

## HEALTHY PERSONALITY IN OUR YOUTH: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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**Abstract:** The aim of the prophets' mission and the revelation of the Holy Qur'an is to train an individual and develop a healthy personality by forming a constructive relationship with God, one's self, society, and the environment. In order to achieve this sacred purpose, humankind is granted revelatory teachings of the Qur'an and narrations from the Infallibles. According to Islamic teachings, without connection with God, any claim to have a healthy personality is unfounded. A person's mental health is measured by his distance from or closeness to God. This article describes the concept of a healthy personality and its outcomes, with an explanation on the relationship of the healthy personality with prayer and servitude to God. Among the salient points of this article is the concept of personality in psychology and the role of a healthy personality in the observance of Islamic values.

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## Introduction

From the Qur'anic perspective, a person acts according to his character; his choices, behaviours, reactions, friendships and enmities, and how he expresses his emotions are rooted in his personality and identity. The healthy personality is the root of positive and constructive behaviours and emotions; similarly, the unhealthy personality is the source of irrational and improper behaviour. One's personality should be balanced so as to enjoy the pure life and feel secure, satisfied, and happy because "*Whoever does righteous deeds, man or woman, and has faith, verily, to him will We give a good and pure Life, and We will bestow on such people their reward according to the best of their actions.*" (Nahl, 97). On the other hand, God said, "*Everyone acts according to his own disposition,*" (Israa, 84). In other words:

The believers who seek healing from the Qur'an and gain mercy from it, on the other hand, the oppressors who do not gain anything from the Qur'an but damage and harm, and mean people who are too proud while enjoying blessings, and disappointed when facing problems, all act according to their mentality and personality; mentalities which have been formed as influenced by heredity, personality, parents, educational and upbringing, and a person's habits.<sup>3</sup>

On the basis of religious teachings and psychological findings, there is a permanent relationship between a healthy personality and proper behaviour based on faith. In this study, we demonstrate this relationship on the basis of evidence – Qur'anic verses and hadiths. The research

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<sup>3</sup> Makarim Shirazi, Nassir, *Nemunah Qur'anic Interpretation*, vol. 12, p 245.

method used in this study is analytic-descriptive. The Qur'an, hadiths, and literature in the field of psychology constitute the most important sources of this study.

### **Personality in contemporary psychology and Islamic psychology**

Understanding personality is the ultimate goal of modern psychology. In one sense, personality includes the entire realm of psychology. All psychological schools of thought, such as psychoanalysis, behaviourism and humanism, define personality from their own perspective. According to Pervin and John, "Personality represents those characteristics of the person consisting of fixed patterns of thought, emotion, and behaviour."<sup>4</sup> Warren<sup>5</sup> regards personality as a set of emotional, physical, and intellectual characteristics that distinguish people from one another. Shamlou believed that personality "consists of an organized set and a unit composed of relatively fixed and permanent characteristics which together distinguish a person from other people."<sup>6</sup> Allport<sup>7</sup> wrote, "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual which consists of psychosomatic systems that determines thoughts and behaviours of man." According to Miley, "Personality is a psychological totality that determines a particular person."<sup>8</sup>

To Islamic scholars, there is a strong relationship between personality and Qur'anic anthropology which considers the human being composed

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<sup>4</sup> Pervin, Lawrence A. and Oliver P. John. *Personality (Theory and Research)*, translated by Muhammad Ja'far Jawadi and Parwin Kadiwar, p.3 and See: Yusuf Karimi, *The Psychology of Personality*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Warren, H.C.1930 A.D.

<sup>6</sup> Shamlou, Sa'id, *Schools of Thought and Theories in the Psychology of Personality*, p 10.

<sup>7</sup> Allport.

