

HUMAN BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN IN THE HOLY
QUR'ĀN: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS MULTIPLE
DIMENSIONS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The Qur'ān describes all aspects related to human beings, both concisely and extensively. The Qur'ān exposes the psychological aspects of human behaviour through many verses. The way a human being behaves enables one to identify his or her personality and identity. The ultimate abode of all humanity in the hereafter will be determined by their behavioural character in this life. That is why we should promote noble behaviour and prevent evil manners to build a noble and virtuous society. The prime objective of this research is to explore and analyse the general behavioural aspects of human beings and behavioural diversity of different faiths and its impacts on behaviour as portrayed in the Qur'ān. Descriptive, analytical, interpretive and comparative methods have been applied throughout this study. The descriptive method is employed in Chapter Two to explore the Qur'ānic portrayal of the common behavioural aspects of human beings. Interpretive and analytical methods are used for Chapter Three, Four and Five where the behavioural patterns of believers, disbelievers and hypocrites are presented and analysed accordingly. Chapter Six or the final chapter is devoted to comparative analysis among the behavioural attitudes of the different classes of people and the impacts of creed on shaping behavioural patterns. This research concludes that the Qur'ān recognises that the psychological aspects of human behaviour are of two types: the instinctive or *fiṭrah* based that Allah (SWT) instilled in them, and the acquired, which humans acquire from surroundings and backgrounds, largely impacting physical and metaphysical dimensions of life. This study also reveals that faith is the prime motivating factor for behaviour. It influences human behaviour regardless of their religio-ideological backgrounds. The believers properly believe in the articles of faith. Disbelievers are devoid of faith. Hypocrites are in between belief and disbelief. Ideological diversity divides them into three different behavioural patterns as per the research findings. As a result, believers are proactive, disbelievers are reactive, and hypocrites are disguised in identity crisis. Conclusively, this research suggests that if human civilization wants to achieve peace and wishes to be psychologically balanced, it needs to behave according to the *fiṭrah* or innate nature upon which human beings were created; this will help relieve humanity from tension, social chaos and disturbance; and to achieve peace and happiness in this world and in the hereafter.

ملخص البحث

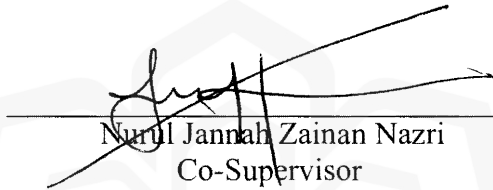
يصف القرآن جميع الجوانب المتعلقة بالإنسان إما بإيجاز أو بإسهاب. ويعرض القرآن الجوانب النفسية لسلوك الإنسان في آيات كثيرة. إن السلوك هو ما يشكل المواقف والتصورات. والمسلك الذي يختاره الإنسان في حياته يعرفه على شخصيته وهويته. ويحدد المصير المحتوم في دار القرار الأبدى من خلال سلوكياتهم ومعاملاتهم في هذه الحياة. ولأجل ذلك، يلزم علينا أن نشجع السلوك النبيل وأن نرفض الشر للحصول على المجتمع المثالي النبيل. إن الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو استكشاف وتحليل الجوانب السلوكية العامة للبشر والتنوع السلوكي للاعتقادات المختلفة إلى جانب تأثير الإيمان على السلوك مثل ما ذكر في القرآن. قد استخدم البحث المناهج الوصفية والتحليلية والتفسيرية والمقارنة خلال الدراسة بأكملها. وتم استخدام المنهج الوصفي في الفصل الثاني حيث حدد الباحث كيف يصور القرآن الجوانب السلوكية الشائعة للإنسان في زوايا مختلفة في عدة مواضع. بينما تم استخدام المنهج التفسيري والتحليلي في الفصل الثالث والرابع والخامس حيث تم تحليل الأنماط السلوكية للمؤمنين والكفار والمنافقين وفقاً لذلك. وأخيراً خصص الفصل السادس للتحليل المقارن بين الصفات السلوكية للمؤمنين والكفار والمنافقين إلى جانب تأثير الإيمان في تشكيل النمط السلوكي. قد توصل البحث إلى نتائج هامة، ومنها: أن القرآن يلاحظ الجوانب النفسية للسلوك الإنساني على أنه نوعان: الغريزة الفطرية التي غرسها الله فيهم، والمكتسبة التي يتكيف بها الإنسان من خلال البيئة المحيطة، فيما يتعلق بالبعد المادي والميتافيزيقي للإنسان. واكتشفت الدراسة أيضاً أن الإيمان هو الدافع الرئيسي للسلوك. وهو يؤثر في سلوك الإنسان بغض النظر عن الخلفيات العقائدية المتنوعة. فالمؤمنون لهم إيمان سليم، وأما الكفار فلا إيمان لهم. أما المنافقون فمتحيزون بين الإيمان وعدمه. يقسمهم التنوع الأيديولوجي إلى ثلاثة أنماط سلوكية مختلفة حسب نتائج البحث. ونتيجة لذلك، فالمؤمنون هم أصحاب روح المبادرة، والكفار متفاعلون بسرعة، وأما المنافقون فهم متحيزون في أزمات الهوية. وفي الختام، يشير هذا البحث بشكل قاطع إلى أنه إذا أرادت الحضارة الإنسانية تحقيق السلام وترغب في أن تكون متوازنة نفسياً، فعليها أن تتصرف وفقاً لطبيعتها الفطرية التي خلقت على أساسها. لتخليص البشرية من الضغط والفوضى الاجتماعية، ولتهديهم إلى سبل السلام والسعادة في الدنيا والآخرة.

