

## **GROWTH STAGES, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE HOLY QURAN**

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper studies "stages of growth" from the perspective of the Holy Quran. Thus, the preamble states: Quran has beautifully expressed physical growth stages, expressed a particular interest in mental and spiritual growth of and introduced mankind wisely showing the process of development in human life following the path of balance and evolution. Then, definition of the term "growth" and the lexical meaning of the word expressed, we discuss physical and spiritual development through reliance on the Quran and some traditions. In the end, concluding the contents the list of references is presented.*

**Key words:** growth, physical growth, intellectual growth, spiritual growth, nature and perfection.

### **Introduction :**

One of the main topics discussed in the Qur'an is "growth" and issues related to it.

Quran has beautifully expressed physical growth stages, expressed a particular interest in mental and spiritual growth of and introduced mankind wisely showing the process of development in human life following the path of balance and evolution. Then showing the origin and the purpose of the movement has guided mankind through the direct path illuminated by the angels and prophets help as the conductors to prevent being alone in his quest for the truth with more determination to attain that goal that is demanding.

But the remarkable thing is that all people are not identical in their "growth" and they differ depending on their choices. The path that is followed by the well grown ones is not comparable to that of transgressors and oppressors and renegades, the growth of human is in acceptance and invitation to meet God and faith and according to Qur'an "the grown" are those "Allah hath endeared the faith to you and hath beautified it in your heart, and hath made disbelief and lewdness and rebellion hateful unto you"<sup>1</sup>

Attention on Holy Quran verses spirit opens the doors of bless on the thirsty truth seekers and suggests that "growth" encompasses deep meanings, We by the means of this paper also try to

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Hujurat, 7

spare ourselves with astonishing revelations to guide us in the path of truth and could lead to the prosperity.

The definition of "growth :"

Physical growth is lifetime biological and psychological (cognitive) changes occur in the body, including body growth and development, intellectual growth, brain and the nervous system development and relativity of their growth and development. Motor growth means motor development and control of various organs and coordinated activity of nerve centers, nerves and muscles that make all body systems ready to move in harmony.<sup>2</sup>

Literally meaning of "growth "

Origins of the word "growth" in many Arabic and Persian dictionaries imply appropriateness, moderation and decency of a path.

was guided to decent path, insisted

developed in his affairs, promoted

was guided to do his task

he was asked for guidance

development of wisdom, sense<sup>3</sup>

is opposite to (misdirection) and used meaning guidance.<sup>4</sup>

means his achieving the truth and the direct path , means guidance.<sup>5</sup>

One of the names of God, "Rashid"<sup>6</sup> means the one that guides people towards their benefits.<sup>7</sup>

"Growth" means to be good and it is reaching the right and the meaning of "Astakhirvo allh Yaghrom Lakom Ala Roshdekom" is that ask God for good things and he determines you to do something that is good for you, and the" means to guide misled toward the right path and defining the path for him.<sup>8</sup>

What was mentioned is only a part of the meaning of the term and this term encompasses a wide range of lexical meanings.

### **Physical growth stages**

A lot can be obtained by examining the roots of and its derivatives in Quran, that can help in our research goals. The Quran explicitly says:

Quran clearly says:

"He it is who created you from dust, then from a drop (of seed), then from a clot, then bringeth you forth as a child, then (ordaineth) that you attain full strength and afterward that you become old men though some among you die before and that ye reach an appointed term, that haply ye may understand"<sup>9</sup>

This verse refers to all stages of the creation of man (physical growth) and each of these steps in linked with the next using the term to determine the point of connection to each other.

" The remarkable thing is that in the first four stages of the creation consisted of clay, drop, clot and child birth the term means that there is no role for human , but in the three stages of after birth namely the stages of attaining ultimate strength, elderly and death the terms and are used

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<sup>2</sup> Shoari Nejad, Ali Akbar, *Developmental Psychology*, p 194

<sup>3</sup> Bandar Rigi, Mohammad, "Monjad Al Tolab", p 77

<sup>4</sup> Esfahani, Ragheb, " Almofradat Fi Gharib Al Quran", vol 2, p 398

<sup>5</sup> Alfrahidi, Khalil Ibn Ahmed, Alein, vol 6, p 242

<sup>7</sup> Ibn Manzor, Mohammad Ibn Mokram, *Lesan Al Arab*, vol 2, p 175

<sup>8</sup> Tarihi, Sheikh Fakhr Al Din, *Majma Al Bahrain*, vol 3, p 50

<sup>9</sup> Ghafir, 67

that implies the independence of human existence after birth and probably the fact that this three stages can last more or less as a result of human misbehavior sometimes premature aging or premature death is ahead<sup>10</sup> .

