

Pharaoh's personality traits in the Holy Qur'an

Dr. Akram A. Mansour

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Palestine University, Palestine

Abstract: The study aimed at determining the personality traits of Pharaoh in the light of the Holy Qur'an. The researcher used the Deductive Approach. The study reached many results which are :

1. The Pharaoh's personality traits contained three points: the moral traits, the psychological traits and the intellectual traits.

2. Pharaoh used these traits to hinder people from the way of Allah and to terrorize his opponents.

3. Each arrogant person and oppressor will be gone soon.

The study recommended researchers study other personalities, such as Abu Lahab and Al-Nimrod in light of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah. Besides, the study recommended the need to increase the cooperation between the scholars who interpret the Holy Qur'an and the educational scholars in studying these topics.

Keywords: Pharaoh's personality traits, the Holy Qur'an.

Date of Submission: 02-12-2020

Date of acceptance: 17-12-2020

I. Introduction

The Holy Qur'an has represented the main source in educating the Muslim because it is considered an integrated educational curriculum enriched with various educational experiences. Moreover, it is responsible for building the normal personality contained spiritual, intellectual, moral, emotional and social dimensions. Thus, the education that is emerged from the Holy Qur'an can meet the needs of people, nourish their emotions and feelings, follow their growth and development and achieve complete guidance (Ali, 2005: 118, 119).

The Holy Qur'an contributed to educate the first generation of Companions of the Prophet -may Allah be pleased with them- to form excellence in heart, mind, perception and feeling. When trends in the field of education diverge, people should be guided by the Holy Qur'an that leads them to the best correct behaviors, as Allah says: "This Qur'an guides one to something that is more straightforward and reassures believers who perform honorable actions; they shall have great earnings" (Al-Isra: 9). The Holy Qur'an mentioned many personalities and characteristics negatively and positively in various events.

Personality is defined as "a set of people's characteristics contained the physical, mental, psychological, social, spiritual, ethical and practical traits, and these characteristics distinguish the individual from others" (Al-Issawi, 2000: 229).

It was clear that Pharaoh's personality traits had a role in setting policies and foundations for people. If the courtiers were bad, the personality will go towards stubbornness and arrogance, as it is clear on the personality of Pharaoh in the Holy Qur'an. The Pharaoh's personality was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an 67 times, and this demonstrates the importance of this personality that the researcher would study and interpret his traits in the Surahs of the Holy Qur'an.

1.1 Previous studies:

The researcher mentioned the available studies according to the subject matter, and these studies were classified from the newest to the oldest.

Al-Zameeli & Al-Saifi's study (2012) aimed at detecting the characteristics of the Jews in the Holy Qur'an and showed that their most prominent characteristics are the love of life, hatred of death, deception and deceit against people, cruelty of heart, cowardice, treachery and breaking pledges.

Jarada's study (2010) aimed at detecting the personal traits of the hypocrites in the light of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet which were: appeal to oppression, hinder from the way of Allah, loyalty to the infidels, lying, mockery of people, breaking pledges, envy, cowardice, usury and ill-thought.

Commenting on the current study:

1. Diversity of studies that dealt with negative personality traits, so some of these studies had a religious vision, and the others had an educational vision. This indicates the different interests of the researchers in various fields.

2. The research explained that there is a set of negative personality traits that are common between hypocrites and infidels, such as bad manners and hinder from the path of Allah.

3. The current study was distinguished through dealing with the personality traits of Pharaoh in the Holy Qur'an, thus linking his personality with the personalities of the infidels and hypocrites as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem of the study focused on detecting Pharaoh's personality in the light of the Holy Qur'an. Hence, the problem of the study involved the following questions:

1. What are the moral traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an?
2. What are the psychological traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an?
3. What are the intellectual traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an?

1.3 The purpose of the Study

1. Detecting the moral traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an.
2. Detecting the psychological traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an.
3. Detecting the intellectual traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an.

