

## “SERVITUDE” AS THE FOUNDATION OF LIFESTYLE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE HOLY QUR’AN

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### ABSTRACT

*The apparent diversity of a variety of lifestyles in the World can be collected in certain types of lifestyles. It is important to note that how the last revealed book, the holy Qur’an, distinguishes between different types of lifestyles. An analytical-descriptive research of the Qur’anic verses argues that a material inclination by man leads him to choose the style of animal life and his divine attitude brings him to a human lifestyle. So, according to the criteria of these two main patterns, each person's lifestyle with levels of severity and weakness approaches to one of them. The Holy Qur’an is a comprehensive set of behavioral patterns in different areas of life in order to reach a human lifestyle. But the needy man, was created as free creature, whether he chooses serving Allah and the style of human life or serving non-Allah (ṭāqūt) and animal lifestyle. The necessity for servitude of Allah is disbelief in ṭāqūt, which is performed under the shadow of knowledge of Allah, the Almighty, and then His love. Servitude of ṭāqūt and choosing the animal lifestyle are based on the man’ neglect of his Creator, which spends the potential human abilities only for meeting his material needs and hence prevents him from prosperity and happiness.*

**Keywords:** *The Holy Qur’an, human lifestyle, servitude, animal lifestyle, ṭāqūt.*

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Definition of Lifestyle**

The deliberate and theoretical expression of lifestyle issues dates back to the last 50 years. Some mention Alfred Adler (1870-1930) as the first scholar who wrote about it. The term lifestyle, *sabk-e zendegi* in Persian, generally is a new expression in the scientific and cultural literature of mankind.

The concept of *sabk-e zendegi* (lifestyle) is clear of its literal meaning; *sabk* in Persian means “method”, “manner”, “way”, “form”, “rule”, and “style” (Moein, 1992; Anvari, 2003). But there are several approaches to explaining its terminology, which generally consist of three basic ones: the sociological approach (influenced by Georg Simmel (1858-1918) and Max Weber), psychological approach (influenced by Alfred Adler's opinions), and theological approach. Definitions with a sociological approach are more descriptive and their main focus is on behaviors and behavioral symbols, however, in psychological definitions, the source of behavior and values is noticed more and this term is applied in psychology as “personality” and “manners”. In the religious terminology, it means: “a set of organized behaviors influenced by accepted beliefs, values and attitudes, convenient with the individual's desires and the environmental state, which has become the dominant notion of the behavior of an individual or a group of men” (Sharifi, 2012). In this definition, the symbolic role of lifestyle in comparison with the absolute behavior is considered. Due to the recent emergence of the term,

its literal meaning is more appropriate to the scope of this paper, although the religious definition can be regarded, as well.

### ***Human Inherent Poverty and His Tendency to Worship***

The Qur'an sometimes praises and sometimes blames man. Indeed, the greatest praises and blames for man are expressed by the Qur'an; it describes man higher than heaven, earth, and angels, and yet lower than demon and animals. It regards human as an entity that has the ability to control the World and the angels and can also fall to lowest level of existences (Motahari, 1993, vol. 2, p. 274).

Regardless of all the qualities, from the viewpoint of the Holy Qur'an, man is intrinsically a poor and needy creature: (يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ) (Fāṭir: 5). Inherent poverty is the description of the human's existential truth, which is the basis of relationship between 'abd (servant) and rabb (Lord). Lord Who is all richness, power, dignity, and majesty, and the servant who is all poverty, weakness, humility, and non-existence. Such inherent poverty is the basis of human's servitude, a devotion that is the source of annihilation in Allah (fanā') (Imam Khomeini, 1996). The intrinsic poverty of man causes his feeling of dependence on Absolute Perfection, unconsciously leading to humility and submission to Him, i.e. servitude. Although such a tendency to worship is not conscious and clear, this inner attraction is the motive engine of human to move towards perfection, so that through obtaining the perfection he will move to the Absolute Perfection and reach the state of 'abdulallah (servant of Allah).

To obtain the state of 'abdulallah is a complicated and long process by which man may exit from the domination of factors threatening him to control over. Since man is a needy being with physical, psychological and social needs, he is always in the moments of intense needs being threatened to be possessed and controlled by something or someone, and hence the need, which is the nature of his being, may be changed into his humility, i.e. deviation of the need and change of man into a servant of tāqūt. Since there are only two paths for man: "servitude of tāqūt" or "servitude of Allah". The basic principle of the prophetic education system has always been the rejection of serving non-Allah, along with proving "serving Allah", as the verses of the holy Qur'an point to it (see: 'Anbīa': 25; 'Arāf': 59, 65, 73, 85; Mu'minūn: 23; Hūd: 50, 61, 84; Naḥl: 45; 'Ankabūt: 16 and 36). Practicing how a man can exit from these takeovers and resist to these forces is the description of the way of becoming servant of Allah ('Abdullah).