Allameh Tabatabaiee points out that the term means that “you will flourish to reach puberty”<sup>11</sup>

The creation of man and his physical development is also expressed in many other verses; “Verily we created man from a product of wet earth; then placed him as a drop (of seed) in a safe lodging; then fashioned we the drop a clot, then fashioned we the clot a little lump, then fashioned we the little lump bones, then clothed the bones with flesh, and then produced it another creation, so blessed be Allah, the best of creators.”<sup>12</sup>

This verse states that the creation of man with glory and merit is of the soil. The creation of soil means the creation of "Adam" and the creation of other beings from continuing generations of Adam (AS) is of the combined male and female sperm placed in the base of the uterus. Uterus is internal organs of the body because it is the most secured under the protection of the spine, ribs and pelvic bones and belly and hands to protect it. And here the meaning of the safe base of the uterus is considered.

After getting settled in fertile womb, the clot forms and then becomes something like the chewed meat and then bones grow and gradually cover with muscle and flesh and on the perfect creation of human completes this way. that made man his best creation.

It should be noted here that the procedures and specifications outlined in the Qur'an is in the time where there was no recognition and knowledge of fetal and stages of its evolution in the world and this scientific fact was raised by the scientific community years after the Quran revealed. Specifically, the first cells that grow are bone cells and then exposed flesh and muscle, the finer scientific points of this verse has lifted the curtain on a scientific miracle<sup>13</sup>.

So physical growth is one of the most visible and most tangible aspects of growth ,the period begins before birth, continues after being born in a certain order, and the song flows and the changes in the individual creates maximum maturity:

### **Maximum Maturity period**

The stage mentioned in Quran after the fetus and during infancy is the “Maximum **Maturity**”.

Maximum maturity is referred to in eight verses of the Qur'an and generally implies that stage of human life that he eventually grew in strength and mental endurance and naturally looks to the youth.

“and we have recommended unto man kindness toward parents, his mother beareth him with reluctance, and bringeth him forth with reluctance, and the bearing of him and the weaning of him is thirty month, when he attains full strength and reacheth forty year... ”<sup>14</sup>

According to Quran lexicon:

means strength, namely youth strength. <sup>15</sup> In”, the term is a plural term and some believe that it has no singular form but some others believe its singular is . <sup>16</sup> Some derive its singular from saying that it

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<sup>10</sup> Makarem Shirazi, Nasser, Tafsir Nemoneh, vol 2, p 166

<sup>11</sup> Tabatabaiee, seyed mohammad Hossein, “ Almizan Fi Tafsir Al Quran”, vol 17, p 525

<sup>12</sup> Al-muminun, 12-14

<sup>13</sup> Makarem Shirazi, Nasser, Tafsir Nemoneh, vol 17, p 127

<sup>14</sup> Al-Ahqaf, 15

<sup>15</sup> Ghorshi, Ali Akbar, Ghamos Quran, vol 4, p 11

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Fares, Ahmed, Moajam Maghaees Al Logha, vol 3, p180

means strength and robustness and refers to a strong man, and is to get experience, strength and understanding.<sup>17</sup>

Majma Al Bayan, quotes from Imam Sadiq (AS) that reaching to maximum maturity means getting strength and said that maximum maturity is between 18 to 30.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, in interpretive resources maximum maturity is clarified with ages. Abi Basir narrated from Imam Sadiq (AS) that he said: If an individual reaches the age of thirty, he will reach its maximum maturity, and when he is forty, he has reached his utmost maturity and when enters the age of forty, he will be in deficit.<sup>19</sup>

God After a childhood of man can flourish him to reach puberty and utmost strength, which is the young age and when he reaches thirties and forties, he will be considered a member of the community<sup>20</sup>.

In the interpretation of the verse "come not near the wealth of the orphan save with that which is better till he come to strength..." it is quoted from Abolla Ibn Sanan, that my father asked Abi Abdolla- and I was there- where orphan is permissible?" and he answered "when reaches to maximum maturity", asked when is maximum? Answered when wet dream; asked sometimes a boy reaches 18 without wet dream or more than that or less? Then said : when reaches 13 , he will be punished for sins and rewarded for goods, and he is permissible unless he is weak or simple minded.<sup>21</sup>

Therefore, we can say that the maximum maturity stage of human life has a beginning and end.

Beginning of it according to Imam Sadiq (AS) tradition is eighteen and according to Al-Ahqaf, 15 forty years of age is the end.

