



## The Role of Heredity in Moral Characteristics with Emphasis on from the Perspective of Islamic Sources

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### **Abstract**

Human behavior is affected by various factors. Heredity, along with other factors such as education, environmental conditions, social factors are one of the main factors that shape human personality. The degree of influence of each of these elements is different. The present article with descriptive-analytical method, tries to analyze the contribution of heredity in the formation of personality with regard to religious texts. The result of the research shows that religious texts confirm the role of heredity in personality. At the same time, it should be noted that the contribution of this factor is not as high as other factors. According to the provisions of Islamic texts, although genetic characteristics have an effect on a person's personality and morals, their contribution is to the extent of creating the background and its role cannot be considered to the extent of the total cause. It should be noted that this influence does not lead to predestination because the greatest role in the formation of a person's personality depends on his choice and his free behavior because according to religious texts, man is a selective being and therefore responsible for his actions.

**Keywords:** *Human Shape; Determinism; Inheritance; Genetics Knowledge; Personality Traits*

### **Introduction**

#### **Human Personality and Its Shaping Factors 1**

One of the fields of human studies is the study of personality. Personality is a set of insights, Beliefs and convictions of each person are associated with relatively fixed behavioral traits and characteristics. Personality is one of the most important aspects of a human being, therefore it is important to know the elements that shape personality. People's personality is formed gradually and is affected by various factors such as genetic factors, life experiences, Environment and culture. Islamic teachings also acknowledge the role of genetic factors in the formation of human personality. Of course, in the Holy Qur'an, the performance of people is based on their shape and secondary creation. In Surah Al-Asra and in the eighty-fourth verse, it is said: "*Each person acts according to his character does, so your Lord to the one who has the right path is, is wiser*". However, in other Islamic texts, the role of genetics is not

negated and it is introduced as an effective factor in the formation of human personality. The basic research that the present article is in looking for the answer of the influence of heredity in the formation of personality from a perspective Islamic text.

### **The Role of Heredity in Moral and Behavioral Characteristics**

According to the Islamic view, the nature of human souls is the same at the beginning of their birth, and factors such as upbringing or genetics and etc cause the formation of his carnal possessions and personality, now the question arises whether hereditary and genetic factors in the existence occurrence, Do carnal possessions play a role? this question We examine the answer to this question from the two paths of genetic science and religious teachings:

#### **A) The Point of View of Genetic Science**

In order to clarify the role of genetic factors in human behavior, it is first necessary to briefly discuss the knowledge of genetics and how to transfer traits through heredity.

#### **Record Cellular Information**

The human body is made up of billions of cells. Today, human knowledge has reached the point where it has identified the components of the cell nucleus. One of these components are chromosomes. The number of chromosomes in the cell nucleus is a characteristic of every living organism. For example, there are (46, 23) paternal chromosomes and 23 maternal chromosomes) in each cell of the human body. Each chromosome consists of two chromatids that join together at a place called the centromere. Each chromatid consists of two strands of double-stranded DNA. In the structure of each DNA molecule, there are units called nucleotides, each of which consists of a phosphorous compound, a type of sugar, and one of the four types of organic bases T, G, C, and A, which are identified by symbols. DNA is a very long molecule whose two strands are connected like a zipper and there are thousands of nucleotides in each strand. About 3 billion base pairs are located in 23 pairs of chromosomes.

The sequence of nucleotides (genes) in each of the two strands of DNA is of particular importance, because they are the pattern of replication and transcription. The continuous division of body cells due to growth and development, repair of damaged parts and reproduction requires replication of the DNA molecule in the cell nucleus. On the other hand, when you look at a living organism, what you see is either protein or made by protein. Proteins are the most important manifestations of order in living organisms, which are made of amino acids.

The sequencing of more than 0.90% of the human genome was completed by the beginning of the new millennium, but still many human genes have not been identified. The DNA in the cells of the body is either in the form of heterochromatin (with replication and without the possibility of transcription) or in the form of euchromatin (with replication and transcription). Euchromatin contains many active genes. In general, in the human genome, a small part of DNA has a specific activity, such as coding and making proteins, and most of it has no known activity, which is called redundant DNA, due to the compactness of DNA in the heterochromatin section, gene regulation and protection of chromosomal integrity are among the responsibilities of this section. When two daughter cells are obtained from a parent cell, the heterochromatin part is completely inherited, meaning that the new clone has heterochromatin regions of the parent's DNA, which causes epigenetic inheritance. Inside the nucleus, some genes are almost permanently active (for coding and making proteins), but others must be turned on and off to meet the needs of the cell or organism. It seems that among the cells of the human body, there are cells whose euchromatin genetic codes are recorded depending on the person's choice in life and his behavior, and the heterochromatin part is related to the person's ancestors.

