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# Relating Pleasure Principle & Reality Principle to Islamic Concept of Human Life

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**Abstract:** A lot of studies conducted till date on comparing the nature of Secular and Islamic Psychology. Since Islam is a religion of nature or we can say it calls man not only to maintain ecological balance but rather a universal balance. These days a lot of people believe that this World is the only Life in which Man has to satisfy all his desires and pleasure, in this very limited time and there is no other chance or other World where Man can satisfy his desires. Therefore, man is becoming more and more materialistic and exploitative these days to full fill his desires which is causing the destructing of natural resources and misbalancing of ecology, this is called Pleasure Principle. But Islam recommends Man to follow Reality Principle instead of Pleasure Principle, which will provide Man a chance to satisfy his desires at advance level. In this paper a fresh study has been conducted comparing Pleasure Principle vs Reality Principle and it is tried to explore the connotation and relevance to both thoughts. ?

**Keywords:** Pleasure, Islam, Psychology, Human life, Jannah.

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**Introduction:** The secular psychology implies that man is the most powerful agent of nature, and he is free to take actions whatever he wants, there is could be no divine intervention which can affect the choices of man while Islamic Psychology is based on the Oneness of Allah that Allah is the creator of Universe and He is the creator of Man also therefore He has full autonomy on man, and man is powerless against him. Man depends on Allah, but Allah does not depend on anyone. Man has very limited choices to make, and Allah is the real doer who gave man certain powers just to conduct his test in this World.

The motivation behind the study is that many people believe that if a man practices Islam his pleasures and desires could not be full filled, and he has to give up his desires and pleasures forever whereas Islam not only promises to full fill the desires of human being which he can imagine in this World but it can also full fill the unseen desires and pleasures of Man which man cannot not even imagine in this World. But his creator, Allah knows and prepared for him in Jannah. The desires of Man will surely be full filled on full scale but not in this World but in afterlife in Jannah, because this World has very limited resources for example the life of Man is very short, the physical and mental power of Man is very limited, the area of earth is very limited whereas in Jannah Man will be provided a huge

number of resources like, his life will be for unlimited period of time, his physical and mental power will be increased many folds etc.

**Reality Principle and Pleasure Principle:** Psychology describes the two goals of human life that are pleasure principle and reality principle. Pleasure principle relates to immediate or instant fulfilment of desire. It has nothing to do with long term success whereas reality principle is intending to achieve long term success and it relates to more goal- oriented intention of man.

Sigmund Freud the founder of psychoanalysis described pleasure principle as watchman over life. In his book 'Civilization and its Discontents' he stated that "what decides the purpose of life is simply the programme of the pleasure principle"(Freud.1985).<sup>1</sup>

The other contrast to pleasure principle is reality principle. Reality principle can be defined as the ability of a human mind to act according to the reality of external world, rather than according to his own immediate desire or pleasure which is called pleasure principle. Man can have two types of egos that are pleasure-ego or reality-ego (Freud. 1991).<sup>2</sup> It may be compared to the triumph of reason over passion, head over heart, rational over emotional mind (Goleman. 1996).<sup>3</sup>

Freud described that man in his early age follow only pleasure principle. "In infancy and early childhood, the id (identity of a man) rules behaviour by obeying only the pleasure principle. People at that age only seek immediate gratification, aiming to satisfy cravings such as hunger and thirst, and at later ages, the id seeks out sex" (Freud. 218).<sup>4</sup> He further argued that in advance age man give up the pleasure principle and start obeying reality principle because he became increasingly mature by the time. A mind which follows reality principle instead of pleasure principle is called mature or educated mind. But at the bottom of reality principle, it (always) lays the pleasure principle. In other words, the goal of reality principle is also the pleasure but of advance level or "planned pleasure". In his own words, "an ego thus educated has become 'reasonable'; it no longer lets itself be governed by the pleasure principle, but obeys the reality principle, which also, at bottom, seeks to obtain pleasure, but pleasure, which is assured through taking account of reality, even though instant pleasure be postponed or diminished" (Freud. 218).<sup>5</sup> It means that if a person obeys the reality principle his desires would be fulfilled on a advance level in comparison to that person who is only focused on pleasure principle. Because advance pleasure always comes after long term planning and labour. It cannot be achieved instantly. While instant pleasure is always easy and immediate but short-lived. In infancy and early childhood, man predominantly obeys the pleasure principle. Maturity is the slow process of learning to endure the pain of deferred gratification as and when reality requires it – a process Freud saw as fostered by education and educators (Freud. 1991).<sup>6</sup> Thus, a mature mind gives up instant gratification in favour of long-term satisfaction.

