologists focus on the whole person rather than individual aspect such as the unconscious mind**

**Drawbacks**

This approach is too positive and fails to explain and prevent evil or psychotic behaviour.

**THE TRAIT APPROACH;**

The supporters of this approach are of the opinion that people can be described on the basis of personality traits. The psychologists and the theorists continue to debate on the number of basic traits that make up human personality

**Gordon Allport** in 1936 recognised 4000 traits and categorised them into three levels;

CARDINAL TRAITS

CENTRAL TRAITS

SECONDARY TRAITS

Further **Raymond Cattell** reduced the number of main personality traits to 171 and then using a statistical technique reduced his list to just 16 key personality traits.

Then a British psychologist **Hans Eysenck** developed a model of personality based upon just three universal traits.

**Introversion/ extraversion**

**Neuroticism/emotional stability and psychoticism**

**Inferences;**

**Cattell** focussed on too many traits, while **Eysenck** focussed on too few traits.

The trait theory has objectivity that Freud's psycho analytic theory lack but this theory also has some weaknesses;

Traits are often poor predictors of behaviour.

An individual may score high on assessments of a specific trait, but he may not behave such in every situation.

**Social Cognitive theory of personality Development;**

In his social cognitive theory, Bandura was of the opinion that environment causes behaviour but behaviour also environment. This chief concept in his theory is also called reciprocal determinism.

**WEAKNESSES**

This theory lays too much emphasis on what happens instead of what the observer does with what happens. This theory does not take into account physical and mental changes. It fails to explain behavioural differences. This theory does not take into account that what one person views as punishment another person may view as reward. It can be concluded from above theories that no theory is able to explain and guide the development of personality.

**STATEMENTS ABOUT THE QURAN BY NON - MUSLIMS SCHOLARS STATEMENTS**

Dr. Keith L Moore, former president of the Association of Anatomists and the American Association of clinical anatomist at a conference in Cairo presented a research paper and stated " It has been a great pleasure for me to help clarify statements in the Quran about human development it is clear to me that these statements must have to Muhammad from God or Allah, because most of this knowledge was not discovered until many centuries later".

E. Marshall Johnson, professor and chairman of the Department of Anatomy and developmental biology and Director of the Daniel Baugh Institute USA, stated once, "-----in summary the Quran describes not only the development of external form, but emphasise also the internal stages, the stages inside the embryo, of its creation and development emphasising major events recognised by contemporary science."

**DEVELOPMENT OF A HUMAN BEING ACCORDING TO THE QURAN**

"O' mankind if ye have a doubt about the Resurrection (consider) that we created you out of dust, then out of sperm, then out of leech like clot, then out of morsel of flesh, partly formed partly un formed. In order we may manifest our power to you; and we cause whom we will to rest in the womb for an appointed term then do we bring you out as babies then (foster you) that ye may reach your age of full strength and some of you are called to die and some are send back to feeblest old age so that they know nothing after having known (much) and further), thou seest earth barren and lifeless but when we pour down rain on it is stirred to life, it swells and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth in (pairs)"

In this verse, of surah Al- Hajj Allah (SWT) says about human life in two phase. This verse vividly, explains the development during intrauterine stage and thereafter.

In the surah Al Baqarah, Allah says:

*"As we bestowed our favour upon you when we sent among you a messenger of your own who recites to you, our revelations, scarifies you, teaches you the law and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know"*

Thus, it is clear that Allah (SWT) guides mankind the art of living through the personality of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and the holy Quran contains the charter for mankind which definitely leads to success of world and hereafter.

**Charter of the Quran for human life;**

After the completion of intra uterine development and entry of a new feeble human being in this world Allah (SWT) further guides the parents and the new creation through the **Holy Quran;**

*"Mothers may breast feed their children two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing period. Upon the father is the Mothers provision and their clothing according to what, is acceptable.....Al Quran)*

Here Allah directs a mother of new born child to completely feed the child for a period of more than two years. Nowadays science also proved that for proper psycho social development and nourishment of a child breast feeding for more than two years is necessary. Dr. James Prescott stated that it was very difficult for him to identify a single murderer, rapist, or drug addict in any correctional facility in America who has been breastfed for more than two years. Breast feeding soothes the frustrations, bumps, bruises and daily stress of early childhood. It is associated with better social adaptations.

"Verily, salah is an obligation on the believers to be observed at its appointed time"

Here and in many other verses Allah emphasises in the Quran obligation of daily prayers to avoid evils and vices for proper development of personality. A recent study investigating the alpha brain activity during Muslim Prayers has reported increased amplitude in the parietal and occipital regions suggestive of Para sympathetic elevation, thus indicating a state of relaxation.

**The qualities/traits which are must in the character of human being as described by Quran are;**

Respect of all human beings.

Always speaking the truth and shun the deceit full words.

Saying the same words which are in the heart

Speaking politely keeping voice low

Do not be arrogant with people

Besides these traits there are full revelations in the Quran which are essential for proper and healthy personality.

The problems which today's world is facing due to poor personality development and their rescue through The Quran are;

Suicide:- "Do not kill or destroy yourselves for surely Allah has been merciful to you"

Grief:- "Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger some loss in goods, lives and the fruits of your toil, but give glad tidings to those who passionately persevere. Who say when afflicted with calamity to Allah we belong, and to him is our return"

Anxiety:- "And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah .Indeed Allah allows those who rely upon him"

Obsessive-compulsive disorder:

These are called Wasawis in Islam and we find in the Quran the counter adaptive thoughts for those obsessions:- "*I seek refuge with Allah the Lord of mankind, from the evil of the whispers of Devil, who whispers in the hearts of men*"

**Homo sexuality:** The main cause of homo sexuality is the environment during puberty; it degrades the society as a whole."Do ye comment lewdness such as no people in creation ever committed before you? -For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women ye are indeed people transgressing beyond bounds"

Thus, there is proper guidance of the Quran in every affair of life for a man just a person needs to reflect on the teachings of the Quran the laws in the Quran if applied to life, success will always be there.

#### **Healing Quranpower of the Quran:**

Scientists discovered that mechanical vibrations in the sound cause the brain cells to correspond and change with them and as we know that the Quran is composed in such a metre that it cannot be deemed either poetry or prose hence, we find peace and healing in the Quran.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The only inimitable book of revelations, the Quran has the themes of the oneness of God, the purpose of human existence] faith and God consciousness, the hereafter and its significance. The Quran emphasises upon reason and understanding and causes one to reflect .It attaches our hearts with someone that has qualities of power, perfection and richness thereby, we get feeling of safety and security .We can rescue ourselves from the feelings of depression if we have the in build faith that "Allah protects us", "Allah gives us"[AIWAHHAB], "Allah makes us succeed" ,"Allah is with us". Therefore, embodying this faith in ourselves human personality would glorify in all aspects.

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