

Positive Human Nature –Echoes of *Qurān* from the Mouths of Shakespearean Dramatis Personae:(A Comparative Study)

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Human nature, the common legacy of man, has always been the topic of debate of various discourses, including the *Qurān* and the works of William Shakespeare. That man by nature is upright has been an established truth upheld even by the *Qurān* and William Shakespeare alike; where ways and means are enumerated for maintaining and further improving man's nature. Both works, despite using different techniques, discuss the same topic, particularly, positives of human nature, establishing, therefore, close thematic affinities. The present study discusses positive human nature – hitherto un-attempted in any research work, whatsoever. This work parallels, in both the Holy *Qurān* and in Shakespearean tragedies, aspects of positive nature, including chastity, temperance, love, diligence, patience, compassion and humility. The present research is qualitative, corresponding with the nature of the topic, using the content analysis technique. The secondary data, collected from both works, is exhaustively analyzed before reaching conclusions.

Keywords: human nature, *Qurān*, Shakespeare, tragedies, positive human nature,

The world, so far, has produced innumerable men of colossal genius who, in their various capacities, have exerted substantial influence; thus, leaving far-reaching, often indelible, impressions both on the mind and history of man. William Shakespeare, the great Elizabethan humanist playwright and poet, is one such example. His appeal and currency as a delineator of human nature, is as universal and permanent as the beauty of Cleopatra – “*Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety*”¹ (Shakespeare, 1965) – for, man and his nature are his strong themes. In the words of Ben Jonson (1987), Shakespeare's contemporary, “*He is not of an age, but for all time!*” His works, particularly, plays, a miniature cosmos strewn with pearls of universal wisdom, implicitly teach and instruct his readers. It, therefore, goes without saying that almost every educated person of any

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Contribution of Authors: The first author, pointed out all those verses of the Holy Quran which are directly or indirectly related to various aspect of positive human nature like chastity, temperance, love, diligence, patience, compassion and humility.

The second author pointed out all those aspects of positive human nature which are discussed by William Shakespeare, in his well renowned four tragedies i.e *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*. The comparative analysis of the Shakespeare's work and Quranic verses, carried out in the work, is also done by the second author

¹Even Time, a heartless ravager, has no effect on her beauty, neither does her charms lose its freshness by familiarity; her fascinations are endless.

background is influenced, one way or the other, by the great English Bard. Though his artistic corpus consists of plays, narrative poems and sonnets, yet it is his great tragedies on which his fame, as a whole, rests. His immortal tragedies, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello* discuss the universal theme of human nature, thus, giving the reader “knowledge of the human heart”. He is, therefore, called the poet of human nature, whose education and upbringing, unmistakably, had been fixed, like the umbilical cord, in the ideals of the Renaissance humanism.

Yet, despite their strong influence, even men of his tribe, have not been isolated islands unto themselves. Their most ‘personal’ works, at times, betray the original sources. But the ingenuity in them help blend their native thoughts and ideas with the borrowed ones in such an intricate, yet, delicate way, that they “emerge as thoroughly and uniquely Shakespearean” (or Miltonian) (Daiches, 1979). However, upon contemplation, one is, pleasantly, and sometimes unpleasantly, surprised to trace the ideas to the original sources. While reading the Holy *Qurān* and the works of Shakespeare simultaneously, one realizes, at numerous places, that the playwright might have borrowed ideas, directly or indirectly, from the Holy *Qurān*. The reasons are not far to seek. In the first place, Shakespeare – though not documented or spoken about anywhere – must have lived in a time when the Islamic culture and civilization had permeated the western world (Shah, 2010). Second, it is because their themes i.e. man and his nature - are invariably the same. The statement that Shakespeare openly borrowed material for his writing may, at first, look disquieting, and even blasphemous, has long been an open secret²; it is, therefore, strongly believed that after borrowing ideas from the Holy *Qurān*, he might have interfused them with master strokes in his works. A close yet detached study of the works of Shakespeare, unmistakably, show clues of influences of the Holy Scriptures, like the *Qurān* and the Bible on him.