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or currently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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Signature


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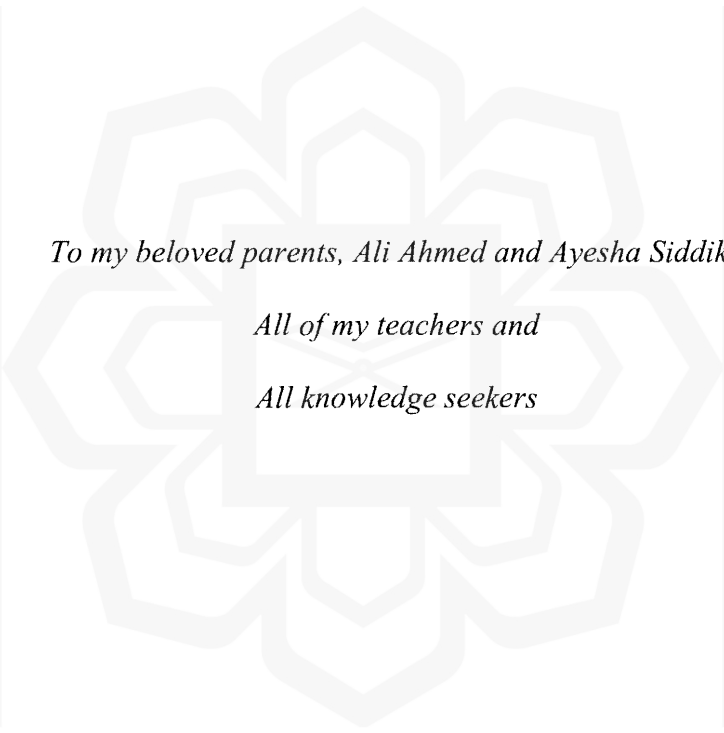
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To my beloved parents, Ali Ahmed and Ayesha Siddika

All of my teachers and

All knowledge seekers

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

b = ب	z = ز	f = ف
t = ت	s = س	q = ق
th = ث	sh = ش	k = ك
j = ج	ṣ = ص	l = ل
ḥ = ح	ḍ = ض	m = م
kh = خ	ṭ = ط	n = ن
d = د	ẓ = ظ	w = و
dh = ذ	‘ = ع	h = هـ
r = ر	gh = غ	y = ي

Short : a = ' I = ' u = '
 Long : ā = ا ī = ي ū = و
 Diphthong : ay = اي aw = او

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Holy Qur'ān, as the ultimate Book of Guidance, covers all aspects of human life. In various places, the Qur'ān describes the psychological aspects of human behaviour and attitude through its many verses. Modern psychology is broadly concerned with the study of behaviour. Thinking is a form of behaviour, so is remembering, or writing, or any other form of activity performed by man, be it simple or complex, concerned with worship or common dealings¹.

The divine message in the Qur'ān primarily focuses on remoulding human behaviour, their education and constant reform to confirm the worship of the Creator, for which all humans are created. The study of this behaviour by observation, experimentation, analysis, and induction is the concern of various branches of modern psychology.² The Holy Qur'ān is also concerned, from the very beginning till the end, with the behaviour of humans in this world, and with their destiny in the hereafter.