**Why Allah created Human Beings:** Islamic concept of life suggests that this world is for examination of Human Beings. Before man there were all types of animals living on this planet. So why Allah felt the necessity to create man or what was the benefit to Allah to create man. Its answer is that all living beings other than man have no such amount of intellect that they could understand their creator (Allah) and be thankful to Him. Because to understand creator, a living being required to have certain amount of intellect, but all living beings had no required amount of intellect. Therefore, they were unable to understand and thank their creator which is called *Ibadah*. Just like a vet treats animals and help them but animals do not understand that he is helping them, because they have no intellect to understand their helper. Sometimes they even hurt the vet that is why if a vet is doing surgery of a lion he should have tie the lion first and be cautious because whenever lion have a chance, he could attack the vet but if a doctor doing surgery of a human being he has no need to tie him up because man understands that he is my helper and he will be thankful to the doctor after surgery. Similarly, animals are unable to understand the favours of their creator because to understand creator and his favours a living being should have certain amount of intellect which animals don't have. That is why there was a need to create an intelligent being that has certain amount of increased intellect, so that he can understand the favours of his creator. That is why Allah created man.

**Why is there Examination:** When Allah created man and gave him largest amount of intellect, so another issue arises with this. Because when amount of intellect increases in a living being, its potential is also increases or ability to do work also increases. Increase in potential resulted in the increase of three types of characteristics in a creature.

- The power to do good deeds
- The power to do bad deeds
- Creativity

The nature of good deeds is positive, the nature of bad deeds is negative, and the nature of creativity is neutral. In other word among human beings due to high level of intellect there are three types of people, some people use the positive potential of their intellect that is in good deeds like Messengers, Saints, pious people, charity workers etc. Some people use negative potential of their intellect that is in bad deeds such as criminals, thief's, robbers, murderers etc. Some use neutral capacity of their intellect which is creativity like scientists, inventors, discoverers, technologists, doctors, engineers, politicians, businesspersons etc.

**Why is Examination:** As discussed above there are three types of people, some use their intellect for good some use their intellect for bad and some use their intellect in creativity. So, there was a need to separate good people from bad people. Because Allah don't want to do injustice to anyone. And to give same place or reward to good and bad people would be injustice it means that a man may be a good or bad have same amount of reward so doing good deeds is useless or doing bad deeds is not harmful because the reward of both good and bad deeds is same.

**Method of Examination:** Now there was a new question that what should be the method of examination. Because Allah knew that man is a very clever creature especially those who are bad, they will not do bad deeds in front of Me (Allah) because they know that they will be punished. But if they don't see Me and there would be no fear of reward or punishment, man will expose his actual nature, if he is bad, he will do bad deeds freely only in loneliness or privacy. So, to provide him privacy man should be placed in a World where he cannot see Allah and he has no fear of being caught by Allah.

That is why to get reward each and every action immediately is not possible in this world but a person who follow pleasure principle want immediate reward, or he wants to satisfy his pleasure immediately. But actually, he has to wait the reward until his death. Therefore, if a person follows pleasure principle (want to satisfy his pleasure immediately) turned towards crimes and unlawful pleasure because he has no patience to wait until his death. In this way he identified by Allah as a bad person and will bring to Justice in afterlife. But if a person who follows reality principle, he has no problem with Islam because he can wait until his death so he does good deeds and abstain from wrong doings, because he wants peace and success for a greater life which is afterlife, and he can sacrifice his immediate pleasure for afterlife. Hence, a bad man is that who follow pleasure principle and a good man is that who follow reality principle.

**Psychology of Human Beings:** Allah is the creator of Human beings, and he knows the nature of every human that who is good and who is bad. But he will not punish bad people and reward good people immediately before the completion of Exam because if he does so, bad people could complaint what is our fault why you are punishing us. Therefore, to separate good and bad human beings it was necessary that they should have a chance to act according to their free will, and according to their actions their fate will be decided in afterlife.