Though nothing is on record of Shakespeare ever reading the Holy *Qurān* or parts of it, yet, his numerous references to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), like: “*Was Mahomet inspired with a dove*” (Shakespeare, 1987: 1.2. 140. P.593.) and to the Arab world, like: “*All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand*” (Shakespeare, 1987) undeniably show that he, at least, had been familiar with Islam, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and the history and culture of the Arab world. The Holy *Qurān*, as revealed centuries before³ Shakespeare⁴, might have possibly been a source of inspiration for the great Elizabethan dramatist. The following examples, taken from both the *Qurān* and Shakespeare’s works, like solid arguments, support the notion. The line “*All that live must die,/Passing through nature to eternity*” (Shakespeare, 1971) from Shakespeare, unambiguously, owes its origins to the *Qurānic* verse which reads like: “*Every soul will taste of death*” (*Qurān*, 3:185) and to many others (*Qurān*, 29:57, etc.). Yet another example can be cited which reads like: “*Frailty, thy name is woman*” (Shakespeare, 1971)! The same idea is given by the Holy *Quran*, thus: “*Allāh would make the burden light for you, for man was created weak*” (*Qurān*, 4:28). A third illustration will even further elucidate the point, which goes like: “*Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,/And*

² Shakespeare used other people’s material when he found it serviceable. Once his own genius found itself, it took complete control and so reworked any alien material that it emerges thoroughly and uniquely Shakespearean. A study of Shakespeare’s sources, in Italian *novelle* or English chronicles or in other plays, only emphasizes the remarkable power of his “shaping spirit of imagination.” (David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature*). p. 249

³ The Holy *Qurān* was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through Angel Gabriel from 22 December, 609 CE and was concluded in 632, the year of the Prophet’s demise.

⁴ William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes, /I will be brief" (Shakespeare, 1971). The Holy *Qurān* puts almost the same idea in these words: "*Successful indeed are (those) who shuns vain conversation*" (*Qurān*, 23:3) and many other places (*Qurān*, 33:70, etc.).

The present study intends to take up the Sacred *Qurān* and excerpts from Shakespeare's four famous tragedies, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello* and to see what both texts say on positive human nature. For this purpose, translations of the Holy *Qurān* i.e. Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall's and Abdullah Yusāf Ali's have, mainly, been consulted on the basis of their authenticity.

Method

The qualitative research technique, being the very common and efficient method in social sciences, has been followed in the present work where the content analysis of the available secondary data has exhaustively been made. Before the application of the above technique, the texts of the Holy *Qurān* and of Shakespeare's tragedies, having semantic and thematic resemblances, have profoundly been analyzed. A substantial use of secondary data, obtained from both works, has been made. Moreover, data, collected from both printed and online books, reputed journals, websites, magazines, newspapers, etc., have been exploited, at length, during the study. Only those journals have been used 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. Various official websites, particularly, those containing updated and reliable data relevant to the issue under probe, have been used. Extra care has been taken in the authenticity of the consulted sources. Relevant extracts from the works of/on William Shakespeare have been used, drawing, particularly, on the most authentic and updated editions of his works. Simultaneously, authentic and available translations such as done by M.M. Pickthall and Abdullah Yusāf Ali have mainly been used. As the topic of the study is partly a religious one, involving the Holy *Qurān* and the religious sentiments of Muslims, all possible efforts, at every stage of the present work, have been made for remaining unbiased and impartial to the last possible extent.

What is Human Nature? (A Realistic Approach of the Qurān and William Shakespeare):

Human nature is a set of fundamental dispositions and traits in humans – including ways of thinking, feeling and acting – which humans tend to have naturally and independently of the influence of culture. Since they are a common legacy of all humans, they are, therefore, called human universals, ranging culture, language and behavior. Despite many controversies hovering round the topic, many notable psychologists are of the unanimous opinion that there are some invariable building blocks, both good and bad, of human nature. However, considering the topic of the paper, only constituents of positive nature will be discussed here.

