DIVERGENCE FROM THE SELF: UNDERSTANDING THE AMBIGUITY OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY AMONG CONTEMPORARY YOUTH FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This article is aimed at understanding the Islamic perspective of the self and how youths of today exhibit ambiguity of both personal and social identity by diverting from true self. These youths are prone to adopting western values and beliefs and thus shifting away from the deeper connection of one's personality with Islam. In this battle of who they are they are unable to attain inner peace and tranquility and may engage in unhealthy behavior with poor self-control, unstable self-esteem and decreased psychological well being. Hence the best mechanism in searching for True-self is bridging one's connection with the Divine Almighty Allah and thus realize that true self is as clearly defined and exemplified with the teaching of Islam. And, also keeping faith on Day of Judgment and on rewards and punishments on our good and bad deeds.

Keywords: Islam, youth, social identity, western values, psychological well-being

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of psychological issues are increasing drastically among Pakistani youths. In Pakistan, mental disorders are reported for more than 4% of the total disease ratio, with the mental health ratio higher among women. It is estimated that 24 million people in Pakistan are in need of psychiatric assistance. This figure is growing alarmingly feeling of anger, frustration and hopelessness are the resultant of the economic disability, lack of job opportunities, feeling insignifiacnt and devalued and being overburdenilized by societal norms of attaining a prestigious job or success inorder to be accepted and appreciated by society. Thus the youths are battled in resolving the internal conflict of who am I (personal identity) and who I should be (idealized self).

This real self-according to Rogers (1954) is self that feels most true to what and who we really are and is related to self regard which triggers psychological health. Self-regard is defined as the ability of self worth and strength (Somers, 1989), and started by actualizing tendency (Rogers, 1954). The ideal-self, is described as strivings to achieve person's goals or ideals when there is incongruency between the real self and ideal self this results in conflict with other parts of life. It is also seen that faith plays important role in an individual life as it lead an individual to self-striving, we can also say that self-striving is directed by the faith (Nursi,2003). In one of the research of Fowler (1981) also said that "faith is an integral part of one's character or personality" (p. 92). Self-neglect defined in with the Oxford English Dictionary "devotion to material needs or desires, to the neglect of spiritual matters; a way of life, opinion, or tendency based entirely upon material interests." The term identity is, "the process of construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or a related set of cultural attributes, that is given priority over other sources of meaning" (Castells, 2010, p. 6). But sadly we see that most Pakistani youths are struggling between attaining recognition, fame, and appreciation but at the cost of sacrificing once personal identity, ethnicity the values and beliefs associated and embedded in one's religious faith. This Muslim Identity is greatly threatened by the western influence and endagering our Muslim

culture and identity. (Giorgetti, Campbell, &Arslan, 2017; Eckersley, 2005).

Looking in depth of understanding self through the lense of the west we find that that the western perspective mostly neglects God's existence which contradicts Islamic pillars of faith meaning Belief in God (*Tawhid*), Awareness of Prophetic Teaching (*Nubuwwa*) *Hashr* (Awareness of Resurrection of the Dead), and *Ibadah* (Worship) (Nursi, 1918/1999).Furthermore in Islamic perspective the self-striving individuals sets goals in life that normally is interwined with sound ethical principles which are than reflected in building a morally strong society (Tahir and Sohail , 2012).

Islamic understanding of the self:

The basic innate predispotion or fitrah (nature), in Islamic perspective is defined as the, innate and natural disposition of man to believe and worship God (Haque and Mohamed ,2009).The best ingredient to understand oneself is through the guidance of the teaching of Qur'an which is motivated by faith and leads to self-improvement. Integrative Islamic Personality includes congruency between self, real-self and ideal self which if which causes disturbance in our mental and physical health. Purification of soul is very important for the balance between ideal self and real self and it can only be achieved through closeness to Allah. Allah (SWT) said:

And whoever purifies himself does so for the benefit of his soul;
and the destination (of all) is to Allah. Qur'an, 35:18

Once Allah said:

Say (O Muhammad) Truly, Allah leaves to stray whom He will (as a result of their choice to go astray). Still, He guides to Himself those who turn to Him in repentance, those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah, for without doubt in the recollection of Allah do hearts find rest. Qur'an, 13:27-28

Human spirit (*Ruh*) and the human body make the human soul. The Quran identifies three types of souls: 1) The inciting soul; 2) The self-accusing soul; and 3) The contented soul. Modern psychology concept was originated with the fourteen-century old idea of the human psyche or human personality. Sigmund Freud, who is regarded as the father of psychoanalysis, developed the concept of three types of souls as the id, ego and super ego, all emerging at different stages of our lives. According to Freud, "Personality of the newborn child consists of id only and later does it develop an ego and super-ego" (Freud, 1923).