1.4 Limitations of the study

The limitation of the study is represented in determining Pharaoh's personality traits in the Holy Qur'an and their impact on the intellectual, moral and psychological fields.

1.5 The significance of the study

1. The topic of personality and its related traits are considered the focus of the education.
2. The study is considered a vigorous attempt to deal with a new topic in the light of the Holy Qur'an.
3. This study can benefit:
 - Teachers and professors who are responsible for educating and developing the human mind.
 - Scholars in society who are concerned with guiding people and reforming their social, moral and cultural reality.
 - Researchers who are interested in the study of personality and human thinking.
4. The Arab and Islamic environment –according to the researcher's knowledge - lacks this type of studies.

II. Methodology

2.1 Research design:

The researcher used the Deductive Approach which is based on the maximum mental effort of the researcher when studying texts in order to reach the educational contents supported by specific and clear evidence.

2.2 The research procedures:

The researcher followed some steps in this study which contained:

1. Determining the verses related to the personality traits of Pharaoh as mentioned in the Holy Qur'an.
2. Studying and analyzing the verses to determine the personality traits of Pharaoh in the context of the Qur'an verses.
3. Presenting the classification to some professors in order to benefit from their comments.
4. Listing the contents - which have been classified - under their own title.
5. Using the interpretations of the Qur'anic verses containing the subject of the study.
6. Deriving and formulating the study questions and then answering them.

III. The results and discussion of the study

The answer to the first question: What are the moral traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an?

Morality is considered a basic element in building the personality which is represented in the apparent and observable behavior. This behavior exposes to evaluation and criticism by others, thus when morals at the level of the individual and society are corrupted, this may herald the disintegration and collapse of society. Through studying and analyzing the Qur'anic verses related to the personality traits of Pharaoh, the researcher deduces and determines a set of moral traits which are:

A. Aggression and harm to the opponents

Allah says: " When We rescued you from the people of Pharaoh, they had been subjecting you to the worst torment, slaying your sons [fearing from the coming prophet] and sparing your women (as servants). In that a

great testing by your Lord"(50)."So,We divided the sea for you and saved you, while We drowned Pharaoh's household as you were looking on" (Al-Baqarah Surat, 49/50).

This verse showed that Allah preserved the people from Pharaoh who killed their sons and slave their women and daughters. Pharaoh used the most terrible ways to terror people who worship Allah instead of him. However, Allah faced Pharaoh's aggression by preserving people and drowning him and his soldiers who pursued Moses and his people in the sea.

Pharaoh as any tyrant seeks to harm his people who don't obey his orders or instructions using crucial methods and procedures, and he prevents discussions or expressing their opinions. Hence, Pharaoh sought to use religious and racial persecutions in dealing with his nation to maintain his throne and power (Al-Sharbi, 1991: 1).

B. The Denial

Allah says: "In the case of Pharaoh's followers as well as those before them, they denied Our signs, so Allah (God) seized them because of their offences; Allah (God) is Stern in punishment" (Al-Imran Surat: 11).

These words show the decisive situation and the final scene in the story of challenge and denial and put the end of Pharaoh's arrogance. Besides, this sentence shows the end of the people who do not believe the words of the Holy Quran. This Surat shows Allah's care and protection for people who worship him, as well as inflicting torment and punishment on his enemies (Al-Sharbi, 1991: 3).

C. Arrogance and conspiracy

Allah says: "Next We sent Moses and Aaron after them with Our signs for Pharaoh and his councilors. Yet they acted proudly and were criminal folk" (Yunus Surat: 75).

This verse shows that Pharaoh and his people were arrogant, and they denied the call of Moses. Then Allah sent Moses and Aaron after previous messengers, peace be upon them, to Pharaoh and his people with miracles indicating their sincerity, and there is no God except Allah. However, Pharaoh continued his arrogance and refused to obey Moses in his call to worship Allah (Al-Shokani, 1993: 2).