<sup>8</sup> Miley, Roberto, *Development, Emergence, and Transformation of Personality*, translated by Mahmoud Mansour, p. 17.

of body and soul. Imam Muhammad Ghazali viewed personality as the result of interaction between everyone's behaviour and thought (outward appearance and inner state). These two components mutually influence each other, and the rise or fall of each depends on the other.<sup>9</sup> Allamah Majlisi considered man's personality consisting of soul and body and regarded its authenticity and identity as the rational soul that every person defines as "I".<sup>10</sup> Believing that the man is composed of body and soul, Allamah Mahdi Naraqı stated, "Man's physical body is mortal, but his soul is immortal and eternal"; all Islamic scholars agree on this theory."<sup>11</sup> Allamah Ja'fari underlined, "What must be adopted from the Islamic psychology in defining man is his spiritual and heavenly aspects." Thus, he regarded understanding man's true personality and nature as depending on his metaphysical dimension.<sup>12</sup> Considering the verse, "*Say: Everyone acts according to his own disposition,*" (Israa:84), some consider disposition equal to the concept of "personality" in psychology and define it as follows, "Personality refers to a set of intentions, moods, needs, mental ways, and states,"<sup>13</sup> and they believe that the primary meaning of "disposition" is man's mental structure, saying, "Man's disposition consists in the man's unified mental structure which is shaped through the interaction of genetics, environment, and willpower; such that it interprets the environmental stimuli consistent with himself and reacts to them in a particular way."<sup>14</sup> As for the definition of disposition, Raghıb Isfahani wrote, "Basically disposition (*shakilah*) is

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<sup>9</sup> Rafi'i, Behruz, *Views of Muslim Scholars on Education and its Principles*, p.165.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p 166.

<sup>12</sup> Ja'fari, Mohammad Taqi, *Islamic Psychology*, p 35.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmadi, Ali-Asghar, *Personality Psychology from Islamic Perspective*, pp.12-14

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p 25

derived from the root (*shikl*) meaning restraining the animal and (*shikal*) refers to the animal's rein." Since everyone's temperaments, characteristics, and habits bind him to act or behave in a particular way, it is called disposition. According to Mudarrisi:

People differ in the extent of their gain and benefit from the revelation. The origin of these differences is their personality which arises from their various traits and habits. Although God has granted man a particular ability and knowledge so that he can develop his personality constructively, he is trapped in his immature personality and takes a hostile stance against the truth. This behaviour and confrontation with divine teachings result from his abnormal personality, traits, and habits.<sup>15</sup>

From the Islamic perspective, the genuine and essential motivation for having a healthy and secure personality is love for the absolute perfection, and the only manifestation of absolute perfection, or infinite perfection, is the Almighty God. That is, His essence, which includes all perfection and attributes of glory and beauty unconditionally.<sup>16</sup> According to Imam Khomeini:

Man's soul does not get content with any rank and extent of perfection. This search for perfection is continuous and increasing. The one who sees perfection in the sultanate becomes fond of a greater power after he rises to power, and the one who is fascinated with and fond of a beautiful

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<sup>15</sup> Mudarrisi, Sayyid Muhammad Taqi, *Hidayat Qur'anic Interpretation*, p. 299

<sup>16</sup> Misbah, Mohammad Taqi, *The Requirements of the Islamic Management*, p. 209. See: Dolatkah, Muhammad, *Motivation of the Secure Personality from the Islamic perspective*, Ma'rifat, No. 38, p 40

and attractive appearance will be fond of a more beautiful one when he finds it. From this brief explanation, you should find out about details. Thus, all people unanimously refer to this fact that they love absolute perfection.<sup>17</sup>

Many Muslim scholars consider personality equal to disposition. Interpreting the verse “*Everyone acts according to his own disposition*” (Israa: 84), the late Allamah Tabatabai wrote:

This verse views man’s behaviour as an outcome of his disposition. That is, no matter what man’s action is, it is in accordance with his temperament. As the Persian saying goes, “What seeps out of the jug is what is inside it.” By analogy, the relationship between disposition and action is the one between soul and body, namely the body embodies and reveals the soul’s mission through its organs and their actions. This principle that there is a special relationship between the soul’s features and bodily actions has been proved through both experience and scientific investigations. It has been proved that a courageous and brave person’s actions are never the same as those of a timid and fearful one. When encountering a fearful and daunting scene, the timid person acts differently from the courageous. Likewise, there is no resemblance between the actions of a generous or magnanimous person and those of a miserly and mean one. Similarly, that there is a relationship between man’s intrinsic qualities and his physical constitutions. People with particular physical constitutions have a short fuse and are naturally interested

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<sup>17</sup> Khomeini, Sayyid Ruhullah. *Forty Hadiths*, Hadith no. 11

in revenge, and those with some others are vulnerable to the demands of the gluttony and sexual instinct, becoming impatient. This is also the case with other features and characteristics.<sup>18</sup>

### **Our needs**

Self-knowledge is one of the most important principles of success and happiness. The one who does not know where he is from, where he is going to, and for what purpose he has been created is confused about the interpretation of his life. Imam Ali considers “man’s ignorance about himself” the worst kind of ignorance.<sup>19</sup> Lack of self-knowledge and ignorance of one’s dignity can be considered the roots of social, behavioural, psychological, and emotional problems because man’s goals, aspirations, and expectations are defined according to his definition of himself. Thus, understanding man and his lofty needs prepares the grounds for perceiving the pure life. Aside from basic needs, lofty needs are the most fundamental human needs.

According to the religious culture, man’s spiritual needs are regarded as one of his most important needs met only through intimacy with God and constant remembrance of Him. According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, “higher-level needs manifest only when lower level needs are satisfied to some extent.”<sup>20</sup> However, we should not forget that “some people who are strongly committed to a cause may sacrifice all their property and life willingly; for example, those who ignore their physiological and security needs, fight against the enemy, and fast for

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<sup>18</sup> Tabatabai, Sayyid Mohammad Hussain, *Al-Mizan Qur’anic Interpretation*, translated by Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Musawi Hamadani, vol. 13, p 263.

<sup>19</sup> Tamimi Amadi, Abdul-Wahid, *Tasnif Ghurar-ul-Hikam wa Durar-ul-Kalim*, p. 223, no. 2936.

<sup>20</sup> Yusuf Karimi, Karimi, p.151.

long hours under the most difficult circumstances.”<sup>21</sup> To Maslow,<sup>22</sup> a healthy and secure man has satisfied his basic needs sufficiently, and his fundamental motivation is “self-actualization” – which is the constant flourishing of one’s abilities, talents, and competencies throughout his life.<sup>23</sup> According to Chahen, five behavioural patterns indicate mental health: 1. a sense of responsibility, 2. self-confidence, 3. goal-orientedness, 4. personal values; that is, one has a particular philosophy, based on his beliefs and goals, that leads to his happiness as well as prosperity of his beloved, and 5. individuality and uniqueness; that is, one distinguishes himself from others so that he neither ignorantly conforms with the demands of others nor is rejected by them.<sup>24</sup>

However, the meaning of a person’s higher needs and mental health in Islamic thought differs greatly from that in such scientific and philosophical fields as humanism because they differ completely in their view on God, the hereafter, the creation of man, salvation, misery, lifestyle, ethics, goals, aspirations, and values of life. According to Abdullah Nasri: “From the Qur’anic perspective, the world was not created in vain, rather all its constituent elements have been created for a specific purpose,”<sup>25</sup> and the purpose of creation of man (al-Baqarah: 30) is his potential to actualizing all his talents and be a vicegerent of God. The goal of the creation of man is worship of, and servitude to, God. Thus, in Islam the ideal mental health is to achieve the desired human

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<sup>21</sup> Schultz, Duane, and Schultz, Sydney Ellen, *Theories of Personality*, Translated by Yahya Sayyid Muhammadi, p 364.

<sup>22</sup> A. Maslow 1908-1970.

<sup>23</sup> Dolatkah, Muhammad, *ibid*.

<sup>24</sup> Motahhari, Jamshid, *Toward Mental Health*, Ma’rifat, No. 46, p 22.