According to the Quran, the lowest of these souls is the inciting soul, the soul that provokes us to commit sin. This type of soul is related to the lower baser self of the human personality. It needs immediate gratification. The instincts for survival are blind and demand immediate fulfillment and satisfaction. This is what modern psychology calls the id. The id is the impulsive (and unconscious) part of our personality that reacts directly and immediately to the instincts.

The ego is another type of personality soul is the self-accusing soul. This is the soul that is conscious of its limitations. At this stage the conscience is aroused. It stops evil actions. And scold when an evil act is According to Inayat (2005) the self is understood:

committed. God, in chapter 75 of the Quran entitled, "The Resurrection" swore, "Nay, I swear by the Day of Resurrection; and nay! I swear by the self-reproaching soul." (75:1,2). The soul knows its weaknesses and seeks perfection. At this stage there is an inner struggle between the inciting soul and the self-accusing soul. It is that inner war against all evil forces that prevent one from achieving the higher goal (Béres, 2017).

The third type of soul is the self-contented soul which according to Freud is super-ego. This is the phase which brings maturity in belief. At this stage, strong faith is developed and whole life is dedicated to serving God. They develop control of their animal instincts. They stay focused on their deen and understand that world is just the world of matter, focused on the next world to come and are absolutely satisfied with the Will of God. The soul is at peace even at times of hardship and adversity. In praising such people, the Prophet Muhammad says, "How amazing is the affair of the believer. There is good for him in everything and that is for no one but the believer. If good times come his way, he expresses gratitude to God and that is good for him, and if hardship comes his way, he endures it patiently and that is better for him" (Hamid, 2011).

heart (qalb	spirit, (roh)	and psyche(nafs)
•heart links the person with God . •heart fulfills Divine unity (Tawhid •the presence of God in the hearts propels individuals to centre their success in life by attaining good deeds (Kuspinar, 2008).	•energy of life (Abu-Raiya, 2012) •roh affect one's behaviour	•represents physical appetites •any inclination toward evil or undesirable behavior (Abarghooi & Abarghooi, 2013) •If not controlled it becomes the source of psychological stress (Freud, 1937; Rogers, 1951; Cervone & Pervin, 2008).

The newly constructed Integrative Islamic Personality Model (IIPM) developed, explains Islamic teachings with respect to individual's motives, actions, feelings, attitudes (Abu-Raiya & Hill, 2014). This model is comprised of two categories. The first category is called the shahadah under the faith, ,Belief in God˙ and ,Awareness of Prophetic Teaching˙. This includes completely: the testification (shahadah) of the oneness of Allah (God) and the Muhammad as the Messenger of Allah. The second category is called ,spiritual striving˙ referring to self-two categories; ,self-striving and self-regard (Belton, 2011).

Personality from integration of the Islamic and Western perspective is defined as, "One's level of striving to acquire the faith of God and follow the prophet Muhammad as understood according to the testification of Islam, and acting in accordance with that faith; the level and manifestation of striving personally in everyday life; and leading to the ability of self-worth and regard (Ibrahim, 2018).

Although we find most Pakistani youths do not engage in daily five times prayers with the exception of Friday Jumma Prayers but when questioned on rating religion as significant 92.4% Pakistani youths responded affirmatively ,but these youths were confused on   applying religious problem solving in their lives(Rana ,2011). One possible reason could be that most youths seem to use the western values as a yardstick for success and hence this change in being sandwitched between following one's own cultural identity and being attracted towards west as promoted by electronic media (Qureshi, Baber& Abbas, 2021 & Sanghera , 2010).Thus the Young Muslims of today are crushed between wants ,

desires becoming slaves of their nafs and thus deviating from "i'tidal¯ " or moderation in fulfillling these needs (Crow , 2015) .Hence where Islamic principles and values are engrined in   total submission to the command of Allah subhanatala ,having tawakkul (trust) on Almighty Allah and leading a life based on qan¯a'at (inner contentment with what you already have) in contrast to the worldly defination of outer-oriented success is a growing missing elements in most youths of today . The youths appear to confirm to the worldly status schema of brands and superficial extrinsic value system violating moral economy or Shar¯ı'ah

Another possibility of the growing unrest in youths is the shifting from actual meaning and purpose of life and indulging in acts or practices that is opposing Islamic life style. The growing use of drugs, stealing, robbery and other crimes are increasing day by day. About 27 million individuals struggle with drug abuse in Pakistan, reported by country anti-narcotics force according to the country's anti-narcotics force (Béres, 2017).

Today's youth have forgotten about the main purpose of life. Mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and risk-taking behavior is seen in college's campuses in recent years Blanco et al., 2008; Chou et al., 2005. The college years which are the important years of life are linked with the highest rates of binge drinking (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA], 2013), illegal drug use (SAMHSA, 2013), casual intercourse (Bogle, 2008), and also drugged driving (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2009).

According to the Holy Quran, Allah once said
"And be not like those who forgot Allah, so He made them forget their own souls;
these it is that are the transgressors." (59:19).