D. Accusing others of falsehood

Allah says: "The notables among Pharaoh's people said: 'This is some clever magician!'" (Al-Araf Surat: 109).

Pharaoh's people said that Moses is a magician who attracts people's eyes to deceive them, so that they accused Moses that he transformed the rod to a snake using magic. They denied the miracle of Moses and dealt with the action as a result of magic (Al-Nasfi, 1998: 1).

The public - who are the majority and the gentlemen of Pharaoh's people - said that they agreed with Pharaoh's saying about Moses that he is a magician in order to refuse and deny the call and miracle of Moses (Al-Sharbi, 1991: 3).

We noticed here that Pharaoh promoted to his people that this is a kind of magic, not a miracle because the magic is closer than to people's minds from miracles.

Allah said: "He said: 'Have you come to us to turn us out of our land through your magic, Moses?'" (Taha Surat: 57).

In this verse, Pharaoh continues, using his plots, his doubt in the prophethood of Moses, peace be upon him, and the goals of the call. While Moses came to release the Children of Israel from the enslavement of Pharaoh, Pharaoh began to disseminate his belief that Moses came to repel them from their land.

E. Stubbornness

Allah says: "Pharaoh said: 'Let me kill Moses! Let him appeal to his Lord! I fear he will change your religion or cause havoc to appear on earth'" (Ghafir Surat: 26).

Pharaoh's words "Let me kill Moses! Let him appeal to his Lord" show his malice, hatred and insouciance. He means that he doesn't care about Allah, and he will kill the messenger of Allah "Moses" who would like to change people's religion and disseminate the corruption on the land (Al-Zuhaili, 1997: 24). This was Pharaoh's argument to oppose and challenge God using these crucial and ungrateful words to show his stubbornness clearly (Al-Sharbi, 1991: 5).

F. Underestimating the people's minds

Pharaoh, like all tyrants, looks for a way out when others face him using an argument and evidence. Therefore, Pharaoh asked Haman and his people to build the edifice to distract people from Moses's call to worship Allah.

Allah says: "Pharaoh said: 'Haman, build me a tower so that I may reach the means of access (36) the access to Heaven, so I may climb up to Moses' Allah (God). Still, I think he is a liar. 'Thus, his evil action was made to

seem attractive to Pharaoh, and he was hampered along the Way. Pharaoh's plot only meant (his own) downfall (37)"(Ghafir Surat: 36, 37).

Pharaoh ordered his minister "Haman" to build a high palace in order to ascend to the sky to see the God of Moses aiming at challenging him and denying his message. Besides, Pharaoh intended to camouflage and confuse his people in order to keep them in disbelief, inform their belief that he is the only God and underestimate their minds. Thus, these words are considered a statement from Pharaoh to deny Moses and Allah(Al-Zuhaili, 1997: 24).

The answer to the second question:What are the psychological traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an?

The tyrant sometimes seeks to use the psychological warfare against God's servants, and this is clear over the ages. Thus, the psychological traits of Pharaoh mentioned in the Holy Qur'an are the following:

A. The enslavement of people

Allah says: "Has there reached you the story of Moses? (16) When his Lord called to him in the sacred valley of Tuwā, (17) "Go to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. (18) And say to him, 'Would you [be willing to] purify yourself. (19) And let me guide you to your Lord so you would fear [Him]? (20) And he showed him the greatest sign, (21) But he [i.e., Pharaoh] denied and disobeyed. (22) Then he turned his back, striving [i.e., plotting]. (23) And he gathered [his people] and called out. (24) And said, "I am your most exalted lord. (25) So Allāh seized him in exemplary punishment for the last and the first [transgression]. (26) Indeed, in that is a lesson [i.e., warning] for whoever would fear [Allah]" (Al-Naziat Surat: 15- 26).

These verses are evidence that the greater purpose of the mission of the messengers is to guide people to believe in Allah. Then Allah demonstrated that Moses showed his miracle to Pharaoh which was transforming the rod to a snake, as He said: "And he showed him the greatest sign". However, Pharaoh disobeyed and disagreed with what Moses called to and sought to disseminate corruption on the land and opposed Moses severely.