Human beings are the central subject matter of the Qur'ān. As Allah (SWT) says in Qur'ān, *"O people, We have sent down to you a book, which deals with matters concerning yourself, what do you not understand this?"*³ The Holy Qur'ān discusses human characteristics in numerous verses. Mainly, human characteristics are divided into two parts, i.e., physical and behavioural. Human physical development from the embryonic stage to the formation of a complete human being in the mother's womb are comprehensively discussed. Likewise, the psychological aspects of human behaviour in

¹ M. Achoui, "Human Nature from a Comparative Psychological Perspective", *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, vol. 1, no. 4 (1998): 75.

² Ibid, p.76.

³ *Sūrah Al- 'Anbiyā'*, 21:10

various circumstances are also depicted in several Qur'ānic verses. The Qur'ān describes all aspects related to human beings either precisely or extensively. It presents both, the physical as well as behavioural characteristics.

The Holy Qur'ān portrays human behaviour and reactions that include their positive and negative attitudes, characteristics, tendencies, etc. To exhibit the Qur'ānic way of expressing the human behavioural characteristics, the researcher is going to explore as well as analyse the common behavioural aspects of human beings and behavioural diversity of different faiths or ideologies.

Presenting the various categories, some Qur'ānic verses are quoted here, one for each category. One of the common human behavioural attitudes is that human beings are hasty and do not have sufficient patience. This fact is expressed in the following verse. *“And man supplicates for evil as he supplicates for good, and man is ever hasty”*.⁴

The major behavioural attributes of the *Mu'minūn* [true believers] is that they keep the love of Allah (SWT) as supreme priority over everything in this world. As the Qur'ān says *“But those of Faith are overflowing in their love for Allah (SWT)”*.⁵

A key tendency of the disbeliever's behavioural attitudes is that they never wish good for the believers. The Qur'ān proclaims, *“It is never the wish of those without Faith among the People of the Book, nor of the Pagans, that anything good should come down to you from your Lord. But Allah (SWT) will choose for His special Mercy whom He will - for Allah (SWT) is Lord of grace abounding”*.⁶

Lastly, among the common behavioural attitudes of the hypocrites is that they are always in a state of dilemma, do not know what to do, and where to proceed. The Qur'ān demonstrates: *“Wavering between them, [belonging] neither to the believers nor to the*

⁴ *Sūrah Al- 'Isrā'*, 17:11.

⁵ *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*, 2: 165.

⁶ *Sūrah Al-Baqarah*, 2: 105.

disbelievers. And whoever Allah (SWT) leaves astray - never will you find for him a way”⁷.

The terminologies as well as expressions used in the Qur’ān on behavioural attitudes of human beings are unique and the Qur’ān uses its own style while speaking about it. The focal point of the research is to investigate human behavioural characteristics from the Qur’ānic perspective. Therefore, it might be very interesting from an academic angle to conduct research on human behavioural characteristics to analyse the way humans think, behave and react.

The research will attempt to present common behavioural patterns of humanity in general, followed by the behavioural patterns of the believers in the beginning, succeeded by the disbelievers, and then by hypocrites, ending by a comparative analysis between all these faiths. It will highlight a special focus on the impact of faiths and ideologies on the behavioural patterns of the individuals.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The age we are living in is witnessing a significant deficit of ethical human behaviour at all levels from the personal to the collective. Recent studies have shown the increasing rates of breakdown of families⁸, in crime⁹, poverty levels¹⁰ and forced migration and displacement¹¹ rendering millions across the world as refugees. The global leadership landscape is also witnessing a trust and integrity deficit.¹² The problem lies not only in

⁷ *Sūrah Al-Nisā’*, 4:143.