In this saying, Allah says whoever forgets me, he will eventually forgets himself also because this soul belongs to Allah and forgetting our lord lead us in transgression. Once Allah said:

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ

"He who truly knows himself has known his Lord"

According to this saying, self-knowledge comes from the knowledge about the Allah as well. Awareness of oneself eventually leads to awareness of the Allah. And similarly, one who is unaware of the Allah is oblivious of him. If one is determined to learn about one's Lord, then the best way to accomplish the task is to learn about oneself

Another verse dealing with the topic is found in Surah al Ma'idah, where Allah says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ

"O you who believe! Take care of yourselves; he who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right path." (5:105).

In this verse Allah is telling us to take care of ourselves, to pay attention to ourselves, that we must be careful about the well-being of our spirits, that we must be aware of the diseases of our souls, and how to cure them. He also tells us that we should pay attention to our duties, made obligatory on us as Muslims.

Then He says:

لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ

"He who errs cannot hurt you when you are on the right path." (5:105).

This means that if we understand the way, that if we are faithful and committed believers, those who are misguided will not harm us. From this we understand that our first task is to take care of ourselves spiritually.

Sometimes a question may come here about the relationship between the believer and society. Does the mention verse mean that we should focus on ourselves and not pay any attention to the society at all? This query can be answered by Allamah Tabataba'i. Allamah Tabataba is a great interpreter and scholar explains that we should pay attention to ourselves and should keep ourselves up to date on our social and personal duties. We should be socially responsible and keep balance between both. Allah has ordered us to advise people for doing well and stop them from bad deeds. One who don't follow this is not a devoted or true Muslim. Even teaching of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also teaches us to strive for self, he teaches us to value individual and as well as society all together (Belton, 2011).

Discussion

The main purpose of this review article is to know why our youth is deviating away from the true purpose of life which is obeying and following the steps of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) and to worship Allah. In the Quran Allah also mentioned the true purpose of life that is:

"And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and Allah is over all things competent. Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire."(Quran 3: 189-191)

Allah has created this world and human beings with a purpose which is to serve him. Nothing is this world Allah has created aimlessly and we us a Muslim should remember that we are born to worship and to please our Creator. According to Allah saying in Quran "I have not created men except that they should serve Me" (Quran, 51:56).

There are many causes of not following Islamic principles such as weakening of religious belief, manipulating or changing perspective off Islamic teaching according to own needs and value, staying is bad company, not having control on own desires and sexual needs, following society norms regardless of thinking whether they are wrong or right, being impressed by western culture and traditions, dominance of materialism etc. Due to these reasons our youth has become rude, careless, deviating away from Islamic teachings, skipping prayers, disrespecting parents, committing major sins like

zina and engaging in extra marital affairs, getting addicted to drugs and alcohol. If Muslims look they will realize that the major problems they are confronting are because they have overlooked and are deviating from teaching of Quran and sunnah.

According to Allah saying the lowest level of deviation is:

"And the minimum level of deviation is that man does not recognize Allah's proof, His witness up on the creatures, whose obedience has been ordered by Allah and whose leadership and mastership is compulsory." **(Ibid. p. 415)**

Now a day's increase in mental illnesses has been reported, which is due to fact that people are more into western ways of living and forgetting the main purpose of coming here in this world. People who follow teaching of Quran and Sunnah are living more peaceful life.

As Allah also says:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُم بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"Those who have believed and whose hearts are comforted by the remembrance of Allah. Unquestionably, by the remembrance of Allah do hearts find comfort and contentment."

Another reason of dispute between ruh and nafs is forgetting sense of community. Thinking that we belongs to ummah gives the sense of belongingness and relatedness which fulfills fundamental human needs. Islam also provides the interpersonal and intrapersonal values which are important for our mental and spiritual health that help people to fight with challenges faced by the people.

Many researchers are working on religiosity and mental health and increase in this domain is seen. But according to western researches which are anti-religion negative relation has been seen between religion and mental health. Although scientific literature shows positive relation between these two variables i.e. religiosity and mental health. The difference between these two literatures arises from difference in measurement of religiosity. In one of the study researcher reviewed 139 researches on religiosity and mental health showed mostly neutral findings. But if we look broadly, religion is positively correlated with mental health. It is important to bring balance between inciting soul and the self-accusing soul which is attained through pursuing life style according to Islamic teaching (Griffiths, 2011).

Conclusion:

This review article shows how true self is related to Islam. And how our values are related to it. And even if one pillar of Islam becomes weak, person is diverted from right path which eventually causes disturbance in all parts of life. This review article provides understanding on the perspective of islam and why people are deviating from it in regards to other research scholar's as well. Only solution to the debilitating condition in youths is by reconnecting with the teachings of Islam in the search of who am I and ensuring the Holy Qur'an as the yardstick to contribute to the real definition of the self and a successful life and thus guiding Muslim Youths ability to preserve their Islamic identity. Reminding ourselves that why we our here in this world and keeping in mind that we are responsible for our actions and we have to answer why we did and what we did here on Earth.

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