Another physical life stage after stage of maximum maturity is the midlife and aging stage, the stage at the end of that is, at this point the man finally reaches its weakness and forget what he has learned and becomes as a child. The Holy Quran says: "... and we cause what we will to remain in the wombs for an appointed time, and afterwards we bring you forth as infants, then (give you growth) what ye attain your full strength, all among you there is who dieth (young, and among you there is who he is brought back to the most abject time of life, so that, after knowledge, he knoweth naught."<sup>22</sup>

It is noted that physical growth has stopped in this period and physical strength is gradually reduced, but this also does not mean disappointing and the end real life stage since as spring and autumn in nature is the sign of God's eternal power of the resurrection, the man at this stage prepares himself for resurrection and rebirth.

### **Intellectual development**

**"Prove** orphans till they reach the marriageable age; then, if ye find them of sound judgment, deliver over unto them their fortune ..."<sup>23</sup>

In this verse, "intellectual growth" is raised as a requirement for marriage, and someone who has intellectual power enough to be able to seize their property not to waste them, with power over domestic affairs and marriage is not only for sexual potency, but mind and spirit as well as the degree of maturity.

Thus, "Islam religion has separated sexual maturity from intellectual maturity and financial powers will be delegated to teens in case of intellectual development as well as sexual maturity.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibn Manzor, Mohamad Ibin Mokram, Lisan Al Arab, vol 3, p235

<sup>18</sup> Tarihi, Sheikh Fakhr Al Din, Majma Al Bahrain, under the word

<sup>19</sup> Feiz Kashani, Mola Mohsen, Tafsir Safi, vol 5, p 14

<sup>20</sup> Al Isra, 34

<sup>21</sup> Al Hajj, 5

<sup>22</sup> Al Hajj, 5

<sup>23</sup> An-Nisa

But it should be noted that the purpose of intellectual growth for obtaining financial independence is not profound wisdom, but a teenager reached minimum intellectual growth and understood significant financial harm can be able to seize their wealth wisely, he is legally considered to be and entitled authority to seize their wealth.<sup>24</sup>

In many traditions, the importance of reason and wisdom utilization is mentioned.

Imam Ali (AS) says: “there are two intellects, the reasoning and the experience and both of which lead to utility”<sup>25</sup>

According to his words, wisdom is of two types ,the reasoning and the experience ;the reasoning happens in human mind and is a natural sense and is a powerful tool to reason while the experience is learn and gain experience with others and will double the power of natural reason, so trying to use and exploit them both leads to utility.

Imam Ali (AS) says: The wise is better to add to his knowledge that of wise and the science of scientists to that of him.<sup>26</sup>

This means that, the wise man is better to add to his knowledge that of wise and scientists to that of him.

Imam Ali (AS) continuous “still the reason and fool come over the man of eighteen years, if reached more he is dominated by one of each, wisdom or folly ...”<sup>27</sup> , ie, human wisdom and folly are continuously battle until the man reaches the age of eighteen, when he reached the age of eighteen each of the wisdom or folly that is stronger will surpass the other one.

This narration from Amir al (AS), clarifies that at the age of eighteen wisdom is not perfect and signs of stupidity in human behavior can be observed, because young when comes to their stage of development more thinks of his faults with selfishness and ignores good advice that provides the convenience of his fall.

But in regard to the age of the perfection wisdom there are many traditions that we mention a few examples:

Imam Ali (AS) says: “the son sees wet dreams at the age of fourteen and reaches to his utmost height at twenty-one years of age and has the highest wisdom at twenty eight of age except enjoying the experience”<sup>28</sup>

He adds: “...has the highest wisdom at thirty-five of age except enjoying the experience.”<sup>29</sup>

In this narrative, Imam Ali (AS) poses utmost perfection of wisdom in thirty-five years of age, and says if there is an increase in mind it will be due to exceeding the experiences.