<sup>25</sup> Nasri, Abdullah, *The Philosophy of Creation*, p 268.



perfection, namely proximity of God.<sup>26</sup> According to Sayyid Abul Qasim Husseini: "...the purpose of the divine prophets' call and its acceptance by people is to achieve mental development; everyone who treads this path enjoys an ideal and healthy mentality."<sup>27</sup> Ayatullah Mutahhari wrote:

A person seeks something and when he attains it, he loses his eagerness for it, and instead he loathes and becomes bored with it. The reason for this is that what he has sought in his heart was not this; he has wrongly considered it his desired goal. People want absolute perfection and hate limitations – which are defects and desires – because no matter what type of perfection he achieves, at first it was the spark of the infinite perfection that led him to this limited perfection. He thinks it is his desired, lost perfection; although when he achieves it, he finds it inferior to what he wanted because his desired goal was more perfect than what he was seeking. If a person attains his absolute perfection, namely what has been placed within him, he will become relaxed and will no longer feels bored and disgusted because there is no limitation and flaw there.<sup>28</sup>

In the Qur'an, God said, "*Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is Allah' and then remained on the right course - the angels will descend upon them, [saying]: Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised.*" (Fussilat: 30). A lofty need of man is to worship; this has an inner state and an outward

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<sup>26</sup> Rahman Mir-Derikwandi, *Major Models and Theories of Mental Health*, Ma'rifat, No. 112, p 62.

<sup>27</sup> Hosseini, Sayyid Abul-Qasim, *The Principles of Mental Health*, p 37.

<sup>28</sup> Mutahhari, Mortida, *The Collection of His Works*, vol. 3, p 761-768.

appearance. The outward appearance refers to the very specific acts of worship, and its inner state consists in being sincere, attentive while performing acts of worship, remembering God and revering Him, pinning all hopes on and being attached to His divine essence, trusting and finding peace in His eternal essence, and fading before His unique essence. For example, if the outward appearance of prayer is mixed with its inward state, it acquires its truth and influences man through helping him develop a healthy personality and regulating his intrapersonal and interpersonal behaviours. In this way, this divine issue becomes the pillar of religion<sup>29</sup> and means of the believers' ascension;<sup>30</sup> it makes the pious attain proximity to God,<sup>31</sup> perfects the sincerity of the sincere,<sup>32</sup> darkens the face of Satans,<sup>33</sup> and distinguishes believers from disbelievers.<sup>34</sup> The Prophet said, "God, the Almighty does not pay any heed to the prayer in which one's heart does not accompany his body."<sup>35</sup> The truth of prayer includes both an inner state and an outward appearance. Resorting to either of these two independent of the other does not mean prayer.<sup>36</sup>

### **The healthy personality from the Islamic Perspective**

The question of whether there is a completely healthy personality has historical precedence and has remained unanswered in psychology so far. According to Islamic teachings, any claim to have a healthy personality

<sup>29</sup> Kulaini, Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, *al-Kafi*, vol. 7, p. 25, no. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *Bihar-ul-Anwar*, vol. 82, p. 303, no. 2, Section 4.

<sup>31</sup> Kulaini, Abi Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub, *ibid.*, vol. 3, p. 265, no. 6. Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid.*, no.1878.

<sup>32</sup> Tabarsi, Fadl ibn Hassan, *Majma'-ul-Bayan*, vol. 7, p. 447, on the verse no.45 of the Qur'anic chapter 'Ankabut.

<sup>33</sup> Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid.*, p. 551, no.1877.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, p. 661, no.1098.

<sup>35</sup> Naraqi, Mulla Ahmad. *Mi'raj-u-Sa'adah*, p. 637.