⁸ *Families in a Changing World*, edited by Sahara Razavi and Laura Turquet, (New York: UN Women, 2019), p. 16

⁹ *International Statistics on Crime and Justice*, edited by S. Harrenford, M Heiskanen, S. Malby and published by, (Helsinki: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2010), p. 18

¹⁰ *Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2020: Reversals of Fortune*, edited by Samuel Freije-Rodriguez and Michael Woolcock, (Washington: World Bank Group, 2020), p. 21

¹¹ *Global Trends in Forced Displacement in 2021*, compiled and edited by the Statistics and Demographics Section, (Copenhagen: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021), pp. 2-3

¹² *Edelman Trust Barometer 2022: Global Report*, edited by Nancy Jeffrey, (Chicago: Edelman Trust, 2022), p. 5

policies formulated by the collective but also in the behavioural composition of the individual human being. Much of the challenges facing humanity are a result of individual actions, choices and human behaviour. What ethical standards or behavioural ideals should human beings aspire to and be held accountable against?

Using reason (*'aql*) as a tool to ascertain what constitutes ethical behaviour has clearly not captivated the imagination of most of humanity as it has failed to address some of the serious challenges confronting it. Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke (1632 – 1704), Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) and Francis Bacon (1561-1626) attempted to construct an ethical human paradigm based on reason and observation. However, an objective criterion analyzing human behaviour is necessary and hence the importance of a divinely revealed scripture (*wahy*) which is not bound by the specificity of time, place and people and has the welfare of all of humanity as its core proposition.

As believers, we accept the Qur'ān is divine and informs us not only of ritual acts of worship but also outlines human behavioural patterns and attitudes. A deep study of the Qur'ānic paradigm is bound to express a normative faith driven understanding and application on dealing with this ethical deficit. The Qur'ān outlines behavioral typologies of people of all kinds – both ethical and unethical. It does so through its stories, messages and parables. It classifies people into believers, disbelievers and hypocrites – not only because of theological beliefs but also due to behavioural patterns and ethical choices they make.¹³

The classical Muslim scholar Ibn Taymiyyah (1263 - 1328) contended that strong and stable societies will continue to last as long as the value of justice is present even though such societies maybe led by disbelievers. On the other hand, a society will never prosper if oppression persists even if it is led by a community of believers.¹⁴ Justice and

¹³ *Sūrah Al-Mā'ūn* 107: 1-3 as an example.

¹⁴ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū'atu al-Fatāwā*, (Madinah, Wazārah al-Shu'ūn al-'Islāmiyyah, 2004), 1st Edition, Vol. 28, p. 146

disbelief can co-exist but not oppression and belief. Both are human behavioural attitudes, amongst many others, outlined in the Qur'ān.

To achieve an ideal society, the people should follow the human values and behavioural attitudes as highlighted in the Qur'ān. But humanity, be it due to the influence of evil temptations, disregards the Qur'ānic injunctions and values, and follows their own desires, which collapses the entire humanity. Tyranny, corruption, misbehaviour, injustice, murder prevail on society due to disregarding the Qur'ānic commands. If Qur'ānic injunctions are obeyed, an ideal, just, well-developed nation could easily be achieved.

This research aims to explore these diverse and divergent patterns and attitudes comprehensively with the objective of constructing a Qur'ānic model of what constitutes objective ethical behavior which is not subject to changes due to a change of time, place or socio-cultural attitudes. Human beings who conduct themselves ethically according to the Qur'ānic paradigm are the pillars of strong and stable nations on this earth and will achieve felicity in the Hereafter.

To explore how the Qur'ān deals in understanding human mind and behaviour, the researcher analyses the Qur'ānic verses dealing with human common behavioural features in general and behavioural attitudes of believers, disbelievers and hypocrites in particular. This dissertation attempts to provide a detailed narrative on human behavioural patterns in the holy Qur'ān with academic analysis. It also provides a comparative analysis for different faiths and changes in their behavioural patterns.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no academic research has been accomplished on human behavioural patterns from the Qur'ānic perspective dealing with different faiths. Hence, it is pertinent to deal with the issue of human behaviour from the Qur'ānic standpoint to fill this research gap in human knowledge.

1.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The researcher determined that behavioural patterns of men and women are different. Similarly, behavioural patterns of educated and uneducated people are also different. Behaviour of the youth and elderly also varies. However, the researcher's focus is on how behavioural characteristics differ among those with ideological diversity. This is precisely why in Chapter Three, the researcher will analyse the behavioural characteristics of believers, in Chapter Four, non-believers, and in Chapter Five, hypocrites. Hence, this is a limitation of the study as it does not claim to be a comprehensive coverage of human behaviour from all possible categories. The current research intends to meet its specified objectives so it will not be able to provide all encompassing parts of human behavioural attitudes.

