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The Interpretation of Human Features in the Didactic Works of Mahmud Zamakhshari

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Abstract

This scientific work provides information about the moral views in the didactic works of Mahmud Zamakhshari, a prominent scholar of his period, who created about 70 unique works in the fields of linguistics, religious studies, lexicology, and ethics. The works on the science of ethics, which are an inseparable part of scholar's scientific heritage, are recognized even today as a notable school of his field. The works such as "Nawabigu-l-kalim" ("Delicate phrases") and "Atwaqu-z-zahab" ("Golden sheaves") are immortal and rare examples in this field. In these two works, the scholar expressed his thoughts and statements based on the views of the thinkers of his period and before his period. The views of Mahmud Zamakhshari on the spiritual and educational importance of human qualities reflected in these works have not lost their relevance even today.

Keywords: *Human Features, Didactic Works, Moral Views, "Nawabigu-L-Kalim" ("Delicate Phrases"), Linguistics, Religious Studies, Lexicology, Ethics, "Atwaqu-Z-Zahab" ("Golden Sheaves"), Spiritual Importance, Educational Importance*

Introduction

The beautiful qualities have consistently garnered admiration and reverence throughout history. For this reason, numerous scholars have authored classic works on the cultivatable positive qualities of individuals. Included among them are the creations of Kaikovus, Farobi, Saadi, and Avloni. The enduring influence of our historical progenitor Mahmud Zamakhshari, a renowned scholar from Khorezm, is evident in his didactic compositions, including "Atwaqu-z-zahab" ("Golden sheaves") and "Nawabigu-l-kalim" ("Delicate phrases"), which expound upon human qualities. These works remain spiritually and academically significant.

Prioritized among human qualities is the attribute of forgiveness. Because certain individuals retain trivial details in their memory for years, causing concern for themselves and others. This factor assumes particular significance within academic establishments. Maintaining and not disregarding disappointments in relationships that occur during the educational process is, after all, a significant impediment to the development of effective educational activities. Indeed, this issue did not emerge solely

yesterday. Hence, our scholars have provided several practical recommendations pertaining to this matter. Unquestionably, the viewpoints expressed by Mahmoud Zamakhshari hold significant relevance among them. According to Zamakhshari, *"The strongest of people's memory is the most forgetful among them, and the softest of hearts is the one who is strong and compassionate"* [1:49]. In the end, sincerity is a quality that distinguishes intelligent individuals. For this reason, Zamakhshari asserts, *"The smartest person is the one who acts on the promptings of his or her thoughts"* [2:105].

It is crucial, among human qualities, to distinguish between primary and secondary, significant and insignificant tasks, and to approach them judiciously, intelligently, and with discretion in accordance with a particular logical framework. This significance is universal, encompassing not only school students but also students pursuing higher education and professional employees. The successful execution of the project as intended ultimately hinges on this particular factor. For this reason, instilling these qualities in the younger generation is crucial. Mahmud Zamakhshari provided additional enlightening insights on this matter. As an illustration, the scientist states, *"Anyone acting in accordance with sharia and common sense will inevitably combine and contrast their priorities"* [1:65]. *"A wise, considerate, and patient individual is always contributing to their community, both in this world and the next."* [2:91].

A consequence of the design of human existence is that triumph and defeat invariably cohabitant. Our people say "There is light and there is shadow" figuratively. Exhibiting patience and perseverance in the midst of challenges constitutes an additional attribute attributed to virtuous individuals. Zamakhshari once said, *"When a brave man suffers defeat, he does not fall in status, and neither does everyone look down on him because of his difficulties."* [1:55].

Without a doubt, honesty is a valuable attribute to possess in one's personal portfolio. Because many disappointments stem from an unwillingness to speak the truth; therefore, falsehoods. Zamakhshari draws a parallel between this circumstance and a natural occurrence: *"The thundering rain that comes when a person is completely honest is a great illustration of this"* [1:55]. People must be instructed from a young age to speak the truth and transcend the meaning of any given word. By doing so, we shall be able to further solidify the foundation of an ideal generation. As a result, Zamakhshari makes a number of appeals to individuals to uphold their word and be truthful, regarding the positive attributes that define them. He commented, *"A person who is honest and pure is always at peace, while someone who betrays and damages others is a herald of doom"* [1:52].