<sup>36</sup> Khalili, Mustafa, *The Role of Prayer in the Personality of Young People*, p 10.

with no connection with God is false. Human mental health depends on the degree of remoteness from or proximity to the absolute power. Here are some characteristics of a healthy personality from the religious perspective:

1. **Goal-orientedness:** The one with a healthy personality believes that he was not created in vain (*al-Dhariyat: 56*), a life without purpose is meaningless, and his life is meaningful. He believes that the return of all people is to Him (*al-Baqarah: 156*). The origin and the end of the universe are clear to him. The purpose of man's creation is his attaining the status of vicegerent of God (*al-Baqarah: 30*) which means the actualization of human attributes and those that God is pleased with. These attributes are actualized through industry (*al-Baqarah: 208; al-Ma'idah: 35; al-Tawbah: 20; al-Ankabut: 69*), self-refinement and self-purification (*al-Shams, 9-10*), and servitude (*Hud: 26*).
2. **The belief in the immortality and eternity of man:** Death is not the end of life, but a bridge from this world to the hereafter (*al-Baqarah: 82, Ale-Imran: 107; Hud: 33*).
3. **The belief in man's two dimensions:** In addition to the physical dimension, man has an immaterial aspect called the soul. (*al-Hijr: 29, Sad: 72*). The belief in soul is the border between paganism and faith.
4. **The one with a healthy personality seeks the truth and knowledge:** He is a talented learner. (*al-Baqarah: 31; al-Alaq: 1-5; Taha: 114*).
5. **Self-knowledge:** The root of all social and personal problems is disregard for self-knowledge. The one who does not know himself

is incapable of establishing relationships with himself and others. Because he does not know himself, he does not know his Lord either. A stage of self-knowledge is to know that he is infinitely able to rise or fall spiritually. He can be worse than animals or better than angels. Through control and regulation of instincts and servitude to God, he can attain the rank of human dignity (*al-Teen*: 4-8) and can achieve the status of God's vicegerent. The one who merely values his animal dimension becomes a full-blown animal; his thoughts and behaviours become animal-like. According to Imam Ali, "[Such a person] resembles a fattened animal that all its efforts are targeted at eating."<sup>37</sup> Man must be aware of his animal desires and tendencies such as self-love and sexual desires as well as his human tendencies like his search for truth, virtue, and beauty as well as his inclination to God and worship and his desire for immortality and power.

6. **Willpower and freedom:** The power to choose is regarded as the basis for man's dutifulness, reward and punishment for his actions, his morality and immorality, and his responsibility (*Insan*: 3, *al-Ra'd*: 11, *al-Anfal*: 53). Without belief in man's willpower and freedom, it is meaningless to evaluate his behaviour.
7. **Dynamism and self-actualization:** The one with a healthy personality does not abandon any effort to develop his talents. (*al-Baqarah*: 286; *al-Najm*: 39). He is constantly thriving and is not content with any extent of development because he knows that human talents are infinite.

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<sup>37</sup> *Nahj-ul-Balaghah*, translated by Mohammad Dashti, letter no.45.

8. He believes that it is **the individual and social behaviours that determine man's happiness or wretchedness** since "*Allah never changes the grace He has bestowed on any people until they first change that which is in their [own] souls.*" (*al-Ra'd*: 11; *al-Anfal*: 53).
9. Two other features of a healthy personality are **feeling responsible and suffering from others' ignorance and error**. He will not remain silent in the face of corruption. Prophet Mohammad is a striking instance of such a person, "*Maybe you kill yourself with grief that they do not believe.*" (*al-Shu'ara*: 3).
10. Other indications of a healthy personality include **insight, patience, and invitation to patience**. People deprived of insight are occasionally provoked by the sedition caused by those who seek this world and endeavour to eliminate justice and humanity. They are clear examples of "*those who are void of wisdom*", "*those who do not know*", and "*those who do not think*". They stand against the true monotheists and torture and persecute them, and they stubbornly continue to oppose the righteous.
11. Good problem-solving skills. When faced with an unpleasant event, he makes every effort to overcome it. You will never hear him complain and moan. Instead of "why", he uses "how". His question is how he can solve his problem. According to Imam Ali, "Whenever a Muslim is in trouble, he should not complain of God, rather he should complain to his Lord Who controls and

manages all affairs.”<sup>38</sup> He also said, “*Whoever is impatient, his affliction becomes greater.*”<sup>39</sup>