1.6 METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The qualitative research technique, being a very common and efficient method in social sciences, has been followed in the present work where the content analysis of the available sources has exhaustively been made. Descriptive, analytical, interpretive and comparative methods have been applied throughout the study. The research has delved into Arabic language lexicons, literary text, and commentaries to efficiently create a coherent context of terminologies pertaining to human behaviour as mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān.

Only materials, which were authentic and strictly related to the issue under investigation as their authenticity is always considered a benchmark for citation, therefore, sources of solid evidence, have been used. As the topic of the study is religious, involving Qur'ānic interpretation, all possible efforts, at every stage of the research, have been made to remain objective and unbiased to the last possible extent. Overall, a qualitative theoretical approach with comprehensive interpretation of textual analysis on

the verses of the Qur'ān has been adopted to determine a root concept of human behavioural characteristics with its diversity.

Data Collection: Since the research is qualitative research in nature, the data were collected through content and document analysis to answer the research questions. The content of the Qur'ān was studied to collect the Qur'ānic verses on the human behavioural patterns. The verses were collected by looking at general and specific keywords of the human beings. For example, for humans: *al-'insān*, *al-'ins*, *'unās*, *al-nās*, for believers: *al-mu'min*, *al-mu'minūn*, *al-mu'minīn*, *al-muttaqūn*, *al-muttaqīn*, *al-muhsinūn*, *al-muhsinīn*, *'ibād al-Raḥmān*, for disbelievers: *al-kāfir*, *al-kāfirūn*, *al-kāfirīn*, *al-kuffār*, *al-yahūd*, *al-nasārā'*, for hypocrites: *al-munāfiq*, *al-munāfiqūn*, *al-munāfiqīn*, *nāfaqū*, and other keywords to get a holistic idea regarding the study under enquiry.

The way of the selection of the Qur'ānic verses: Only Qur'ānic verses which are directly related to the issue under investigation in this thesis have been used. Moreover, the content of the Qur'ān was studied in two formats, electronic and hard copy, to ensure the smooth process of gathering the *āyāt*, to compare and improve the exactness and accuracy of each finding. All the keywords were keyed in, in al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah software to collect the Qur'ānic verses. Other than al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah, an electronic form of the Qur'ān from KSU website (<http://quran.ksu.edu.sa>) was used in the searching process of the *āyat*. Simultaneously, authentic and available Qur'ānic translations from Quran.com¹⁵ have mainly been used.

Besides, for validity and reliability, data for the issues related to the *āyat* were collected from various classical as well as contemporary Qur'ānic *tafsīr* books based on document analysis. Data from Qur'ānic *tafsīrs* were collected to understand the meaning, theme and issues related to human behavioural features. The *tafsīrs* are Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī, Tafsīr Al-Qurṭubī, Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr, Tafsīr al-Khāzhin, Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Bayān, Tafhīm al-Qurān, Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān. Thus, data about this issue were collected

¹⁵ <https://Qur'an.com>

from the *ḥadīth* books (e.g., Kutub al-Sittah and other relevant *ḥadīth* materials) as they contain *aḥādīth* on human attitude, nature and behaviour.

Subsequently, data were collected from several Prophetic historical books (*al-sīrah al-nabawiyyah*) for instance, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* by Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* and *Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* by Ibn Kathīr, *Fiqh al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyyah* by Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, *Al-Rahīq al-Makhtūm* by Al-Mubārakfūrī, *Muhammad Man and Prophet* by Adil Salahi, *Muhammad the Best of Creation-A Glimpse of His Best Life* by Muhammad ibn ʿAlawī and so forth. Furthermore, data on human behavioural issues were collected from other reliable scientific articles, books and websites as well.

Data Analysis: Data were presented thematically using descriptive and analytical methods to fulfil the objectives of this study. Data were analysed to understand the patterns, meaning, theme and issues related to the human behavioural features. The evaluation is made by analysing all narrations and discussions of scholars in their *tafsīrs*. All narrations were cited according to their sources.

Initially, the researcher made a list of verses related to the intended topic. Next, he explored the behavioural characteristics from them. Then, he classified the behavioural features in five categories and placed them in respective categories. Finally, the researcher explored the reasons behind these behavioural attitudes based on Qurʾānic interpretations, Prophetic traditions, historical narrations along with modern references. In the area of comparison, the researcher then presented the similarities, dissimilarities and uniqueness among the behavioural attitudes to provide a solid assessment and evaluation of the multiple dimensions of human behaviour in the Qurʾān.