The combination of disbelief and disobedience in these verses indicates that Pharaoh disbelieved in the heart and the tongue, and disobeyed in showing rebellion and coercion. Then Pharaoh gathered his soldiers and people in the palace to say to them: "I am your most exalted lord", which meant that he is the only God and has the ultimate authority over them, and they can't worship anyone except him.

Hence, Allah punished Pharaoh in a severe manner which was drowning him and his soldiers in the sea to be a lesson for those like him who are rebellious in this world. Moreover, Allah punished him two times; the first time is drowning him in the sea, and the second time is burning him in the Hellfire (Al-Zuhaili, 1997: 30).

B. Pomposity, pride and paranoia

Allah says: "Pharaoh announced it among his people; he said: "My people, do I not hold control over Egypt and these rivers flowing by me? Do you not notice anything?" (Az-Zukhruf Surat: 51).

Pharaoh called his people to say: "Oh, people, do I not have the King of Egypt, and these rivers flow from underneath me, do you not see?". These words indicate that Pharaoh feared the people's inclination toward Moses. He gathered and called them proudly that he is the only great king of Egypt so that no one can dispute with him. Furthermore, the absolute power is for him, the rivers of the Nile flow under his palace, and you live in my paradise. Finally, he made a comparison between his power and property and the poverty of Moses to deceive people (Al-Zuhaili, 1997: 25).

C. Foolishness and vanity

Allah says: "Pharaoh said: "You have believed in Him before I permit you to! This is some scheme which you have hatched in the city in order to drive its people out. You will soon find out!" (Al-Araf Surat: 123).

In this verse, Pharaoh still tries to confirm his authority and accuses people who live in Egypt by educating Moses the magic. Thus, Pharaoh has been in trouble and wants to get out of it to preserve his power and kingdom which is based on lies (Al-Sharawi, 1992: 7).

D. Terrorism, murder and abuse

Pharaoh used various ways to establish his authority and power and impose his personality, such as terrorism, threatening to kill, torture, ignorance of society, decreasing the level of intellectual or human content of people and reliance on lying and fraud to hide the truth from the masses.

Allah says: "When We saved you from Pharaoh's household, they were imposing the worst torment on you: they slaughtered your sons and spared your women. That meant a serious trial from your Lord" (Al-Araf Surat: 141).

Children of Israel lived in this torment for a long time. They lived in a terror environment and paganism. Pharaoh killed their sons and slaving their wives (Al-Sharbi, 1991: 3). Pharaoh controlled his people by using the means of terrorism, making them bonded servants like beasts and underestimating their values in society.

The answer to the third question: What are the intellectual traits of Pharaoh's personality in the Holy Qur'an? Tyrants are considered the foundations of terrorism since creation, and I mean all kinds of terrorism because the character of the tyrant is based on the authoritarianism, oppression and terror of opponents. The following points explain the intellectual traits of Pharaoh's personality:

A. The intellectual terrorism

Allah says: "I'll cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides; then I'll crucify you all" (Al-Araf Surat: 124).

In this verse, Pharaoh continues his terrorism against people and magicians who believe in Allah and threatens them by cutting their hands and legs in a terrible way, as well as crucifying them until death.

The means of tyrants when they face the truth are torture, distortion and abuse because they don't have evidence and proofs to confirm that they are true. Thus, these threats were a result of launching Moses's call to worship Allah instead of idols or Pharaoh.

Allah says: "And the eminent among the people of Pharaoh said, "Will you leave Moses and his people to cause corruption in the land and abandon you and your gods?" [Pharaoh] said, "We will kill their sons and keep their women alive; and indeed, we are subjugators over them" (Al-Araf Surat: 127).