All books of undying interest, whether religious or non-religious, are great because they realistically narrate the chronicle of human nature. Though, the ways and methods these books adopt to present it, are, no doubt, varied, according to the purposes they serve; their *raison d'être*, however, is to enlighten man on the subject of human nature. The not-very-far-to-see examples are the Holy *Qurān* and William Shakespeare. The Holy Scripture is out-and-out a book of morality while Shakespearean are works of art, serving a totally different purpose. However, the commonalities between them are man and his nature - the focus of the present study.

Positive Human Nature: Qurānic and Shakespearean Approach (Common Grounds)

The Holy *Qurān* holds the view that man is born with upright nature – a fact celebrated by almost every divine and human work, including William Shakespeare's. Man is good by nature is clear from the following verse of the Holy *Qurān*:

“So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright – the nature (framed) of Allāh, in which He hath created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allāh’s creation....” – (Qurān, 30: 30).

This verse strengthens the notion that, by nature, man is upright and, therefore, not evil. Even though the Holy *Qurān* is not a book of psychology, yet it takes into account human psychology while discussing man and his actions. Being well aware of the psyche of man, it, therefore, adopts the law of retribution while dealing with man. As is mentioned, *Allāh* (SWT) created man in His image and, thus, with *fitrāh*⁵ which can never be bad. The same notion of man's goodness, upheld by William Shakespeare, is clear from numerous passages in his plays. When Laertes, in *Hamlet*, tries to kill Hamlet, he asks for Hamlet's forgiveness just before he dies, and Hamlet, knowing *he* has been poisoned as well, graciously offers his forgiveness to Laertes before he dies:

Laertes: *“He (Claudius) is just served,
It is a poison tempered by himself.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet,
Mine and my father’s death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me! (he dies.)*

Hamlet: *Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee ...”*
(Shakespeare, 1971).

The following discussion, on both texts regarding positive characteristics of human nature, will help the readers understand the dominant aspects of human nature. Both the texts put restraints on man in the form of chastity, temperance, love, diligence, patience, compassion and humility. Parameters for maintaining the goodness of human nature have been set by both the works.

Chastity

Chastity tops the list of divine virtues, owing to its being a sustaining quality. Melody (1908), in his scholarly work, explains chastity as a form of temperance which moderates the indulgence of sexual appetite. It controls the desire for and use of those things which proffer the greatest sensual pleasures. Since it is a cardinal virtue, chastity, for that reason, finds mentions in the main divine books, including the Holy *Qurān* in several contexts. The following verse is more than enough as an illustration:

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest, and to display of their

⁵ *Abdullah Yusāf Ali*, in his translation of the Holy *Qurān*, defines *fitrāh* as the divine pattern on which *Allāh* (SWT) has created man. It is divine and is, therefore, unchangeable (*Qurān*, 30: 30). In other words, it maintains that though the good human nature is corruptible and fallible, yet its core is unchangeable and unalterable. This is man's redeeming quality that hoists him on the highest position.

adornment only that which is apparent, and to draw their veils over their bosoms..." (Qurān, 24:31— 34).

As was said, it is chastity and veiling that only can brace man up against the temptations of lust. Commenting on such holy verses (Qurān, 33:59) Muslim exegetes and scholars like Ibn Rushd in *Bidaya-al-Mujtahid* say that parts of a woman's body should not be evident to those who are among the prohibited degree of relationship (Yate, 1999).

Basically a dramatist, William Shakespeare never assumes the role of a priest in his plays. Instead, his characters act out ideas such as chastity in a telling manner that helps audience extract the undercurrent meanings for themselves. After watching a Shakespearean drama, a shrewd reader can pronounce a character chaste or otherwise. The following piece can serve as an example where chastity is referred to as a good attribute:

*"When we shall meet at compt
This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven
And fiends will snatch at it. Cold, cold, my girl,
Even like thy chastity"* (Shakespeare, 1968).

Here in this extract, Shakespeare shows that a chaste person is devoid of passions towards the opposite sex; as the emotional proximity may engender feelings of lust, thus, leading to adultery and other illicit relationships. The same idea of chastity can be found in Shakespeare through symbols or synonyms, such as handkerchief, moon and mummy (Shakespeare, 1968), coldness (Shakespeare, 1971), snow (Shakespeare, 1952), etc. As the upholder of Christian values and, ultimately, of Islam, Shakespeare delineates, though implicitly, virtues in a persuasive and compelling manner, leaving the audience convinced to be righteous.