There are five tables and a figure have been used in the thesis. The researcher tried to place tables and figures as close to the relevant text as possible. He also efforted to make each table or figure fit onto one page. Additionally, each table and each figure are

numbered sequentially and have explanatory titles on the top for tables and on the bottom for figure throughout the thesis.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher found some research works on human psychology, human behaviour and human nature, but to the knowledge of the researcher, no research work has been carried out so far on human behavioural patterns in the Qur'ān. Selective books, articles and dissertations are reviewed below.

Qur'ānic Concepts of Human Psyche¹⁶ is a book edited by Zafar Afaq Ansari. This book consists of six articles based on papers read in a seminar on “Qur'ānic Concepts of Human Psyche”, which was organised by the international Institute of Islamic Thought, Pakistan. The articles cover a wide spectrum of topics including various philosophical and psychological theories, and a host of views expressed by Muslim thinkers. The authors advocate that it is important that the Qur'ānic concepts should be understood in terms of the Qur'ān itself, and not as equivalents of concepts of foreign intellectual provenance. However, the articles do not focus the behavioural diversities of those belong different ideological thoughts from Qur'ānic point of view which is the prime concern of my study.

'Aḥādīth fī al-Sulūk al-'Inṣānī¹⁷ is a book written by Dr. Walīd Sarḥān¹⁸. This book is a series of behavioural discussion of the writer which has been aired in the national radio of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during 1992 and 1993. Later on, the entire discussion was published as a book. The book consists of two major chapters where the psychological dimension of behaviour and the social dimension of behaviour has been discussed accordingly. To elaborate the issue of psychological dimension of behaviour he

¹⁶ Zafar. Ansari, *Qur'ānic Concepts of Human Psyche*, (Lahore: Islamic Research Institute Press Islamabad, 1992).

¹⁷ Walid. Sarhan, *'Aḥādīth fī al-Sulūk al-'Inṣānī*, (Amman: Al-Maktabah al-Waṭaniyyah, 1994).

¹⁸ Psychiatrist in profession.

discussed human frustration, fear, anxiety, sleep, suicide, confusion and so forth. On the other hand, he also talked about parenting, child education, children rights, marriage, smoking, cultural crisis and so on. In the first chapter, he elaborated human mental problems predominantly in the Muslim *Ummah*. In the second chapter, he addressed some social and cultural crises existing currently, but he did not discuss the human behavioural patterns from Qur'ānic perspective which is the main focus of this study.

Human Nature in Islam¹⁹ is a book written by Yasien Mohamed where the writer focuses on natural disposition, which is *fiṭrah*. He did not discuss anything except *fiṭrah*. He gathered the definition and interpretation of *fiṭrah*. He then clarified its implication and eventually discussed the intellectual relevance of *fiṭrah* where he provided a critical analysis of secular theories of human nature, Darwinian evolution and Freudian psychoanalysis. Although *fiṭrah* is a part of human behavioural patterns, in my research, I am going to focus on the behavioural patterns in detail based on human ideological differences that includes believers, non-believers, and hypocrites.

Psychology of Behaviour²⁰ written by Neil R. Carlson is a book where the writer discusses all aspects of human behaviour from the modern psychological perspective like nervous system, psychopharmacology, emotions, neurological disorders and so on to show how human behavioural system functions. He just focuses human conduct mechanism from a conventional perspective instead of highlighting human behavioural diversity from the Qur'ānic point of view which is the major concern of this study.

Al-Sulūk al-'Insānī wa al-Tanzīmī²¹ written by Nāṣir Muḥammad al-'Adīlī is a book which discusses both human and organizational behaviour from psychology and management perspectives. He presented human behaviour, personality types, perceptions, values and trends, job satisfaction, work pressure, social behaviour, conflict management, influence, leadership and so forth. He came up with behavioural analysis from a

¹⁹ Yasien Mohamed, *Human Nature in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen, 1998).

²⁰ Neil R. Carlson, *Psychology of Behaviour*, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2010).

²¹ Nasir Muhammad Al-Adili, *Al-Sulūk al-Insānī wa al-tanzīmī*, (Al-Riyādh: Ma'had al-'idārah al-'Āmmah, 1993).