12. **Being pleased and content with what the Almighty God has decreed.** As a result, he is not envious of anybody, does not become anxious, and looks at the world realistically. His prayer is, “O’ God! Enable me to speak leniently and have a tender, soft heart.” Those who do not control their emotions with regards to Allah’s decree have failed to act according to the conduct of the Ahlul Bayt.
13. **What motivates him to take an action is not others’ approval and admiration of him.** He only takes his duty, God’s satisfaction, and proximity to Him into account. He is so magnanimous that if all people in the world praise or reprimand him, he is not influenced by them and does not give up doing his duty. The Imam said to Jabir Ju’fi:

You are not our friend, but if all people in the city say that you are a bad man, you do not become upset, and in contrast, if all people unanimously say that you are a good man, you are not delighted; instead you should assess yourself against God’s Book.<sup>40</sup>

14. Contrary to those who are impressed by material manifestations of this world and are trapped by the latest fashions, those with a healthy personality do not pay heed to these things because they

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<sup>38</sup> Harrani, Hasan ibn Ali. *Tuhaf-ul-Uqul*, p. 81

<sup>39</sup> Tamimi Amadi, Abdul-Wahid, *ibid.*, no. 5625

<sup>40</sup> Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *ibid.*, vol. 75, p. 163

have perceived the grandeur of the Almighty God and consider this world trivial and insignificant.

15. **He is greatly energetic, as opposed to being to lethargic.** Day and night, he tries to live better. You always see him smiling, and like the great lady of Islam, Lady Zainab, at the peak of the hardships and crises, he remains calm and relaxed, and regards the worst incidents as pleasant.
16. His usual conduct is humility before and obedience to God and people (*Ale-Imran*: 199; *al-Anbiya*: 20, *al-Baqarah*: 45).
17. **Optimism.** (*Sad*: 27), and instead of thinking negatively, he thinks positively.
18. He behaves well towards everyone, particularly his relatives. (*al-Baqarah*: 83, 263; *Taha*: 44; *al-Ma'un*: 17).
19. He observes and listens carefully, and his heart is open to new perspectives. He makes the best use of his competencies and talents. He does not leave his intellectual, spiritual, and physical faculties idle and treads the path of growth and ultimate perfection. In order to heal his inner spiritual ailments, he uses the Qur'an. "*Say: For those who believe it (the Book) is guidance and healing.*" (*Fussilat*: 44)", "*Whosoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, him verily we shall quicken with a pure life.*" (*Nahl*, 97), and "*He who turns away from remembrance of Me, his will be a difficult life.*" (*Taha*: 124). He constantly sees himself in the presence of God, the Beneficent, and is into prayer, invoking God in solitude. He views himself as nothing before God and does not know any way to the development and perfection of his soul other than joining the boundless Divine Mercy and constantly connecting with His unique

essence. Through worship of God, he illustrates and reaches the zenith of servitude.

Thus, the person with a healthy personality views life as meaningful and loves prayer for the purpose of elevating his soul and understanding the truths in the universe. From the Qur'anic perspective, those who have a deep belief in God, prayer, the Unseen, and Resurrection are accustomed to worship of God and prayer (*al-Baqarah*: 3-4, 110). These enjoy a good mental health and amazing peace of mind. (*al-Baqarah*: 277). In the most difficult conditions, they do not give up performing prayers, and even their diligence and hard work are the fruits of their constant spiritual connection with God because prayer and all religious behaviours are formed in the context of deep knowledge and awareness. (*al-Nisa*: 162, *al-A'raf*: 170). The true praying people believe in all divine promises and perform religious obligations only to gain satisfaction of God and enjoy His endless divine blessings (*al-Ma'idah*: 12).