Allameh Tabatabaiee interpreting Al-Ahqaf, 15, “...when he attains full strength and reacheth forty year...” indicates that the forty years maturity is associated with wisdom completeness.<sup>30</sup>

Reaching the fortieth year, referring to intellectual maturity, which is usually known as a man of forty years, and have often, reaches the wisdom and most prophets are prophesying after the forties.<sup>31</sup>

The Safi interpretation of Imam Sadiq (AS) has narrated that the age of forty years is of the utmost maturity and perfection and who reaches in forty-one years is in the deficit.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Falsafi, Mohammad Taghi, youth in terms of intellect and feeling, vol 1, p 141

<sup>25</sup> Allameh, Majlesi, Mohammad Bagher, Behar Al Anvar, vol 75, p 6

<sup>26</sup> Allameh, Majlesi, Mohammad Bagher, Behar Al Anvar, vol 75, p 53

<sup>27</sup> Ibid vol 75, p 82

<sup>28</sup> Kolani Razi, Mohammad Ibn Yaghob, vol 7, p 69

<sup>29</sup> Sadogh, Mohammad Ibn Ali Ibn Hossein Ibn Baboyeh, Man La Yahzarol Faghih, vol 3, p493

<sup>30</sup> Tabatabaiee, seyed mohammad Hossein, “ Almizan Fi Tafsir Al Quran”, vol 18, p 307

<sup>31</sup> Makarem Shirazi, Nasser, Tafsir Nemoneh, vol 21, p 327

According to this narrative, and many other traditions we can conclude that the age of forty years is considered as the age of the perfection of wisdom and perfection of the physical powers of reason and the maximum maturity.

### **Spiritual Growth**

God in several verses in the Quran has mentioned human creation and stages of life to make human understand the greatness of man's creation, and strengthen their mental and physical powers on the right track and misguidance be removed .

Therefore, the actual growth in the Qur'an is spiritual growth, faith development and moral development, and what would be preferred over another one that is growing in faith and piety . There are also other aspects of spiritual growth that we briefly discuss :

#### 1- spiritual growth based on the nature

“And (remember) when thy lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their reins, their seed, and made them testify of themselves, (saying): Am I not your Lord? They said: yea, verily. We testify. (That was) lest ye should say at the Day of Resurrection”<sup>33</sup>

Allameh Askari calls this verse "intellectual effort" and as commentary writes: "When the Lord pulled out the generation of Adam of hisseed and each generation was pulled out from the father back every one of them was a witness on his own; the curious nature of the human makes him search the reasons for the emergence of the phenomenon of motion and ask for things, the Lord asked: Am I not your Lord ?And because all of them were found with their innate wisdom that any creature has a creator and each order has a moderator, cried out shouting yes and yes .It is the natural instinct of human beings that privileged him from other creatures; human, using it, concludes , summarizes, and discusses whatever other creatures could not understand and learn."<sup>34</sup>

According to Allameh Askari probe drive instinct can cause a man to put on a path of growth and development with the focus of attention towards religion.

#### 2- spiritual growth based on invitation of God

Quran, the word of God and the eternal miracle of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) conduct human the best way to growth, says: “and when my servant question thee concerning me, then surely I am nigh. I answer the prayer of the suppliants when he crieth unto me. So let them bear My call and let them trust in Me, in order that they may be led aright”<sup>35</sup>

In this verse the Lord answer is considered to help in human growth “I answer” means accepting the invitation are invited, and " trust in Me " means to realize the fact that I am able to give them what they want <sup>36</sup>, and “may be led aright” means that maybe he would rightfully be directed towards it.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore the Lord answered is one of the most important ways to achieve growth and perfection, because man by pure nature and strong faith accepts Gods invitation and takes step towards the end of salvation, happiness and closeness to God.

Conclusion

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<sup>32</sup> Feiz Kashani, Mola Mohsen, Tafsir Safi, vol 5, p 14

<sup>33</sup> Al- Araf. 172-173

<sup>34</sup> Allameh Askari, Seyed Morteza, “Islamic Beliefs”, vol 1, p 19

<sup>35</sup> Al- baqarah, 186

<sup>36</sup> Al hosseini Albahrani, Aalseyed Hesham, “Al-borhan Fi Tafsir Al Quran”

<sup>37</sup> ibid

In sum, humans have both physical and spiritual aspects as well as the material and the spiritual ones. The material aspect constitutes body and appearance and powers of rational thought, and spiritual dimension is provided by God in human nature to nurture the path of life and follow through with perfection and happiness. The Qur'an also refers to the physical growth in order to lead and to help him for spiritual growth and acquisition is bliss. Therefore, actual growth, spiritual growth, faith development and moral development are to walk in a path where the origin and purpose is God.

God not only introduced human as the ultimate goal of creation, but mentions his existence of different forms and in many ways he has noted that the man able to recognize their God will recognize his own identity to reach to the purpose of creation.

Undoubtedly, wending this way needs to include full provision, and this is nothing but the faith of believers, and true believers always adding in evolution and faith, watering its plant with God faith and verses.

We are also loving this love path, we are from the very beginning of time to the eternity and stepped forward to the existence to walk on the path to the divine origin and its meaning of excellence.

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