In this verse, Pharaoh threatens everyone who worships Allah, or thinks to change his/her religion. Pharaoh uses these threats to frighten and prevent people from obeying Moses in his mission when he felt that there is a real danger in his kingdom and power. Hence, he menaces people through crucial ways as killing and enslavement, and he added that people can not deviate from our control. This indicates the tyranny, brutality and cruelty of Pharaoh (Al-Sadi, 2002: 300).

B. Criminality

Allah says: "Then We sent after them Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh and his establishment with Our signs, but they behaved arrogantly and were a criminal people" (Yunus Surat: 75).

Pharaoh and his people have the same trait which is criminality. They seek to disseminate corruption in society and reject the truth. Besides, they exaggerated using arrogance in dealing with Moses and his mission and denied his call to worship Allah because Moses is considered one of the people who Pharaoh slave them (Ashour, 1984: 11).

Allah said: "Pharaoh said: "Councilmen, I have not known any god for you except myself. Light [a kiln] for me, Haman, for some clay, and build me a tower so I may climb up to Moses' god. Still, I think he's a liar!

This verse shows Pharaoh's arrogance in forcing his people to follow him, believing in him and denying the message of Moses. Pharaoh relies on the myths that prevailed in Egypt and focused on making the kings as gods. People see him as human beings like them, alive and dying, but he tells them these words to swindle or ridicule them without objection or comment. Besides, he uses the same sarcastic tone and pretends to doubt the sincerity of Moses, but with this doubt, he searches to reach the truth (Al-Sharbi, 1991: 5).

Pharaoh claimed that there is no God except him, and he increased his delusion and criminality in dealing with the people who worship Allah instead of him (Al-Qushairy, 2007: 3).

Here, Pharaoh asks Haman to build a high tower for him to look at the sky because he thinks that Moses is a liar in his claim which shows that there is a God in the sky who sent Moses to guide people and follow Him. So, Pharaoh and his soldiers became proud of disseminating the falsehood and injustice on the earth (Al-Jawzi, 2002: 3).

C. The oppression and lethality of the opponents

Allah says: "But no one believed Moses, except [some] offspring [i.e., youths] among his people, for fear of Pharaoh and his establishment that they would persecute them. And indeed, Pharaoh was haughty within the land, and indeed, he was of the transgressors" (Yunus Surat: 83).

The appearance of Moses's call to worship Allah showed the truth which demonstrated Pharaoh's lies. Therefore, he behaved with his nation using fraud. Pharaoh was living an inferiority complex when he was young and feared exposure, so he sought to fraud permanently and hide the truth and facts.

A few of Pharaoh's people believed in Allah, and most of them were young men despite the arguments and proofs that Moses showed. Pharaoh's personality frightened people who believed in Allah because of his rebellion, pride and stubbornness. He had a power and an authority that made his people fear his torture, terrorism, murder and enslavement. Thus, there was a little number of people who follow Moses and believe in Allah, such as Pharaoh's wife, the treasurer of Pharaoh's wealth and his wife (Al-Saboni, 1981: 4).

Each tyrant seeks to hurt and terror his people all the time when he feels that there is a danger on his authority and kingdom (Agiba,1998: 2).

D. Foolishness

Allah says: "And Pharaoh led his people astray and did not guide [them]" (Taha: 79), and "I am only guiding you along the path of normal behavior" (Ghafir Surat: 29).

The evidence of Pharaoh's foolishness is that he was the reason for drowning himself and his soldiers at the sea when they followed Moses, so where is the path of rationality that Pharaoh called on, especially after Allah restrained the sea on them? He drowned and destroyed them (Al-Sha'arawi, 1992: 15).

Allah says: "Pharaoh had them pursued by his troops, and the flood overwhelmed them as only it could overwhelm them" (Taha Surat: 78).

Pharaoh led his soldiers and people towards the sea to pursue Moses, and thus they were drowned and eliminated in the sea because of his arrogance, stubbornness and foolishness. Instead of urging them to believe in Allah, he led people to death (Al-Qasimi, 1997: 7).