**Arrangements for Examination:** So, for examination it was necessary that human being should be placed in a world where they cannot see Allah so that they will not hesitate to do wrong doings if they want. Moreover, it is mentioned in Quran that when Allah created the souls of all human beings, he asked a question from all human beings.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا بَلَى ۖ شَهِدْنَا ۚ أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ (7:172)

“And when your Lord brought forth from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them bear witness against their own souls: Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes! we bear witness. Lest you should say on the day of resurrection: Surely, we were heedless of this”<sup>7</sup>.

Following are some of arrangements which Allah made for our examination.

- In Alam-e-Arwah (world of souls) human beings were observing Allah and his powers. Since man is a cunning creature, he does not do bad deeds in front of Allah because he know its repercussions therefore it was necessary to place man in a place where he

could not see Allah therefore Allah send all human beings on this planet- earth and here man could not see Allah and he could act according to his free will. That is why in this world no human being can see Allah because for examination it is necessary; it means that no human being can make the images and statues of Allah because no one saw him.

- Also, Allah erased the memory of human beings of previous events when he was seeing Allah and his powers in *Alam-e-Arwah* as discussed in above ayah 7:172.
- In this world Allah do not give reward to any person because it is a place of examination. If Allah give immediate reward or punishment to human beings in this world than all other people became alert and bad people become good after seeing the results of other people. And the purpose of examination got failed because Allah want to know the true nature of every human being, that what he will do by his own free will without any compulsion.
- It is also necessary for justice in examination to give same syllabus to all examinees. Since all human beings have same amount of intellect that is why they have same syllabus. The syllabus of all human beings is that he should believe in oneness of Allah, obey His messenger of respective time, do good deed, and abstain from bad deeds.
- Another arrangement is that man cannot see Jannah, Jahannam, after life, angels etc because if he would be able to see these things. Because angels always involve in Ibadah and Zikr of Allah. Therefore, he can get information about examination, and he will not expose his true nature.

Now every human being is going through examination in this world. But bad people believe that no one is observing them that is why they start doing bad deeds and identified by Allah. The status of a man in afterlife will be decided according to his deeds in this world if he do good deeds he will be rewarded with Jannah and if he does bad deeds he will be punished in Hell.

**Pleasure is the Goal of Religion:** It is a matter of great concern that if a man obeys Islam what befits, he will get. Because Islam do not allow excess amount of luxurious life and entertainments. It means that if a man is obeying Islam, he has to compromise his larger enjoyments and give up pleasures and entertainment. But it would be a great injustice that a man who is not obeying the commandments of Allah he has more pleasure and enjoyments and entertainments whereas a man who is obeying the commandments of Allah has no room for pleasure and entertainment and he must live more disciplined and boring life. It means that a man who is not obeying the commandments of Allah have more benefits than the man who is obeying His commandments. But it is a sheer misunderstanding. Because obeying the commandments of Allah is a preparation for attaining advance level of pleasures and enjoyments in Jannah which a man cannot imagine in this World. It can be understood by an example that a child does not want to go to school in morning because he does not want to give up the pleasure of sleep and it is very hard for him to compromise the enjoyment of his sleep, but his parents force him to get up and go to school. Child feel very disgusting that his parents are disturbing him in his enjoyments and forcing him to go to school, he became angry with parents and started weeping. But it cannot say that parents are his enemy, and they are abstaining him form enjoyment but in fact parents are preparing him for greater enjoyments and



entertainments of future by waking him up from sleep. He must sacrifice his immediate enjoyment and pleasure of sleep to attain advance level of enjoyments which he can achieve only by attaining good education and for attaining education it is necessary for him to go to school. Child feel disgusting because he does not know the benefits of education, but he only knows the immediate pleasure of sleeping which could be called as pleasure principle while his parents are more experienced, and they honestly want greater level of enjoyments and pleasures for him which can be called as reality principle. Similarly, Allah is the creator of man, and He loves him very much. Therefore he want to give man a greater level of enjoyment and entertainment in Jannah which can be called as reality principle but since man could not see Jannah in this world therefore he only aims to get the immediate pleasures and entertainments of this life and do not care about his future but Allah has more experience and He is also the creator of Jannah so he demands man to obey His commandments so that he would be rightful to enjoy the unprecedented pleasures and entertainment of Jannah which will be more superior and durable than the enjoyments of this life. This difference is due to the difference between the level of knowledge of Man and Allah.

