

Good Attributes of Human Beings

There are many attributes of human beings and many verses about them. We present the most important ones. The human being is the vicegerent on this earth: ***“And when your Lord said to the angels: I am going to place on the earth a vicegerent”*** (2:30)

“And He it is who has made you successors in the land and raised some of you above others by (various) grades, that He might try you by what He has given you.” (6: 165)

Humans have the greatest capacity for knowledge: ***“And He taught Adam all the names, then presented them to the angels; then He said: Tell me the names of those if you are right.”*** (2:31)

“Names” in the preceding verse means “realities”. When angels thought that they were superior to Adam, Allah, the Most Glorious, wanted to prove that the angels were wrong. The Almighty taught Adam all the facts, and then asked the angels if they were true in their claim, then they would have to divulge those facts to Him. But they were not able to do so. Thus, we can understand from this verse that man is capable of attaining all knowledge.

Human beings are created in such a way that they can know their Creator through innate knowledge. Man has no need to use external ways for knowing Allah. If we go deep into our spirits we can understand that we are created, that we have a Lord. To illustrate an example, a person went to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (a.s.) and asked him to prove the existence of Allah, the Most Glorious. The Imam (a.s.) asked him whether he ever travelled on a ship. The man answered positively. Then the Imam (a.s.) asked him whether in his travel a situation arose where there existed a danger for the ship to sink and that people began to panic and were afraid that the ship would be wrecked and they would die as result. The man again gave an affirmative answer. The Imam (a.s.) then asked: “Did you think of any power that could have saved you then”? When the man said, “Yes,” Imam concluded, “That is Allah, the Omnipotent”.

When we are in danger and we feel no one can help us, inborn knowledge is awakened and activated. In many people and in ordinary situations, this knowledge of Allah the Most Glorious is dormant. However it can be awakened and strengthened, especially when we lose our shelter and strength and

feel helpless. It is noteworthy that not only our knowledge of Allah is inadequate) but also the religion of Islam as a whole is in accordance with our spirit. And this is one of the key factors in its survival under very trying conditions and its extraordinary development. The following verse shows this fact.

“Then set your face upright for the religion in the right state – the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah’s creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know.” (30:30)

Almighty Allah has created man in a manner that he becomes aware of the right religion and has strong affinity towards it. These are two dimensions of fitrat (the manner of our creation). We will not discuss fitrat in detail, but here it is necessary to say that this quality is the nature in man instilled by Allah.

The term fitrat means a God-given quality in all human beings. Innate matters are of two kinds: knowledge and desire. So, man's fitrat (natural) instinct consists partly of knowledge and partly of desire (natural drives). Therefore, we can say that every person through his innate God-given knowledge and desire is instinctively aware of the pure religion and has an affinity towards it.

However, when a person is immersed in material life and ordinary affairs and does not pay any attention to nonmaterial ideas, his fitrat (innate knowledge) and desire will become clouded. We know that proper nourishment is necessary for the growth of the body. If we neglect the right type of diet, it could lead to different kinds of complications that could cause a malfunction in the body. It is the same with fitrat. If we just indulge in material life, the other side will be weakened or clouded by material affairs. But in difficulties, when our attention to the material life is temporarily diverted, we turn entirely to Allah and slowly begin to feel the change from inside.

Besides the corporeal body, there is a Divine element or spiritual element in the human being. What does the Divine spirit mean? Does it mean that Allah has a spirit and has part of it in humans? Definitely not. When we attribute spirit to Allah, it is something symbolic, just like the House of Allah. Although every thing is created by Allah, some things are more precious and respected than others, so we attribute them to Allah.

Thus, we can conclude that all men have a Divine element in them, which is very important and which makes man a worthy being. The angels were commanded to prostrate before Adam (a.s.) only after Allah had breathed life into him—that is instilling the Divine Spirit into Adam. This spirit is the origin and the source of all special and exclusive perfection’s of human beings. All the capabilities of this species originate from this endless and everlasting source—the Divine Spirit. Therefore, all of us are indebted to the Almighty, the Creator, for this irreplaceable Blessing.

E. Man was not created haphazardly through chance.

1. God has created human beings.

2. God has created human beings with a purpose.

3 God has chosen human beings as his vicegerents.

These three facts prove that humans are chosen to be Allah's representative on this earth above all other creatures. We shall study how these three prominent factors are presented in the Glorious Qur'an.

“Then He made him complete and breathed into him of His spirit and made for you the ears and eyes and the hearts; little is it that you give thanks.” (32:9)

As we stated in the previous chapter, man has been chosen by Almighty Allah, the Creator, as his vicegerent. The following is yet another verse confirming the basis of our discussion.

“Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him).” (20:122)

Some human beings are chosen by God. The phrase “turned to him” is *tawbah* in Arabic, which literally means to return. Sometimes it is attributed to God and sometimes to humans. When someone commits an error, God turns to him to help him. The Lord thus prepares the way for him to repent. And when he repents, and seeks forgiveness, God returns to him which means that God accepts his repentance. It is very clear that if God does not help us to return we cannot repent. God first helps us. He turns to man, then man repents and then God accepts his repentance. Notice the following verse:

“Then He turned to them (mercifully) that they might turn (to Him); surely Allah is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful” (9:118)

Man is completely free to choose his destiny. That is, man is the master of his own fate. This is how the Scripture presents the idea of one's destiny. There is the light of guidance. However, one is free to take it or:

“Surely we have shown him the way; he may be grateful or ungrateful” (76:3)

To be thankful does not mean to just say: “shukran lillah” (Thanks be to Allah). We should thank God for having given us to the righteous path and given us innumerable blessings without expecting anything from us. So, let's open our real eyes and see for ourselves His endless blessings. Being thankful to Him is not based on just mere utterances. We should try to use His blessings in such a way that we get closer to Him to further be blessed by the light of His Benevolence, Guidance and final reunion.

Both men and jinn have been bestowed the freedom to choose their ways and style of life. As we know, no other creatures have such a choice except the jinn's. The jinn have the freedom to believe or disbelieve. But the level of perfection jinn can reach is lower than that of men. Based on such principles jinn must follow the prophets who have been sent to the human masses.

Jinn like all human beings have all the biological functions. They reproduce like all living beings.

However, their physical structure differs from that of man. Their bodies are light. They are not three dimensional. Jinn's can easily move about. They are able to move from one part of the universe to the other easily. Jinn's can take the forms of animals, humans, etc., but their creation lacks that ultimate potentiality of perfection with which mankind has been endowed.

Therefore, it is only humans who bear the Divine trust and fulfil the goal of creation: ***"We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it. Surely he is very unjust, very ignorant."*** (33:72)

Man is respected and has honour: ***"And surely We have honoured the children of Adam, and We have carried them in the land and the sea, and we have given them to excel by an appropriate excellence over most of those whom we have created."*** (17:70)

H. Human beings have a God-given power of judgement and discrimination, conscience.

Everyone understands what is good and what is bad. Prophets, thus, were sent to make people aware and strengthen their powers of understanding. For example, everyone is aware that to lie is wrong. Thus, the prophets came to emphasise the difference between right and wrong. They also teach us things which we were not aware of, such as details. This God-given power can be understood from the following verse: ***"And the soul and Him who perfected it. Then He inspired it to understand what is right and wrong for it"*** (91:7-8)

Man's success depends on the soul. His discrimination of good from bad is not enough. He should act on the knowledge he has been given by Almighty Lord. Man will never be satisfied by anything except by the remembrance of Allah and drawing near to Him.

"Those who believe and whose hearts are set at rest by the remembrance of Allah; now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts set at rest" (13:28)

Every human being tries to reach his Lord. A person who wishes to acquire infinite wealth also tries to reach Allah, but his mistake is that he misunderstands his God. So he reaches for something insecure and transient. Every one wishes to reach Allah but man makes mistakes. The only way to fulfil oneself is by making one's soul aware of Allah. We should try to reach Him with full knowledge and be conscious of the goal we are trying to reach: ***"O man! surely you strive (to attain) to your Lord, a hard striving until you meet Him."*** (84:6)

There are three types of souls. The highest is the confident soul, the most perfect soul that has obeyed Allah, to the extent that nothing can shake it, like Imam Husain's (a.s.) soul (as it is expressed in some aHadith). In order to attain this level, we must be in remembrance of Allah in each second of our worldly life. Every expression of our life, our ideas, thoughts, deeds, looks, actions, everything that one can imagine should express Him rather than us: ***"O soul that is at rest. Return to your Lord, well pleased (with Him), well pleasing (Him)."*** (89:27-28)

Having a confident heart depends on the remembrance of Allah , the Glorification of his Attributes of Beauty and Grandeur. This is the secret key to our ascendance and the attainment of station or rank. One should try to ponder the attributes of His Beauty and Grandeur. Man will never be satisfied by anything except by the remembrance of Allah. These are great topics in Islamic thought.

Many problems in society can be resolved through money or material gain. But the innate problems of humanity cannot be solved by such things. Confidence is not gained by financial matters. Surely, this is not the case. We should ask ourselves this question: why do some of the richest people commit suicide? The fact is that these people initially thought that once they attained a status of wealth, they would have satisfied the ego. They would have a peaceful life. No sooner had they attained riches, than they began to realise that money alone cannot solve the problem. There was something missing in them.

The Divine blessings on earth are created for human beings who are free to utilise the land, harvest the seas, conquer space, utilise animals, etc. to their own benefits and ends.

“And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth, all, from Himself; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.” (45: 13)

“It is He who created for you all—that is in the earth.” (2:29)

Man is created to worship Allah the Glorious: ***“And I have not created the jinn and the men except to serve Me.” (51:56)***

This verse shows that one of the goals of our creation is to serve Allah the Exalted. We are not created merely to eat, drink, and sleep. The ultimate perfection of the human beings cannot be achieved except through the worship of Almighty Allah.