The results of the study

1. The Holy Qur'an pays a great attention to the story related to Moses with Pharaoh whereby it is considered the biggest story in the Qur'an, and the "Pharaoh" word is mentioned 67 times in the Qur'an.
2. Pharaoh's personality traits represent each arrogant person in this world.
3. The courtiers play a great role in forming the negative and positive personality traits of Pharaoh.
4. All tyrants, criminals and arrogant people will be gone.
5. Injustice will not continue forever.
6. The character of Pharaoh is mentioned in various Surahs of the Holy Qur'an.
7. The personality traits of Pharaoh are totally coupled with his true character that is based on arrogance and corruption.

IV. Recommendations

In the light of the results of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Researchers should study similar topics to enrich the field of scientific research.
2. Parents, teachers and educators should show these educational values in the Holy Qur'an to teach them to students.
3. Increasing the cooperation between religious scholars and educators in studying and guiding students to conduct this type of research.

References

- [1]. **The Holy Qur'an**
- [2]. Agiba, A. (1998). **The Interpretation of the Holy Qur'an**. Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya. Lebanon.
- [3]. Ali, M. (2005). **Fundamentals of Islamic Education**. Dar Al-Salam for Publishing and Distribution. Cairo.
- [4]. Al-Issawi, A. (2000). **Childhood and Teenage Disorder and their Treatment**. Dar Al-Ratib. Lebanon.
- [5]. Al-Jawzi, A. (2002). **Zad Al-Maseer in the Science of Tafsir**. Dar Ibn Hazm. The Islamic Office. Beirut. Lebanon.
- [6]. Al-Nassfi, A. (1998). **Al-Nasfi's Tafsir**. Dar Al-Kallam Al-Tayyib. Beirut.
- [7]. Al-Qasimi, M. (1997). **The Advantages of Interpretation (Al-Qasimi's Tafsir)**. Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya. Beirut.
- [8]. Al-Qurtubi, A. (1964). **The Whole Rules of the Qur'an (Al-Qurtubi's Tafsir)**. Dar al-Kutub al-Masriya. 2nd edition. Cairo.
- [9]. Al-Qushayri, A. (2007). **Al-Qushayri's Tafsir**. Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyya. Lebanon.
- [10]. Al-Saadi, A. (2002). **Tafsir Al-Saeed**. Al-Ressala Foundation. Lebanon.
- [11]. Al-Sabouni, M. (1981). **The Compendium of Ibn Kathir's Tafsir**. 7th edition. The Holy Qur'an Dar. Beirut – Lebanon.
- [12]. Al-Sha'arawy, M. (1992). **Al-Shaarawy's Tafsir**. Dar Al-Jil for Printing, Publishing and Distribution. Egypt.
- [13]. Al-Sharbi, S. (1991). **In the Light of the Qur'an**. Dar Al-Shorouk. 17th Edition. Beirut – Cairo.
- [14]. Al-Shawkani, M. (1993). **Fath Al-Qadeer**. Dar Al-Kallam Al-Tayeb. Damascus – Beirut.
- [15]. Al-Zmaili, Z. & Al-Saifi, R. (2012). The Traits of the Jews in the Holy Qur'an. **Journal of the Islamic University, Human Studies Series**, (31), 98-139.
- [16]. Al-Zuhaili, W. (1997). **The Enlightening Interpretation in the Belief, Sharia and Approach**. Dar Al-Fikr. 2nd Edition. Damascus. Syria.
- [17]. Ashour, M. (1984). **Liberation and Enlightenment**. Tunisian Dar for Publishing. Tunisia
- [18]. Jarada, J. (2010). **The Personal Traits of the Hypocrites in the Light of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet**. **Master Thesis**. Islamic University. Gaza. Palestine.

Dr. Akram A. Mansour, et. al. "Pharaoh's personality traits in the Holy Qur'an." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, vol. 10, no. 6, 2020, pp. 55-60.