### ***The Relationship of Worship and Servitude***

The root "abd" indicates to "humbleness and obedience before the adorable (worshipped)", and in other words, "the statement of humbleness and obedience before the adorable (Ibn Fāris, 1983; Jawhari: 1986; Rāghib: 1991; Mustafawi: 1981). Therefore, a servant is called 'abd because of his total obedience and humbleness. The term is originally description and close to the concept of obedient (Shirtūnī, 1983).

"Worship" is a "verb" while "servitude" is a "description"; the devotee (worshiper) is the one who performs the deed of worshipping, but 'abd (owner of servitude) is the one whose servitude and obedience before the Adored (Worshipped) have been institutionalized inside him. Servitude is a comprehensive concept covering all concepts of "following", "obedience", and "humility".



According to the Holy Qur'an, the philosophy of human creation is the worship of Allah (وما و خلقتم الجن و الانس الا ليعبدون) (*Dhāriyāt*: 56), and the human being is doomed to worship Allah (و ما امروا الا ليعبدوا الله مخلصين له الدين حنفاء و يقيموا الصلوة و يؤتوا الزكوة و ذلك دين القيمه) (*Bayyinah*: 4): But “what is the truth of ‘worship’?” Is it only practicing some deeds such as bowing down, prostrating, standing, saying prayer, and fasting? The answer is that worship is a symbol whose secret is servitude. Indeed, worship without servitude is like a body without soul. Servitude is to be close friend of Allah and surrender to Him, and man regards Allah, the Almighty, as his Lord and Organizer. The relationship between servitude and worship is like the relation of intention and action. So the servitude in an inner *habitus* and worship is its apparent sign, which both affect each other. As servitude is the cause of worship, practicing worships is also effective in deepening servitude.

### ***Servitude and Lifestyle***

The servitude of the Almighty Allah is matched with the release from the others (*Nahf*: 36). In other words, there are two bounds for serving the Exalted Allah: Arrogance (ان الذين عند ربك لا يستكبرون عن عبادته و يسبحونه و له يسجدون) (*Arāf*: 206), and Polytheism (associate others with Allah) (انني انا الله لا اله الا انا فاغثنني واقم الصلاة ليذكرني) (*Tāhā*: 14). In the latter, Allah commands the Prophet Moses (PBUH) to Monotheism (Unity of Allah) and deny of polytheism. Accordingly, man must put aside everybody who seeks for the possession and control of him, as well as, the plan managed by the others to shape and change him, as he needs to return to his servitude from arrogance (*manīyyah*) in all his states and affairs. (نعم العبد انه اواب) (*Sād*: 44).

The Holy Qur'an, the last divine message to man and his eternal plan of happiness, is the highest divine blessing to him. Allah the Almighty admired Himself after creating man, saying: (فتبارك الله احسن الخالقين). Following sending down the Qur'an, He also admired Himself, saying: (الحمد لله الذي انزل على عبده الكتاب و لم يجعل له عوجاً) (*Kahf*: 1). As if the purpose of creation system, creating all beings, and sending the messengers, was to prepare the ground for the revelation of the Qur'anic verses to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Therefore, it is emphasized that the product of the World of creation is the establishment of the high school and the university of the Qur'an, without which there is no positive effect on the creation of the World. For the only means by which the perfection and prosperity of humanity is based on the end of the world is the high school of the Qur'an. Accordingly, Allah is worthy to praise and appreciate His actions of sending down the holy Qur'an and introduce the holy Prophet (PBUH) as His total servant (Hosseini Hamedani, 1983, vol. 10, p. 232).

According to the Qur'an, to be servant and serving Allah is a high rank, as the holy Prophet (PBUH) desires divine revelation because of serving Allah (*Furqān*: 1). The position of servitude is superior to the Mission, but one of the elements of servitude is the Mission, as during prayer (*ṣalāt*) this priority is taken into consideration (in *tashahhud*). The attribute of servitude is institutionalized in a person who observe the requirement of servitude in all matters of life, including worships, personal and social affairs, etc. and regulates his life for the sake of the Glorious Allah's will and satisfaction which has been communicated to man in the form of revelation and divine message. Qur'anic and Islamic commandments and worships are the manifestation of servitude and the image of Monotheism in the face of man, which brings the most complete lifestyle from birth to death. Therefore, a person who is 'Abdullah and whose will is in accordance with the will of Allah, never hesitate of his obedience to Him and



performance of religious obligations, so that his servitude is undertaken through this total humble obedience.