All members of the human species have relatively the same DNA set, but minor differences in DNA cause human diversity. Today, mankind is able to identify some traits of the diseases of the ancestors and even the possible diseases of the children by using the sequence of genetic codes, C, G and A on DNA. On the other hand, choosing the right or wrong way by each person through genetic and epigenetic affects his physical and mental states, the possibility of changing heterochromatin to euchromatin and vice versa indicates that it is possible to change part of the effect of the ancestors in the individual's genome. The environment affects the gene action in various ways and provides the necessary raw materials for the synthetic processes that are controlled by the genes. It seems that due to the existence of a unique genetic base in every human being, the effect of the actions of each individual's ancestors and the environment in which he lives has an effect on the action of his genes, and with the spiritual sequencing of the genome, the reality of each person can be understood.

For scientists of genetic science, parents and ancestors are important only as people who have passed on their genes, and their lifestyle has no role in this matter. But another group of scientists have now provided evidence that heredity may not be as contrived as classical geneticists believe. This theory is called epigenetics. Epigenetics is a theory in the field of inheritance that says that genes have a memory for an event. Two generations may be exposed to an event and this event is marked in the genes of that generation and these effects continue for the next 4 or 5 generations or more. Epigenetics is the study of how information is transferred from one cell to another without the precise encoding of information in the DNA sequence. Instead, genes may be altered or modified in other ways. Scientists realized that while every cell in the human body contains the same DNA, genes, Individual genes have a switch mechanism that tells them to be on or off. This finding specifies how a cell becomes, for example, a brain, eye or lung cell. Epigenetic mutations can prevent a specific gene from being identified or expressed by interfering with this switching mechanism. (See: Trans Austen Brown, 1392; HS Chawla 2002; Griffiths et al., 2007. ; Hoda Zare Mirkabadi and others, pp. 1-4 and 11-12).

### **The Degree of Influence of Genetic Factors**

Behavioral genetics is one of the fields of research in genetics that studies the inheritance and formation of behavior based on the genome (Katherine, 2007, 52). However, there are different views on whether the factor that shapes personality and behavioral characteristics is only the genetic structure of the individual or environmental or social factors. Like the findings of genetic science, it is clear that this factor is not the determining factor and the cause of all behaviors in a person; Despite the discovery of a number of behavioral genes, such as genes effective in causing anxiety, human behavior does not necessarily correspond to his genes, and a person who has behavioral gene x does not necessarily develop behavior (Rak Mohammadi, 2009, 263).

Also, the answer of genetic experts to the question of whether human destiny is coded in his genes is negative; According to them, identical twins despite having the same gene set in terms of shape and behavior, they are not the same and this phenomenon indicates that human characteristics are affected by factors other than genetics. As the majority of genes are affected by the environment to some extent. Therefore, the genes received from the parents at the time of conception do not accurately dictate the traits and characteristics of individuals (Bruce, 2007, 693). Based on this, the decision and will of a person is a determining element in the occurrence of his behavior, however, the question may be raised that if genes have an effect on a person's behavior, is the will not also under such influence? In other words, aren't these genes that make a person strong-willed and determined and make someone weak-willed or weak-willed?! Specialists in behavioral genetics have answered this question in such a way that every moral characteristic, such as being weak-willed or lacking in courage, is not completely under the control of genes and can be changed and improved by training, nurturing and the individual's own will (Rak Katrin, 2007, 60, Basiri and Gohari 1392 105-128).

## B) The Point of View of the Qur'an and Hadiths

Even though the age of genetic knowledge is not more than two centuries, the transmission of traits through heredity and the influence of genetic factors can be used from religious teachings. Of course, there is no verse in the Holy Qur'an that clearly indicates this matter, however, some have tried to take the role of the agent of inheritance from verse 77 of Surah Yusuf (Basiri and Gohari 1392, 105-128) in the interpretation of this verse, it is stated that the speakers of the speech were Yusuf's brothers. *"They were brothers with Yusuf on their father's side, that's why they attributed Yusuf to the brother of the accused because they were from the same mother"*. They said if he: *"Benjamin stole the king's measur, it is not unlikely because his brother had also stolen before. They have inherited this job from their mother, but we are separated from them on the mother's side"* (Tabatabai, 11, 226).

However, it does not seem that the meaning of the verse, as well as the mentioned commentary, is necessarily the approval of behaviors arising from hereditary factors. Rather, it may mean the influence of the mother's upbringing on the children. In other words, Yusuf's brothers pretended that the theft was caused by their mother's education in order to separate their accounts from them, as if such behavior was inherited between them. Therefore, some commentators have emphasized the role of the mother in education in the interpretation of this verse (Sadeghi Tehrani 15, 170). In addition, the Qur'an did not confirm their words and accusations, even despite the commentators' efforts to discover this alleged theft in Yusuf's life, the original accusation was baseless and based on envy. (Fazlollah, 250, 12).