In spite of this, it is important to note that not all individuals possess the same indicators of perfection by nature. There are typically individuals in a community who are more intelligent than others. Their objective is to ensure that those in their vicinity derive maximum benefit from their wisdom. Those in their vicinity are tasked with assimilating further teachings from the wise individual, acquiring his virtuous attributes, and incorporating them into their own endeavors. Additionally, Zamakhshari's views on this subject are instructive. The scientist stated, *"When a truly great and noble person is absent, others miss him and desire for his company; when he returns, they are startled awake by his presence and fully engaged in the conversation"* [1:60]. *"One of the most admirable characteristics of a valiant and virtuous individual is the ability to conceal his brother's flaws and handle all of his affairs as if they were his own"*. [1:73] is additional evidence in support of the aforementioned view. One proverb from the set of guidelines for attaining perfection states, "If you approach the good, you will get what you seek." This rule is defined by Zamakhshari as follows [1:73]: *"If you follow in the footsteps of the blessed and pious, you too will be blessed with success and good fortune"*.

Our country employs a proverb that was discovered by our predecessors and is still recalled by our shrewd citizens today: "Appear as you are, or be as you appear". The definition of this rule in the Zamakhshari language is as follows: *"If a person's interior is well-organized and healthy, this will reflect positively on his outward look"*. [1:52]. *"Kindness is a quality that merits Allah's approval"*, said

the scientist. *“Generosity is an inherent quality that becomes more commendable with each passing discussion”* [2:39] reaffirms the aforementioned arguments.

Indeed, individuals who possess an identical exterior and interior exude magnificence and dignity. Because they are perceived by individuals in their true form. They are exalted as exemplars of transcendental aesthetics. Zamakhshari provides a distinctive definition of this attribute of perfection: *“Like a message from the night of the full moon, the beauty of your body and face brings happiness to the hearts of the people”*. [1:53].

Historical records attest to the fact that our progenitors embarked on journeys to various nations in pursuit of knowledge. It is sufficient to illustrate this with the lives of Imam Bukhari and Mahmud Zamakhshari. They studied not only scientific principles but also the way of life, mentality, characteristics of worldviews, and life laws of people from other nations on purpose during these journeys. They accepted travel for this reason: to gain knowledge and a better understanding of the world. According to Mahmoud Zamakhshari, *“It’s preferable to explore the world, high and low, rather than sit hungry behind fortified walls at home”* [1:61]. In further elaboration on the notion of travel as a determinant of human perfection, Zamakhshari posits the subsequent viewpoint: *“No one can know (true) pleasure unless they have been battered by life’s seas and soaked in the water of its many challenges”*. [1:72].

Without a doubt, the capacity to empathize with others’ suffering is a quality that transcends mere perfection. Because bad days and happy days coexist in an individual’s mind. Occasionally, the necessity for assistance and the act of sharing happiness may be diminished. For this reason, a decent person ought to empathize with his loved ones when they are relieved of their concerns, endure the sorrow and suffering that they endure, and share in their suffering. This characteristic is described by Zamakhshari as follows: *“In times of loss and yearning, we recognize our closest and most esteemed friends and family”* [1:53].

The veneration of the notion of Mother Earth is widely recognized within our country. Man is, after all, a progeny of the planet. The earth provides him with sustenance and nourishes his heart, ensuring a prosperous existence. This particular aspect was not overlooked by Zamakhshari. With respect to this matter, the scholar asserts that *“Farming is both advantageous and beneficial, and it provides numerous blessings to its inhabitants”* [1:64].

In Zamakhshari’s description of human qualities, correctness and unwavering commitment to the truth are regarded as crucial attributes. The scientist asserts that *“A decent person’s walk is more (more incredible) than a lion’s walk”* [1:52], underscoring the significance that an individual should attribute to the right path they choose. Furthermore, he underscores the notion that *“Most individuals are completely wrong; they insist on things that do not exist, they spread malicious rumors about others, and they always speak and act in accordance with their true nature”* [1:53]. Furthermore, Zamakhshari stated concerning justice and the truth, *“The truth is like the sun in that it can’t be hidden or covered up”* [1:60], *“A well that never runs dry of justice is more reflective than a crystal goblet, and a fish that always hits the bullseye is more perceptive than an honed tongue”* [2:95] demonstrates the rationality of his ideas. *“Be with justice and turn away from oppression”* [2:83] is the reason why Zamakhshari urges individuals to strive for perfection.