Temperance

The quality of temperance, one of the fundamental norms of a society (Pakeeza & Chishti, 2012), helps the reasonable self win victory over the baser desires of gluttony and lust. St. Paul describes the conflict thus, "although I delight in the laws of God, I see another law in my bodily members warning against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin ..." (Butera, 2001). Some verses clarify the point through an analogical deduction. For instance: "*Be modest in thy bearing and subdue thy voice. Lo! The harshest of all voices is the voice of the ass*" (Qurān, 31:19) and many other examples (Qurān, 25:67) show that Islam teaches human beings to be moderate in every walk of life.

Temperance, for Shakespeare too, is of the same paramount importance and has, therefore, won his admiration. It was temperance that inspired him to create tragicomedy⁶, the crossbreed dramatic form, hitherto unknown in world drama. Shakespeare is often found at various places, as here, advocating temperance:

⁶ As the word implies, 'tragicomedy' is a mixture of tragedy and comedy. William Shakespeare wrote the hybrid literary form with master hand when other artists of high caliber avoided it. His *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596) and *The Winter's Tale* (c. 1611) are tragicomedies. Various modern plays, such as Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1953) or Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1904) may also be termed as tragicomedies ... (See for further detail: Martin Grey. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 293.

*"... nor do not saw the air
too much with your hand, thus, but use all
gently; for in the very torrent ... you must
acquire and beget a temperance that may give it
smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul to hear
a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion
... to split the ears of the groundlings..."*
(Shakespeare, 1971).

Being an actor and playwright himself, Shakespeare highly prizes temperance like the above. That Shakespeare does not approve of extravagance in emotions is evident from his use of the word *offends*, as lack of temperance is not tolerable. The same idea can be traced in his other works: (Shakespeare, 1952; Shakespeare, 2014; Shakespeare, 1971).

The quotations, painstakingly selected, exhibit that temperance occupies a conspicuous place in human nature. Such importance is logical in nature, even to a man of ordinary prudence, as it protects the society against disputes and unrest. As angularities are inevitable in human nature and society, both the works recommend temperance as the best possible remedy.

Love

Love, the antidote to greed, is the fountainhead and amalgamation of all delicate feelings and emotions. In other words, love "is the bond and the sanction which connects not only man with man, but with everything which exists" (Shelley, 1977). The truth that the Creator Himself is pure and sheer love is plain from the subsequent verse: "*And He is Forgiving, the Loving*" (*Qurān*, 85:14). Love engenders compassion and forgiveness. In his treatise, *Faqīr Zulfīqār Ahmad Naqshbandī* (2001) writes that *Allāh* (SWT) plants His love in the heart of every human being at the time of their birth which is why every person is born in the original state, *fītrāh* of Islam. Love is, therefore, a divine attribute and, thus, those who love *Allāh* (SWT) and His creation are the blessed ones is illustrated here in categorical terms:

*"Say (O Muhammad, to mankind): If ye love
Allāh, follow me; Allāh will love you and forgive
you your sins. Allāh is Forgiving, Merciful./ Say:
Obey Allāh and the messenger..."* (*Qurān*, 3:31,
32).

Love secures, for the entire creation, *Allāh* (SWT)'s forgiveness and world peace; while its absence causes devastation and unrest in the society.

Love, a universal theme, has allured Shakespeare, the finest, yet the most intricate delineator of human nature. He has, therefore, based his entire works on the theme of love and its various manifestations. The following selection from *Othello* testifies, succinctly yet effectively, the fact that love can redeem and elevate even base natures to the state of human dignity:

*"If thou be'st valiant – as they say base men
being in love have then a nobility in their natures
more than is native to them – list me"*
(Shakespeare, 1968).

The same idea of love and its miraculous effects can be traced in other Shakespearean tragedies (Shakespeare, 1952), (Shakespeare, 1971), (Shakespeare, 1968) and (Shakespeare, 2014). In short, love is a blend of various godly attributes that mothers all other good qualities – compassion, mercy, temperance, patience, etc.

