

الْقُرْآنُ الْكَرِيمُ

THE NOBLE QUR'ĀN

With Tafsīr Upon the Way of the Righteous Salaf

**The Base Nature and
Qualities of Man
Described in the Qur'ān**



WEAK, HASTY, IMPATIENT, OPPRESSIVE, IGNORANT,
UNGRATEFUL, MISERLY, ARGUMENTATIVE,
TRANSGRESSING, BOASTFUL

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Though Allāh has created man in **the best stature** (95:4), and has **honoured him** and has **given him excellence** over other creatures (17:70), if he does not abide by revealed guidance, he will be victim to the many negative aspects of his nature. Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has described man with the following negative traits and behaviours in the Qur’ān:¹

—Man was created **weak** (**ḍa’if**) and is thus weak in his body, his will and determination, leading him to be weak in faith, firm resolution and patience. (4:28).

—Man was created out of **haste** (**‘ajal**), he is desirous of hastening things. (21:37)

—Man was created **impatient** (**halū’**), becoming **anxious** (**jazū’**) when anything afflicts him such as disease or poverty, and **niggardly** (**manū’**) when he has plenty at his disposal. (70:19-21).

¹ Explanatory comments are taken from al-Taysir, Imām al-Sa’di’s tafsir and from Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim with respect to (33:72) on the subject of the base rule concerning man.

—Man's base nature is to be **oppressive** and **ignorant** (**ẓalūm, jahūl**), as he was created upon that, and thus 'adl (uprightness, trustworthiness) is an acquired trait, not a default one. (33:72).

—Man is **despairing** and **ungrateful** (**ya'ūs, kafūr**) when Allāh's mercy and blessings are removed from him, such as health, provision and offspring, and does not show patience and determination, hoping for replacement with its equal or better. (11:9).

—Man is **oppressive** and **ungrateful** (**ẓalūm, kaffār**) despite being given innumerable bounties for his provision and livelihood. He falls into shirk, disbelief, and sin and does not fulfil the rights of his Lord. (14:34).

—Man is **hasty** (**'ajūl**) in that when he becomes angry, he is quick to invoke supplication of evil and harm against his own family and others, or even himself, and does not show patience. (17:11).

—Man is **ungrateful** (**kafūr**) when calamity befalls him, he forgets everything and calls only upon his Lord, but when he is safe again, he turns away from his Lord (17:67).

—Man rejoices with good that is brought to him, and turns away from his Lord, but **despairs** (**ya'ūs**) when evil such as illness or poverty touches him, instead of being patient and remaining hopeful. (17:83).

—Man is **miserly, stingy**, (**qatūr**) he has been created upon covetousness and stinginess. If he was given treasures of all things, he would still withhold from spending for fear of decrease. (17:100).

—Man is very **quarrelsome** (**aktharu jadalān**) and always given to disputing about the truth brought by the Messengers in general and that brought by the Qur'ān, despite it being made clear with every type of evidence and parable. (18:54).

—Man is **ungrateful** (**kafūr**) for the life he has been granted and which he enjoys, and denies the benevolence he has been shown and the innumerable favours bestowed upon him. (22:66).

—Man is an **open disputant** (**khaṣīm mubīn**) despite being created from something as base and lowly as a drop of sperm, he disbelieves in his Lord, rejects His signs and

denies His favours, arguing with mere sophistries to avoid showing gratitude. (16:4, 36:77).

—Man claims his good fortune (after adversity) is because he has knowledge that he deserves it from Allāh, or due to specialist knowledge he possessed of the ways and means in acquiring it, failing to see it as a trial from Allāh. (39:49).

—Man is a **transgressor (muṣrif)**, when he is afflicted he earnestly calls upon his Lord, lying, sitting and standing, but when the harm is removed, he continues as if had never invoked Allāh at all for the removal of the harm. (10:12).

Those who are furthest removed from these traits are those who believe in Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ), establish the prayer, fast, give zakāh and adorn themselves with the noble qualities and traits that He and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) have enjoined. The more one adheres to that guidance, the further removed he is from these blameworthy traits. There is no way to truly remove oneself from these base and vile qualities and nurture one's soul and character to reach perfection, except through learning and acting upon sound, revealed knowledge, and that is the Qur'ān and Sunnah—

not philosophy, altered religion or popular psychology self-help manuals.

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said:

إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ
الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٩﴾

“Verily, this Qur’ān guides to that which most just and upright and gives glad tidings to the believers who work righteous deeds that they will have a great reward.” (17:9).

Abu ‘Iyād

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