The following aphorism describes Zamakhshari’s perspective on human qualities: *“Justice begins with speaking and hearing the truth”*. This attribute serves as a significant gauge of human spirituality and represents perfection.

Uzbek folk proverbs, including “The foundation of patience is yellow gold” and “If you are patient, halwa emerges from a cave”, have developed throughout the centuries to symbolize the timeless

significance of patience and contentment, not only in the character of an individual but for all of humanity as a whole. For this reason, Mahmud Zamakhshari asserts in his didactic treatise “Atwaqu–z–zahab” (“Golden sheaves”) that “*Contentment is the reason for climbing to the top*” [6:104].

Irrespective of an individual’s material circumstances, Mahmud Zamakhshari asserted, “*Even though the poor man’s face is covered in grime and his clothing are torn, his contentment transforms him into a prince before your eyes. And the rich man’s insatiable avarice will make him seem destitute and impoverished even if he’s dressed modestly in front of you*” [6:104]. Drawing from these reflections, Zamakhshari first advocates for the importance of valuing labor and the diligent individual, and then urges others to exercise patience, citing the fact that the “golden clothes” of the wealthy appear “weary” as a result of impure pursuits of wealth.

Zamakhshari argues in his didactic works that vices, which “control” the activity of the human psyche and direct it toward a variety of behaviors, are exclusive to those who lack patience. His profoundly instructive remark regarding those who lead a lighthearted existence “*One who values entertainment will never be like a person who endures hardships*” [6:91] is one of these vices.

While commenting on the virtue of perseverance, Mahmud Zamakhshari emphasizes its substance, essence, and quality. Ultimately, patience and contentment do not guarantee a prosperous existence, and perfection does not solely result from the possession of this quality. As Mahmud Zamakhshari astutely observes, “*A wise, considerate, and patient individual is always contributing to their community, both in this world and the next*” [6:91].

An exceptionally patient individual is capable of reaching a verdict and executing a course of action that not only serves his own interests, initially those of his family, but also those of society as a whole. This is achieved through meticulous observation of the events and circumstances in the vicinity, judicious evaluation of the processes, and logical deduction.

Historiography records that Mahmud Zamakhshari, one of three commentators who flawlessly interpreted the Qur’anic tafsir, bequeathed an extensive scientific and spiritual legacy in his capacity as a distinguished commentator. His perspectives align with the principles espoused in Islamic teachings for this reason. In fact, “*The Holy Qur’an exhibits numerous repetitions of the call to patience*”. Patience is an essential quality for achieving obedience to God, resisting sin, surmounting challenges along the way, enduring frailty, and exercising self-control over one’s desires [3:286]. Teachings of Islam endure because humanity and society remain significant in all eras, including the present day, as a value whose educational value does not diminish.

Analogous to the exhortations found in the Holy Qur’an, the Hadith Sharifs contain magnanimous reflections on patience and contentment, including the proverb, “*Patience is a superior and more extensive gift bestowed upon none*”.

“*Allah bestows his servants with the virtue of patience as the greatest and most broad gift. One who is patient can go without food and still keep his dignity intact and a positive outlook on life. Even if his master gives him the entire globe to rule over, a servant without the virtue of patience will learn to value himself less and more as he accumulates wealth. A Muslim will have achieved the highest salvation possible if he or she is patient and content with the necessary sustenance provided by Allah. True riches lie not in material possessions but in a full heart*” [3:286]. One of the most critical components of a comprehensive personality education is this attribute. It is, after all, exceedingly challenging for an impatient individual to accomplish anything in life. Patience is therefore an absolute necessity in the realm of human existence.

The patience and contentment are qualities that are intrinsic to every human being and have been revered throughout history. Our historical predecessors, such as the great scientist Mahmud Zamakhshari, urged individuals to be patient and content in their endeavors, as the spirituality of patience and contentment is a distinctive attribute that distinguishes and endows high-ranking individuals with beauty. Consequently, by virtue of his astute observations and life experiences, he bequeathed a scientific and spiritual legacy of teachings that continue to possess didactic merit in the present day. Incorporating them logically into novel interpretations and approaches grounded in contemporary educational demands and societal needs fortifies the historical and national foundation of an adult generation's education.

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