Owing to its central position in human nature, every text, such as the *Qurān* and works of Shakespeare, appeals to love in man to ensure peace in the world. Putting emphasis on love, both texts recommend universal love for the entire creation of God, including man, animals, plants and the physical environment they mutually share.

Diligence

Diligence, countering sloth in human nature, teaches man to value time. That the entire universe is in constant and diligent flux is manifest from this verse of the Holy *Qurān* where *Allāh* (SWT) says: “*And (He) maketh the sun and the moon, constant in their courses, to be of service unto you, and hath made of service unto you the night and the day*” (*Qurān*, 14:33). *Allāh* (SWT) promises salvation to those who are diligent and spend their lives toiling for the welfare of humanity. Even prophets lived diligently (*Qurān*, 12:47). Likewise, common man has been created in a state of struggle and toil (*Qurān*, 90:4), for he diligently fights against the trials and tribulations here in this world and the hardships and calamities in the other.

Diligence, a spirit more of animals than humans, often loses grounds to the forces of sloth, thus, reducing individuals as well as entire societies into miserable parasites. Shakespeare has horded his works with lines and descriptions extoling diligence and exhibited other virtues in bright colors. The fact that diligence and perseverance are relevant not only in ordinary affairs, but in running governments, is acknowledged here in these lines:

*“The king-becoming graces,
As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
Bounty, perseverance (diligence), mercy, lowliness,
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
I have no relish of them...”* (Shakespeare, 2014).

The virtue of diligence indicates a definite sense of responsibility. Being an important virtue, it has always found accommodation in almost every play of Shakespeare (Shakespeare, 1952), (Shakespeare, 1971).

A cursory glance of the Holy *Qurān* and the works of Shakespeare indicate that both the texts are replete with warnings against sins and instructions for virtues. As mentioned earlier, the entire universe is diligently and strictly following a course of movement (*Qurān*, 36:40). Likewise, when readers enter the world of Shakespearean plays, they find all the characters involved in a diligent strife against the odds. He too, like the Holy Scripture, dramatizes the attributes of human nature in the most perfect manner.

Patience

Patience – endurance through moderation and restraint on one’s extreme emotions and feelings – counters wrath in human nature. It, surely, leads, as opposed violence and conflict, to peaceful resolutions of conflicts. Chodron (2005), in her paper, elucidates the psychological

implications of patience in these terms: *“Patience has a quality of enormous honesty in it, but it also has a quality of not escalating things, allowing a lot of space for the other person to speak, for the other person to express themselves, while you don’t react, even though inside you are reacting. You let the words go and just be there”*. Similarly, the renowned Muslim scholar and exegete of the Holy *Qurān* Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah says in his work that some renowned Muslim scholars define patience as a good human characteristic or a positive psychological attitude, by virtue of which man refrains from doing that which is not good (al-Jawziyyah, 1997). The references deduce that the quality of endurance is, therefore, helpful in a peaceful society and its lack reduces it into a hotbed of crimes and sins, like revenge, murder, genocide, etc. Islam, therefore, teaches man to always practice forbearance, especially, in times of hardships, as is said in this sacred verse:

“O ye who believe! Seek help in steadfastness and prayer. Lo! Allāh is with the steadfast. / And surely We shall try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives and crops; but give glad tidings to the steadfast, / Who say, when a misfortune striketh them: Lo! we are Allāh’s and lo! unto Him we are returning...” (Qurān, 2:153, 155, 156, 157).

Patience, extended to the general humanity without discrimination, qualifies man to the grace of *Allāh* (SWT). It surely poises man on the highest position of human character.

Shakespeare, unlike the dominant instructional strategies of the Holy *Qurān*, adopts educational strategies in his plays for instructing his audience as is illustrated here: *“O gentle son,/Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper/Sprinkle cool patience”* (Shakespeare, 1971). Lines and passages on patience can also be found in his other tragedies (Shakespeare, 1968), (Shakespeare, 1971), (Shakespeare, 2014), (Shakespeare, 1952). The number of passages regarding patience underlines the import of forbearance in human life as whole. As a whole, the works of William Shakespeare, like the Holy *Qurān*, are a treasure trove of knowledge, serving, besides many purposes, as guidelines for man in every walk of life.