**If This Life is for Enjoyment:** If we assume that this life is just to satisfy enjoyments and pleasure than many questions arise some of them are these. If life is for enjoyment and entertainment, then how a handicapped person can enjoy his life. How a deaf will listen to the music, how a lame will dance, how blind will see the movies and beautiful things, how a poor person will enjoy recreational activities and luxurious life style which require a large amount of wealth, how a person who have motor neuron disease like Stefan Hawking will enjoy sex etc. It means that Allah has done injustice and partiality among Human beings some of them are able to enjoy while others are not.

**Limits of Pleasure in this World:** Another issue is that those people who are able to enjoy all entertainments and luxurious life have limited number of resources and assets. For example, if a man wants sexual pleasure, he has very limited amount of adult age. A child reaches adult age at the age of 15 and became sexually weak at the age of 60-65. It means that for only 45 years he can enjoy sexual pleasures. Similarly other means of enjoyment is to travel on high speed. But since earth has an atmospheric covering, an object can travel only up to the speed of MAC 20, beyond this speed object will catch fire due to air friction. One MAC is equal to the speed of sound that is 1234 km/h so 20 MAC is  $20 \times 1234 = 24,680$ . After the speed of 24,680 km/h the vehicle will catch fire, it means that 24,680 km/h is our limit of speed on this earth. But since in outer space there is no air therefore we can travel faster than this limit. But in space also we cannot go too far because maximum speed we could achieve in space is speed of light which travels approximately 299,792 km/sec but this speed is insufficient to travel beyond our galaxy. If an object travelling along the diameter of our galaxy which is 105,700 light years, it means that the object will take 105,700 years to complete the diameter of the Milky Way. But our life is approximately 60-70 years we cannot go out from our milky way if we will succeed in making a vehicle which have the speed of light. So, our space dream also cannot be fulfilled in this life. Suppose if we become successful in making a vehicle which have the speed of light, we can

only make a trip maximum 50 years out of which 25 years for one side trip. In twenty-five years, that vehicle can only reach some of these stars like:

#### Stars and their Distances form Earth:

Name of the Star	Distance in light years
2MASS 1507-1627	23.90
WISE J004945.61+215120.0	24.1
GJ 3991	24.27
GJ 4248	24.28
HD 4628	24.31
Beta Hydri	24.32
G 192-13	24.43
VX Arietis	24.48
107 Piscium	24.57
Mu Cassiopeiae	24.63
Gliese 514	24.96
GJ 1151	24.97

Another means of pleasure is Political power or become a king or dictator. But now a days due to popularity of democratic forms of government the chance of this pleasure is also diminished many folds. Now a day's politicians or head of the states are unable to enjoy that extent of political power as in Monarchy. If a man assumes king ship how long he can maintain this power, since maximum rule time record goes to Ramses II of Egypt who ruled for 66 years<sup>8</sup>.

#### Prospects of Pleasure in Jannah:

**Speed:** If we analyse the conditions of this earth and conditions of outer space, we will find that earth is a very delicate and protected place which is designed by Allah for providing appropriate conditions to our living otherwise the living creatures of earth cannot survive a few minutes without proper conditions. It is like a chick in the egg, the conditions inside the egg are appropriate for the chick but if we want to place that chick outside the egg (before hatching time) it cannot survive. Similarly, Allah protected this earth by atmospheric covering nothing can enter in it from outer space or nothing can go beyond the atmosphere unless its speed is more than 40,270 km/h this is called escape velocity. But if an object enters in the atmosphere more than the speed of 24,680 km/h it catches fire due to friction of air as discussed above. So, when anything enters our atmosphere, its temperature rises up to 1650 °C due to Air friction (it is to be noted that the melting point of iron is 1,538 °C) therefore nothing from outer space can enter out atmosphere to harm us if it enters it will burn and cause less harm. That is why space shuttles are covered with ablative covering or heat proof tiles which is called ablative heat shield.



**Density:** Other thing is density. The more dense material, the stronger it is, and more stronger objects can be produced from it. All dense objects like diamond, metals are nothing in comparison to the materials which we found in outer space. For example, the density of earth 5515 kg per cubic meter whereas the density of neutron star is  $10^{17}$  kg/m<sup>3</sup> (10,000,000,000,000,000 Kilograms per cubic meter).