### **Religion and the development of a healthy personality in our youth**

Undoubtedly, adolescence and youth play a special role in shaping personality. That is why in hadiths, the importance and superiority of this age range have been emphasized. The Prophet said, "Make the most of your youth before your old age."<sup>41</sup> Addressing teachers and parents, he also said, "I recommend that you treat adolescents and young adults well because they have a tender heart that absorbs virtues. God has appointed me as a prophet to give people glad tidings of the Divine mercy and warn

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<sup>41</sup> Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid.*, p. 226, no. 372.



them of His punishment. Youths accepted my words and entered into a covenant of affection with me, but the elderly refused to accept my call and opposed me.”<sup>42</sup> Likewise, according to him, “The devout young person is as superior to the devout old person as the prophets are to other people.”<sup>43</sup> Imam Sadiq also said, “Young people’s hearts are more tender than those of the elderly.”<sup>44</sup>

Socrates was asked, “Why do you associate with young people most?” He replied, “The twigs can be set right, but the hardwoods that are not fresh are inflexible.”<sup>45</sup> Young people can be influenced easily; therefore, all those who work for either rectification or corruption of society pay careful attention to them.

Religion certainly plays a fundamental role in shaping the personality of young people, and there are many unanswered questions that only religion can answer. Thus, for the young people who have turned away from religion, life is meaningless. According to Erickson, “The identity that a young person seeks to encounter is “Who am I?” “What role should I play in society?” “Am I a child or an adult?”<sup>46</sup>

Young people have many questions as to the nature of the world, their relationship to the world, the purpose of creation and life, the best way of life, and choosing values and beliefs. All these questions contribute to the formation of a young person’s identity, and he searches for some criteria for judging his and others’ behaviour. If he does not find answers to his

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<sup>42</sup> Falsafi, Muhammad Taqi, *Al-Hadith*, vol. 1, p. 350. See: idem., *Young People in Terms of Intellect and Emotion*, vol. 2, p. 248.

<sup>43</sup> Payandeh, Abul-Qasim, *ibid.*, p. 589, no. 2050.

<sup>44</sup> Majlisi, Muhammad Baqir, *ibid.*, vol.12, p. 280.

<sup>45</sup> Khalili, Mustafa, *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>46</sup> Muhammadi, Muhammad Rida, *Important Aspects of the Adolescent’s Personality* Ma’rifat, No. 38, pp. 28-39.

questions, he faces an identity crisis. At this stage, religion plays an effective and constructive role. It invites man to God and the origin of perfection, and it forms the personality. It also grants him stability and peace of mind and prevents him from perplexity.

On the other hand, family is an influential factor in the development of man's personality; it significantly contributes to the development of young people's identity through inheritance and the choice of training methods.

In addition to the family, society and one's willpower play an essential role in establishing the identity of adolescents and young people.<sup>47</sup> Addressing his son Imam Hasan, Imam Ali wrote:

Adolescents' hearts resemble an empty land that accepts any seed it is sowed with. Therefore, before your heart is hardened, and your brain is trapped, I have taught you good manners so that you may embark on your tasks resolutely; tasks that experienced people endured their hardships, and you have been spared the ordeal of experiencing them again.<sup>48</sup>

The only elements that grant man security, trust, and confidence and relieve his anxieties are remembering God and enjoying a strong support in life: "*Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest!*" (*al-Ra'd*: 28).

In this regard, the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatullah Khamenei, said:

Attention to and love for God gives meaning to man's life; it bridges his mental gaps and brings him success in all aspects of

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<sup>47</sup> Lotf-Abadi, Hussain, *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 2, pp.214-215.

<sup>48</sup> *Nahj-ul-Balaghah*, letter no.31.

life. The reason why in some countries such as the United States, aspects such as money, military power, and even knowledge, cannot bring about happiness, and psychological problems stem from alienation from God and spirituality.<sup>49</sup>

According to American psychologist and philosopher in the early twentieth century, William James:

The religious faith changes how the world seems to man and offers man new elements in addition to the tangible ones in the structure of the world. It changes the lifeless and cold material world into a world replete with life, reason, and awareness. The religious faith transforms man understanding of the world and creation. Moreover, inclination to the sacred truth and reality deserving worship lies in the nature of every human being. Human desires are not limited to material ones, and spiritual tendencies are not merely suggestions that are acquired. This is the truth that science confirms.