L. Man cannot know himself unless he knows Allah. A man cannot forget Allah, otherwise he will forget himself.

- (a) Why was man created?
- (b) What is his fate?
- (c) What should he do now?

These are some of the questions that can be understood if mankind knows its Creator. Man will understand many realities after his death.

Men are mostly unaware of many things in this universe. They have limited knowledge and are only concerned with their day to day activities their daily routine. They care little of things beyond the material world. When death overtakes them, the curtains are parted. It is at that juncture that their eyes are opened to see the realities in their nakedness—everything uncovered. It is at this stage that they begin to

perceive the Grandeur of the Creator, their misconceptions, their rejections, their negligence, their deeds whether good or bad. Before their eyes, they will see the angels, the burning inferno of hell for the bad deeds, and the everlasting bliss of Paradise for the good deeds.

Death awakens them to realise, possibly too late, that the Islamic ideas were the consummation of the heavenly religions dispensing truth in the fullest possible sense—the Words of Almighty Allah. They are then filled with fright and uncertainty of what they had neglected. They are filled with remorse of the lost opportunity, which is impossible to compensate it is water under the bridge.

if one tries to lessen his or her dependence on material life, he can reap the benefits in this very world. If money or fame is not important to one, but only remembrance of Allah and things concerning Allah, then one can see those realities which are hidden from others in this world.

“Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from your veil, so your sight today is sharp.” (5: 22)

The Almighty Lord sent apostles, messengers, prophets and Imams to make us aware of both the spiritual and material aspects of life. Allah has never wanted us to be unconscious of the facts. Allah, the Creator wants us to be aware of the path we choose for this worldly and other worldly life.

The Lord wants us to enter another world with the bliss of soul and peace of mind. Almighty Allah sent His Last Messenger, the Seal of the Prophets, Muhammad (S) to invite us to Islam, as the consummation of all the heavenly religions. So, it is in the interest and benefit of the human masses to follow and abide by Islamic law through which their eyes will be opened to the naked facts.

However, in general, it is unfortunate to see that people are in deep slumber in this material world but as soon as they pass to the next stage, the other world, they immediately become conscious of what is really going on(1) and return to this world is rendered impossible.

A verse in the Glorious Qur'an speaks of the unrighteous people. When they die they ask Allah: ***“Until when death overtakes one of them, he says: Send me back, my Lord; Hapty I may do good in that which I have left. By no means! It is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised” (23:99,100)***

Human beings usually becomes conscious only at the time of death. That is why we should read the Qur'an very carefully and when we reach these verses, we should stop and reflect on them. After death our sight will become more sharp and we will see and realise many things. But Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said in this regard: 'If the curtains are removed for the people, my certainty will not increase. '

He means that he has attained the depth of certainty which cannot be enhanced by any means. He has attained the station of Truth. Once the Prophet (S) was walking with some of his companions, and they met a young man whose strange behaviour attracted their attention.

The Prophet (S) asked him: "HOW are you?"

The young man replied: "I am certain."

The Prophet (S) said: "There is a sign for everything. If you have attained the rank of certainty, what is the sign for your certainty?"

The man replied: "My certainty tells me to fast in hot days and to pray all night. This is my sign. I have reached a stage that worshipping Allah alone is the only pleasure that I dearly derive. I see heaven and hell. And of those around you, I can see who are the people of heaven and of hell."

The Prophet (S) stopped him and said: "Say no more. Because it is not good to tell others of their future". The young man begged the Prophet (S) to pray to Allah to grant him the status of martyrdom. The Prophet (S) prayed, and later the man was martyred on a battlefield. That young man's good deed and his detachment from the material world earned him the status of having attained certainty. His soul was free and he could see what a person who has his heart set on the worldly glitters could not see. The Glorious Qur'an states that if we attained the status of certainty we could even see heaven and hell.

"Nay! if you had Known with a certain knowledge) You should most certainly have seen the hell."
(102:5,6)

Heaven and hell have been created for us, and they are not something that will be created in the future. A person who has pure insight can see them. Once a man named Rammam went to Imam 'Ali (a.s.) and asked him to tell him the qualities of the pious (muttaqin) to the extent that he could see them. First Imam 'Ali (a.s.) did not want to say anything but Hammam insisted. One of the points mentioned by the Imam was that these people are like the people who have seen heaven and hell.

Men do not desire only material matters. People have some important things to consider as ideals. They can try their best only to attain the blessings and pleasures of Almighty Allah. The following verse explains that His pleasure is the most important reward.

"Allah has promised the believing man and believing woman gardens, beneath which rivers flow to abide in them, and goodly dwellings in gardens of perpetual abode; and best of all is Allah's goodly pleasure that is the grand achievement." (9:72)

This is the greatest achievement and not the material things. Here God explains the benefits and blessings in Paradise, and says that to be aware that God is satisfied with you, and that He is pleased with you, is the greatest blessing. This knowledge for man is extremely important. The desire of every person is to obtain the pleasure of Allah, the Glorious.

<https://www.al-islam.org/self-knowledge-mohammad-ali-shomali/good-attributes-human-beings>