Compassion

The virtue of compassion counters jealousy in human nature. In order to mitigate the ravages of jealousy in the society, every religion teaches man to be compassionate and charitable, to his fellow beings, irrespective of their color, caste and creed. *“Compassion impels us to work tirelessly to alleviate the sufferings of the fellow creatures, to dethrone ourselves from the centre of our world and put another there, and to honour the inviolable sanctity of every single human being, treating everybody, without exception, with absolute justice, equity and respect”* (Armstrong, 2009). Islam, the religion of compassion and fellow-feeling, teaches sympathy in these words:

“And serve Allāh. Ascribe no thing as partner unto Him. (Show) kindness unto parents, and unto near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and unto the neighbours who is of kin (unto you) and the neighbours who is not of kin, and the fellow-traveller and the wayfarer and (the slaves) whom your hands possess...” (Qurān, 4:36).

Kindness of heart, undeniably, promotes a world free of prejudice, based on fellow-feelings and boundless love. *Allāh* (SWT), therefore, directs man to show kindness towards those who are

below him in worldly status, so that he may not become proud. Thus, humility drives out the vain feelings in man's heart and mind.

Compassion, as is shown, is the quality of mercy, ingrained in man's nature by the Creator against jealousy. It is the divine quality in human nature to feel the afflictions of fellow beings and put in all their efforts to alleviate them. Shakespeare, like other known writers, is the sonorous advocate of compassion and harsh critic of compassionless, as is clear from these lines:

*"Death, nature! Nothing could have subdu'd nature
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy (compassion) on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters"* (Shakespeare, 1952).

William Shakespeare, in the above lines, invokes the wrath of God on those who do not show mercy to others, especially, to their near and dear ones. Other lines, praising compassion, are: (Shakespeare, 1968), (Shakespeare, 2014) and (Shakespeare, 1971).

William Shakespeare and the Holy *Qurān* promote, in rigorous terms, compassion and its advocates. At the same time, both uphold the view that compassion in every age is the most neglected virtue. It is not that Islam or its teachings are devoid of compassion as Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sent to the world as a mercy to all creations (*Qurān*, 21: 107). Taib (2004) has cited the same verse of the Holy *Qurān*. Similarly, Shakespeare, in his plays, has incorporated passages, advocating compassion (Shakespeare, 1968) which occupies a central position among the virtues. The Holy *Qurān* has, therefore, notified *Allāh* (SWT) as *Rahman* (compassionate) and *Rahim* (merciful) and the same attributes are inculcated in the nature of man.

Humility

Man, being proud, feels joyous to be glorified and praised. It is an acute psychological disorder that can be treated only by being humble. In other words, a humble person considers himself below others and, thus, gives them due respect, irrespective of their worldly position. Some scholars, therefore, call it spiritual poverty (Shomali, 2010). In short, a humble man, hence, gives credit where credit is due and does not unfairly glorifies himself. Murray (2003) says, meekness *"is simply the realization of what nothings we really are, when we truly see how God is Everything, and when we clear out room in our hearts so that He can be everything for us"*. The point that the modest are the blessed and infallible ones is clarified in the Holy Scripture, thus: *"The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them answer: Peace;"* (*Qurān*, 25:63). This verse indicates the the true modest never stoops to curse even those who are sly in their remarks on and mischievous towards them.

Humility, in short, is the quality of human nature that wins the heart of all and sundry. Shakespeare, the poet of human nature, appreciates modesty against pride and haughtiness. He has drawn both humble and proud characters but his sincere appreciation goes to the former. He always delineates proud characters set in sharp contrast with the humble ones in his plays, thus, completing the binary opposites. Moreover, humility in women, coupled with beauty and good manners, has always taken his fancy as is evident from these lines: *"Her voice was ever soft,/Gentle and low (modesty), an excellent thing in woman"* (Shakespeare, 1952). Here, while cataloging the good

qualities of Cordelia in *King Lear*, Shakespeare sets, through a general example, a standard. Other lines, beside numerous examples, in Shakespeare's works, praising humility, are: (Shakespeare, 1971), (Shakespeare, 1968) and (Shakespeare, 2014). The Holy *Qurān*, the most authentic document on human nature, extols those who are modest and humble.