Caroline Adams an astronomer states in her article, if a tablespoon of the Sun, would weigh about 5 pounds (2 kilograms) — the weight of an old laptop. A tablespoon of neutron star weighs more than 1 billion tons (900 billion kg) — the weight of Mount Everest. So, while you could lift a spoonful of Sun, you can't lift a spoonful of neutron star (Adams. 2019).<sup>9</sup>

If there is no dense material, no advancement is possible for example in Stone Age there was no iron and without iron no machines can be made. Or in other words if today iron is vanished from earth, we will again be returned to stone age where there will be no technological advancement at all. All hi-tech objects like machines, cars, aeroplanes, computers etc. are made up of dense materials like metals. It means that if we acquire more dense materials, we can produce more hi-tech and compact objects, but it is nearly impossible for us to bring those dense materials on Earth because they are far away.

**Non-Solid Creatures:** Another thing is that we found very limited amount of living beings on this earth. We can see only those living beings which are made up of solid materials, but we could not observe any living creature made up of liquid, gas, jelly, rays, waves, light etc. But it is possible for Allah to produce living beings made up of these materials also. Even some creatures of non-solid materials are mentioned in Quran, like Jinns which are made up of fire and angels which are made up of light. Since visiting and touring is an important means of entertainment, we cannot visit place beyond 25 light years from earth as discussed above, but it is possible for Allah that he can give us long life in Jannah and give us body of non-solid material. If Allah give us body of light like angels, we can travel at high speed easily because light is made up of photons which are massless particles. That is why light experience no air friction during high-speed travel.

**Elements of Earth:** If we analyse number of elements on earth, till today 118 have been found out of which 94 occur naturally while 24 were produced artificially- these elements are called synthetic elements. These 94 elements are found on earth or on moon or other heavenly bodies because till today we reached only on these heavenly bodies more elements could be found on other planets or galaxies. All technological advancements are based on these elements more elements will be discovered more technologically advance equipment's could be possible to produce in future. Now a days new synthetic elements are produced increasingly but a question arises, if man can produce new elements that why Allah cannot produce new elements. Is Man being more capable than Allah? So, we can expect that we will see more elements in Jannah, and we will have more advance machines in Jannah.

**Two concepts of Reality Principle:** As discussed, that a mature person who obeys reality principle has ability to give up instant gratification in favour of long-term satisfaction. But a question arises that what is the span of long-term. In worldly matters long term encompasses this life but according to Islam it extended to life after death. Or in other words man should give up pleasures of this life to achieve advance gratification and pleasure in afterlife that is infinite. This is the concept of Jannah. According to Islam this world is for the test of Human Being whether he does good deeds or bad by his own free will. And after death he will get reward according to his deeds. Whereas conventional concept of Reality principle is that a man should give pleasures and obey reality principle so that he can achieve great goals in his career or in later life such as he become a successful entrepreneur, politician, sportsman, billionaire etc. But this concept has nothing to do with after life while Islam calls man to prepare for after life which is real and infinite times longer than this worldly life and recommends man to give up pleasures of this World to achieve advance level of pleasures of afterlife that is Jannah because advance level of pleasures is not possible in this life due to limited resources and time, as discussed above. Since Allah observing us secretly, He observes the behaviour and conduct of a human being to other creatures. And second thing which he observes more carefully that, either he loves Me (Allah) or not. This is what discussed in Quran repeatedly *الذين آمنوا و عملوا الصالحات* those who believe in Allah and do good deeds. To become successful, a man should love Allah and believe in oneness of Allah this is called *Iman* and to have good behaviour with other living beings which is called *Amal-e-Saaliha* (good deeds or character). These are the two basic requirements for human beings to become successful in this life and hereafter.

**Conclusion:** Through above discussion we can conclude that a man should follow Reality Principle instead of Pleasure Principle because it is Reality Principle which can lead a man to eternal success and provide him full pleasure and satisfaction whereas if he adopts Pleasure Principle, he can achieve pleasure easily but that pleasure will be for a very short period of time and resulted in misery and destruction which will be for a long period or may be forever. It is a great misconception that Islam abstain a man form full filling his desires and pleasure but in real Islam recommends man a path which will lead him to full advance level of satisfaction and pleasures in afterlife.

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