### *Types of Lifestyle in the Qur'an*

According to the creation system, man neither is like angels as an absolute reason nor like animals as absolute substance, but he has both kingdom (*mulk*) and spiritual dominion (*malakūt*). The Holy Qur'an points in various verses to different existential dimensions of human creation (Nasri: 2015). So, surely there were two opposing tendencies in man, an upward and a downward tendency, a heavenly tendency and an earthly one; then Allah gave man reason and will and put him freely between these two options (Motahari, 1993, vol. 3, p. 515). Imam Ali (PBUH) said: "Allah, Almighty, put in angel reason without lust, in animal lust without reason, and in human both reason and lust. Whoever whose reason overcomes his lust, is better than angels and anyone whose lust defeats his reason is worse than animals" (Ibn Bābiwayh, 2006, vol. 1, p. 5). Hence, the human being is between two infinities: from one side he falls to infinity, and on the other, rises to infinity; therefore, he is free to select either the animal life or rational life. Animal life or animal lifestyle is based on material worldview and rational life or rational lifestyle is based on divine and monotheistic worldview. These two lifestyles are between zero and one hundred point in the theoretical area of lifestyle from the perspective of the Holy Qur'an. Each human being, in terms of the level of the indicators of each of these two lives, reaches to a degree of intensity or weakness.

### *Animal Lifestyle (Material) and Servitude*

In numerous verses neglectful men are likened to animals without consciousness (e.g. 'A'rāf: 179). These verses rebuke people whose hearts and minds do not have ability of recognition, i.e. they cannot distinguish between the righteous and the good deeds. They look at the scene of the world unambiguously and indifferently through their sights. They do not understand their cost and benefit, so they neglect their afterlife, leading to their deviation from the Right Path and falling down of the human dignity (Hosseini Hamedani, 1983, vol. 7, p. 142). They are as the same as animals because although their creation is human, they have animal morality and do not perceive the facts. They are worse than animals, because they do not enjoy the reason which Allah granted them.

The resemblance of the neglectful to animals is because among all animal traits, two features of "eating" and "copulation" are prior to others, i.e. the purpose of the animal life first belongs to these two traits, and then, in order to maintain and obtain these two purposes, the repulsive forces are used. The verse (وَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَتَّعُونَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ) (Muhammad: 2) refers to this point, as well (Ṭabaṭabayi, 2011, vol. 8, p. 336).

It is interesting that these neglectful people who are deprived of Allah and spirituality, are divided into two groups: those who are like a cattle of fattened sheep, and those who are not fattened, seeking for water and grass in deserts. Both aims only to make their stomach full; denying such a lifestyle, Imam Ali (AS) says:

"I have not been created to keep myself busy in eating good foods like the tied animal whose only worry is his fodder or like a loose animal whose activity is to swallow. It fills its belly with its feed and forgets the purpose behind it. Shall I be left uncontrolled to pasture freely, or draw the rope of misguidance or roam aimlessly in the paths of bewilderment?" (Nahj al-Balaghah, Letter: 45).



Therefore, although all the creatures of the Genesis (*Takwīn*) are servants of Allah, the Almighty: (إِنَّ كُلَّ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتَى الرَّحْمَنَ عَبْدًا) (Maryam: 93), man intentionally and voluntarily may refuse worshipping Allah and instead serve non-Allah (*tāqūt*) (*Baqarah*: 257). The most important means of *tāqūt* for capturing man, is amusing him in this material world and deviating him from divine verses. Accordingly, he would be entertained, deprived from true cognition, and satisfied with this world (*Yūnus*: 7). If man pays attention only to the world, his effort is shortened and does his best to achieve the full enjoyment of his material life and then finds his ultimate goal only in this world. This is just a material worldview that shapes the lifestyle of material or animal life. In the material worldview, human existence is summed up in its material body ending with death. The principle of personal cost and benefit plays the main role. The ethical recommendations or innate calls, therefore, in addition to the lack of a practical model, does not have an executive guarantee (in order to grant him his eternal happiness).

### **Human (Divine) Lifestyle**

Humanity is originally independent and inherent in human. It is not just a reflection of its animal life. The fundamental difference of man and other beings and animals, i.e. the criterion of humanity, lies in his “knowledge”, “faith”, and “free will”. A very important human aspect which distinguishes him from others, especially animals, is the “voluntary action”. Man is free and, on the basis of the insight (knowledge) and the tendency (faith), chooses a way of life, while animals do not have such an ability. Acting, deliberate behavior, and deliberate selection are of the most important human features. Man is capable of confronting and standing up against the animal lusts and desires and though reinforcing the powers of will and certainty he would overcome his animal desires and instincts, as well as, he will guide them to the right direction (Motahari, 1993, vol. 2, p. 30).