Ways for Future Research

The present study investigates the Holy *Qurān* and the four tragedies of Shakespeare, namely, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*. It highlights the positive characteristics of human nature, leaving out, due to its limited scope of the present work, the negative ones. The entire process of collection and the subsequent selection of data are, of course, the toughest, yet the most rewarding parts of the entire process. However, the selection criterion is, admittedly, open to doubt, and, therefore, to question. The present work is obviously neither exhaustive nor absolute but only the *hors d'oeuvre* of an unending debate on the topic, hitherto dodging, surprisingly, serious investigation. Since the present work has spotlighted only an aspect of a multifaceted topic, it, therefore, requires a rigorous probe. If, on the one hand, an investigation of the negative characteristics of human nature can be fruitful, a comparative study, on the other hand, of both negative and positive characteristics of human nature in these texts can also be really very productive.

As is obvious by now that the present study investigates, mainly, the four renowned tragedies of William Shakespeare, it is, for that reason, recommended that a similar or more exhaustive study be carried out, using a homogeneous or heterogeneous selection in other works of Shakespeare i.e. tragedies, comedies, historical plays, romances, narrative poems and sonnets, examining similar or dissimilar aspects of the chosen works. Likewise, an exhaustive study of the same nature can also be initiated by comparing and contrasting the works of other great native and foreign writers and the Holy *Qurān*, bringing to the fore aspects of universal significance. As an endnote, a qualitative type research can also be done, utilizing the focus group technique where the scholars on the Holy *Qurān* and Shakespeare (Wordsworth, Milton) be interviewed on a decided topic for its data.

Conclusion

Human nature serves as the hunting ground to every great work of human and divine endeavors. All great works, without exception, draw on the topic, not because that human nature is a universal archetype but, more often, is reformed and influenced by them to promote the quality of goodness among human beings. Almost every writer, great or low, divine or human, creates their works, keeping in view human nature because that is the maker and the unmaker of human character. The Creator, the greatest of all writers, has sent numerous scriptures, including the Holy *Qurān*, to the world, addressing human nature, with the objective to reinstate it to its original seat. Similarly, great writers, like Shakespeare, have discussed human nature, using, less or more, the same or different methods. But, unlike the direct moralizing of the Holy Book, most of his works are suggestive, assisting the audience to extract their own interpretations. The building blocks of human nature are positive and negative; the two texts, therefore, discuss both. However, the positive nature is the predominant one and, therefore, occupies significant portion of these two works. This study is conducted where positive aspects of human nature are profoundly investigated in both works. The study reveals that both the works meet at positive human nature i.e. chastity, temperance, love, diligence, patience, compassion and humility, thus, joining together both the texts. These qualities are not only discussed in these works but are, at the same time, appreciated and encouraged.

Moreover, ways and means for developing these characteristics are highlighted and their positive impacts on the society are spotlighted. Discussion at length in these works shows that these positive characteristics are common, irrespective of discriminations, thus, investing a universal import to both the works. The similarity in terms of approach, both at theoretical and practical levels, towards positive human nature reinforces the perception towards the reality that either Shakespeare has read the Holy *Qurān* or, at least, has been well aware of its basic philosophy. Although, dominance has been given to positive human nature, yet, both the works do not exclude its negative aspects; rather, they discuss it with the same rigor. To properly elaborate this aspect, indeed, requires a separate academic research, thus, completing the entire scope of human nature. Additionally, it is glaringly present in other works, excluding the four tragedies (the focus point in this work), of Shakespeare require separate researches. Moreover, comparison of the same with the Holy *Qurān* can further clarify the whole spectrum of human nature. Of course, such sort of work can become solid evidence for value addition to the existing repository of knowledge in connection with human nature. The variation, in terms of methodology, other than the one followed here, for the investigation of the issue under discussion can touch the academic skies! The intended objectives of the present work are set to pave ways for the same.

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