He also added:

However much our motives and stimuli to our desires originate from the material world, most of our desires and wishes are derived from the other world because most of them do not match worldly estimations.<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, increased anxiety, worry, anxiety, obsession, and psychosis are achievements of atheists and disbelievers in their lives. *“He who turns*

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<sup>49</sup> The Iranian Supreme Leader’s Speech 8/8/1995 A.D.

<sup>50</sup> Nabati, Muhammad, *The Impact of Religion on the Reduction of Stress*, Keyhan Newspaper: (<http://kortan.wordpress.com>).

*away from remembrance of Me, his will be a difficult life, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment.” (Taha: 124).*

Robert J. Ringer wrote:

Today’s western people have reached the conclusion that life without spirituality brings about mental suffering and pain and makes man’s soul lifeless and feeble. It deprives man of sustained pleasure and happiness. The high rate of crime, sexual offence, and moral corruption; the disintegration of the family and the great number of street adolescents and young adults driven out of home, the resort of liberal societies to drugs, alcohol, ecstasy pills, and violence to provide false joy for people all indicate this fact and show the relentless pain the West is suffering from, such as the decline of adolescents, and some of them are satisfied with the killing of fellow human beings and regard this work as sport and recreation.<sup>51</sup>

Sayyed Hossein Nasr wrote in this regard:

In the current western lifestyle, there is an inclination toward inviting people to live in the present moment – free from the history and the past – and to indulge in the momentary honour and instantaneous sensual pleasure. The worship of sports heroes as well as the desire for constantly breaking records and persistently overcoming the nature represents one aspect of this concern. However, a more destructive aspect of this trend can be seen in the use of drugs, alcohol, and unrestricted sexual relationships. In addition, the

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<sup>51</sup> Mohammadi, Li-Rida. *Joy in the Liberalism*, Purseman, no. 43.

importance given to sports is not at all unrelated to the desire for sensual pleasures. All these factors imply young people's loss of faith and belief in moral standards.<sup>52</sup>

Accordingly, all non-divine schools of thought have tried to extinguish the flames of inner feelings or at least reduce them. For this reason, they have offered so-called solutions as refuge such as the unconditional freedom of the young people in satisfying carnal desires and animal instincts, as well as leading and directing them to bars, and hundreds of other methods that waste opportunities that eventually leads to their destruction. However, after young people turn to these seemingly strong refuges, they collapse, and they discover them to be false and imaginary because they did not see their goals achieved through satisfaction of their sensual desires.

Violence and sexual abuse of children are two factors that threaten the security and health of families. The worst kind of rape is incest it is feared that it might gradually become acceptable. According to a report by a Swedish organization, "About six out of ten rapes that occur at home are usually done by the biological father. Similarly, in the United States, many studies conducted since the mid-1970s about rape have confirmed the prevalence of sexual assault and incest against women and children. This is done very commonly by fathers, brothers, step- or half-brothers or step-fathers. Sexual abuse of children in the UK has also risen up 90 percent."<sup>53</sup>

There is also an exponentially growing trend in corruption in American schools. Accordingly, each year the rate of moral corruption is raised and

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<sup>52</sup> Nasr, Abdullah, *The Young Muslim and The Modern World*, p 342.

<sup>53</sup> *Modernism and Incest*, Howra', no. 17, p. 23.

accelerated in these schools. In the United States, sexual and moral corruption is combined with the violence that results from carrying weapons and has created unbearable scenes.<sup>54</sup> Thus, developing a healthy personality goes hand in hand with the development of morality and spirituality.

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<sup>54</sup> Risalat newspaper, no. 6286, 11/7/2007 A.D., p 18.