In the divine worldview, which is the basis of human lifestyle, Monotheism is the most original characteristic of this attitude (*Tāhā*: 14). The three principles of Monotheism, Resurrection, and Prophecy in the teachings of the Islamic religion are a comprehensive answer to the most important issues of human life about the start, end, and method of the worldly life (Motahari, 1992). In such a perspective, the transitory life of the world is the introduction to the eternal and real life of the Hereafter (وَ مَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَ لَعِبٌ وَ إِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ) (*Ankabūt*: 64). The holy Qur’an not only warns believers of the world and its deceiving means (فَاعْرِضْ عَنْ مَنْ تَوَلَّى (عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَ لَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا\* ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اهْتَدَى) (*Fāṭir*: 5), but it warns of company and close relationship with the owners of the material and animal attitudes (عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَ لَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا\* ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ اهْتَدَى) (*Najm*: 29-30). In the human and divine attitude, the happiness and salvation of man does not lie in the maximum use of the material benefits and the immediate pleasures of the world, but it is based only on closeness to Allah, the Almighty, and remembrance of Him, bringing joyfulness and happiness for man (*Tāhā*: 124).

In many Qur’anic verses, in terms of divine orders and prohibitions, the lifestyle attributes approved by Islam has been expressed, by which man would release of the material life and achieve the lifestyle of the exalted human being, i.e. the pure life (*ḥayāt ṭayyibah*). Since both Genesis (*Takwīn*) and Legislation (*Tashrī*) systems are created by Allah, the All-Wise, all these



commandments and models are completely in accordance with the real human costs and benefits; in other words, since the divine orders and prohibitions are in a binding relation to the existential realities of man and the world, the divine lifestyle is a rational model. According to the Qur'an, the color of Allah is the best colors for humankind and worldly life (مَنْ وَصَبَغَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَصْبَةٍ لَهُ نَحْنُ وَ صَبَغَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَحْسَنُ هَذَا وَأَنْ اعْبُدُونِي) (عَابِدُونَ لَهُ نَحْنُ وَ صَبَغَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَحْسَنُ هَذَا وَأَنْ اعْبُدُونِي). In addition, divine servitude passes through the path of divine knowledge; the implementation of this divine pattern in life is based on the proper knowledge of man about himself and his Creator. If man understands the beauty and glory of Allah and attains the perfection of his Lord, seeing his absolute and continuous need and poverty to the Richest and most Merciful Gracious, then he would be involved in this Unique Essence and His love will fill all his existence. For love follows knowing, leading to servitude and obedience. Hence, he would not pay attention to anybody unless Him, so that he would completely perform all divine commandments and orders.

It's worth mentioning that the Monotheistic and Divine lifestyle is varied, in spite of its apparent single form; although the nature of man as well as the Right Path are not more than one and for all people the human nature and entity in the Genesis, and the principles, directions, and limits in the Legislation are common, since there are some differences in the nature and entity of individuals as well as in their environment, the starting point of every individual is not the same. One cannot expect everyone to start from the same point, because everyone has come from distinctive circumstances (الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَهُمْ سُبُلَنَا) (*Ankabūt*: 69). Therefore, Islam accepts the requirements of individuals and does not reject them (قُلْ كُلٌّ يَعْمَلُ) (على شاكلته) (*Isrā'*: 84). It is considered in the Islamic jurisprudence, ethics, and commandments, which is called as the requirements of time and place, referring to the custom, belt of lacuna (*manṭiqat al-firāq*), and so on (Mahdavi-Kani, 2008).

## CONCLUSION

To determine a better lifestyle for man in this world, it's notable to consider his main challenges and issues and reply some important questions including "who is he?", "from where did he come?", "to where will he go?". Many of the calamities and deadlocks in human life today are because of the domination of animal lifestyle. The only way of getting rid of it is to turn into a human lifestyle. Islam has brought humanity and divine lifestyle to mankind, a pattern that, having regard to the all existential dimensions of human, has given all his needs, requirements, and tendencies, and according to his Genetic creation, has presented the best, easiest and most solid program of prosperity and happiness. Although man is granted to be free of accepting a kind of lifestyle, its prosperity and perfection are obtained only by the commitment to the human and divine lifestyle. Such a commitment is practiced only through the achievement of servitude of Allah, the Almighty, doing by man himself. Therefore, it is necessary in the first step for man to reconcile with himself. Afterwards, through returning to himself, he must serve Allah in order to be saved and calmed, a state that would be manifested in all aspects of his life.



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