Also, the insistence of some people (Qureshi: 1: 45) on the transmission of disbelief and atheism through inheritance, citing verses such as the verse *"Rab La Tazero Ala..."* is very unfounded. Whether the birth of a non-believer child from non-believer parents has a direct relationship with family education and its influence, and not the transmission of traits and beliefs from inheritance! It has been stated in the following narrations that a baby is born with monotheistic nature and it is the parents who lead him astray. *"And Noah said, 'My Lord, do not leave upon the earth from among the disbelievers an inhabitant'. 'Indeed, if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants and not beget except [every] wicked one and [confirmed] disbeliever"* (Noah/ 27-26); in the above verses also does not mean that the child is an infidel and an infidel from the very birth, so that we attribute it to heredity, and the baby is not described as disbelief and debauchery, rather, these attributes monitor the end and the future. They reach it in adulthood. As in the verse *"Wa Basharuho Beghulam Aleem"* (Zariat /28) it is not meant to be "Aleem" at birth.

But in the narrations, the factor of heredity appears in a clear way. For example, Amir al-Mu'minan Ali (a.s.) said this in his order to the governor of Egypt (Nahj al-Balaghah: Letter 53) *"Then, to select the commanders, go to those who have character and family origin from pious and well-established families, and who have grace, courage, generosity, and kindness, because they are the center of dignity and branches of goodness and merit."* In this passage, the plural *"Ahasab"* refers to the originality of the race and the positive aspects of heredity (Makarem Shirazi, 10:466). In addition, the emphasis on courage, generosity, and courage, which is a part of carnal possessions and influenced by heredity, confirms the reference to the aspect of heredity.

The narrations in which the word *"Eirg"* is mentioned clearly indicate the transfer of traits through heredity; for example, during the Battle of Jamal and after Muhammad Hanafiyah hesitated to attack the enemy army, Amir al-Mu'minan (AS) hit him with the hilt of his sword and said, *"No Eirgie has reached you from your father"* (Hosseini Madani 141), in another report, it is said that he said, *"Eirgie has reached you from your mother."* (Abu Nasr Bukhari 81; Ibn Abi Al-Hadid, 1, 243; Majlesi, 42, 98).

Also in the narrations related to the choice of a spouse, it is stated with emphasis on choosing a spouse from a decent and pure family: (Siyuti, 1:505; Motaghi Handi, 16:296) *Marry in a family of decent origin, because Eirg is secretly influential.* It is also said in a narration of the Holy Prophet

(PBUH): Choose a suitable wife for having children, because Eirg has a hidden effect. (Ibn Idris, 2:559; Faiz Kashani, 3: 93, Ghadhagi, 1: 370). The word " Eirg " in the word means root and origin(Farahidi, 1:153; Ibn Manzoor, 2:397) The meaning of " *Desas* " in the expression "*fan al- Eirg desas*" is also its involvement and hidden influence (Ibn Athir, 2:117).This fact has been reflected in other narrations with different interpretations: The Messenger of God (PBUH) stood during the sermon and said: "*O people, avoid the plant that grows in the trash. Asked what do you mean? He said a beautiful woman in a bad environment*" (Kilini 5 :332) is quoted from Imam Sadiq (a.s.) who said that "*bravery is in the people of Khorasan and generosity and envy in Arabs, so for a wife to have children, also, in another narration, choose the right wife for having children, because women give birth to children who are like their brothers and sisters*" (Har Ameli, 29:14).

However, there are several reasons that show that the effect of heredity and traits passed on to a person from parents does not go beyond necessity and context and does not reach the level of causality; The collection of verses indicating the authority and right to choose the path, destiny and performance for man, teachings related to the influence of education and encouragement to cultivate the soul from moral vices and unworthy traits and beautify it to perfection are among them, but in principle, if the hereditary and genetic determinism is accepted, the philosophy of the mission of the prophets, as well as all educational systems, will be questioned. Also, the upbringing of good-natured people from corrupt parents and vice versa is a clear proof that hereditary traits are not forced. Therefore, in some hadiths, the following verse (An'am: 95) means that it separates the believer from the unbeliever and the unbeliever from the believer (Hawizi, 1:749).

On the other hand, several narrations in line with the verses related to nature show that every child enters the field of life with a monotheistic nature, and these parents are the main role models in education who may lead him off the path: "*Every baby is born with the nature of monotheism, and it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, and a Magi*" (Saduq, 2 :49).Therefore, the nature of monotheism, which is the basis of a person's guidance, is the same in different human beings.

## **Conclusion**

The Qur'anic interpretation of "*Shakeleh*" can be interpreted as a self-made moral character and a person's secondary character; A personality that is rooted in the individual's instincts and is a product of the environment's upbringing and self-cultivation or lack of self-cultivation by the individual. In the process of forming and creating "*Shakeleh*" of each person, the following factors can be considered to be involved: the genetic factors of inheritance and personality of the person, the instincts, the natural tendencies and the intellectual power of the social environment and popular culture, and the element of individual discretion and choice. Our understanding of the Qur'anic verses is that the determining factor in the formation of a person's shape is the training of the individual's free will, and among the reasons for this claim is the key element of "*Tazkieh*" and the strong emphasis of the Qur'an on it.

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