

Old Age Phenomenon (A Perspective from Medical Sciences and Islamic Teachings)

Medical Sciences Perspective:

Many *diseases* are not diseases, but *normal aging*. The director of a Beijing hospital gave five pieces of advice to the elderly :

You are not sick, you are getting old .. Many *diseases* you think are not diseases, but signals that the *body is aging*.

1. *Poor memory* is not Alzheimer's disease, but a self-protection mechanism of the elderly brain. *Don't scare* yourself. This is the brain getting old, not a disease. If you just forget where you put your keys, but you can find them yourself, it is not dementia.

2. *Walking slowly* and having unsteady legs and feet' is not paralysis, but muscle degeneration. The solution is not to take medicine, but to *move*.

3. *Insomnia* is not a disease but the brain is adjusting its rhythm. It is a change in sleep structure. Don't take sleeping pills indiscriminately. Long-term dependence on sleeping pills and other drugs to fall asleep will increase the risk of falls, cognitive impairment, etc.*The best sleeping pill* for the elderly is *to get more sun* during the day and maintain a regular schedule.

4. *Body aches* are not rheumatism, but a normal reaction to nerve aging.

5. Many elderly people say: My arms and legs hurt everywhere. Is it rheumatism or bone hyperplasia ?Bones do become loose and thin, but 99% of 'body pain' is not a disease, but a slow nerve conduction, which amplifies the pain. This is called *central sensitization*, a common physiological change in the elderly. Analgesics are not the solution. *Exercise and physical therapy* are the adjustment methods. You can recommend 'foot bath + hot compress before bed + light massage', which is more effective than taking medicine.

6. Abnormal physical examination' is not a disease, but the index standards have not been updated.

7. The World Health Organization recommends that the physical examination indicators of the elderly should be *relaxed*. The same is true for cholesterol. The elderly have slightly higher cholesterol, but they live longer. Because cholesterol is the raw material for synthesizing hormones and cell membranes, too low a level can easily reduce immunity. The Guidelines for the *Prevention and Treatment of Hypertension* in China' also clearly pointed out that the blood pressure reduction target for the elderly is <150/90 mmHg, not the standard of young people <140/90. Don't treat *aging* as *illness* and don't treat *change* as *lesion*

8. Aging is not a disease, it is a necessary path.

A few words should be said to the elderly and their children: First, *remember, not all discomfort is a disease*.

Second, the elderly are most afraid of being 'scared'. Don't be scared by the physical examination report or be fooled by advertisements.

Third, *the most important thing for children is not to take their parents only to the hospital* but to accompany them for walks,

sunbathing, eating, and talking and bonding.

Aging is not the enemy It's another word for living .. but stagnation is the enemy !

Stay healthy 

Worth reading and understanding the process of health

psychology 

[21/09, 10:29 am] +234 810 965 3306: # Reflections from a Brazilian oncologist:

1. Old age officially begins at 60 and should end at 80.
2. The fourth age, or old age, begins at 80 and ends at 90.
3. Longevity begins at 90 and ends after death.
4. The main problem of an elderly person is loneliness. Often, spouses don't grow old together; someone always goes first. A widow or widower becomes a burden to their family. That's why it's so important not to lose touch with friends, to get together and communicate frequently, so as not to be a burden to your children and grandchildren, who will probably never say so. My personal recommendation is to not lose control of your life. This means deciding when and with whom to go out, what to eat, how to dress, who to call, what time to sleep, what to read, what to have fun with, what to buy, where to live, etc. Because if you can't do all these things freely and on your own, you'll become an unbearable person who will be a burden on others.

Before reacting... breathe deeply; Before speaking... listen; Before criticizing... look at yourself; Before writing... think carefully; Before attacking... surrender; Before dying... live the most beautiful life you can!!!

The best relationship isn't with the perfect person, but with someone who has learned and is learning to live as interestingly and beautifully as possible. Notice other people's shortcomings... but also admire and praise their virtues.

If you want to be happy, you have to make someone else happy. If you want something, you must first give something of yourself. You need to surround yourself with good, friendly, and interesting people and be one of them.

Remember: In difficult times, even with tears in your eyes, stand up and say with a smile: "Everything is okay, because we are the fruits of an evolutionary process."

Islamic Perspective:

Islam indeed speaks beautifully about old age, its spiritual meaning, and how both the elderly and the younger should approach it. Let's look at what the Qur'an and Hadith say, and then we'll discuss why Allah allows aging and how to deal with its challenges in light of Islamic wisdom.



1. The Concept of Old Age in the Qur'an

Old age is described in the Qur'an not as a curse, but as a natural stage of life — a test, a sign of Allah's power, and a means to humility and reflection. The Quran describes old age as part of Allah's creation, highlighting the progression from weakness in

infancy to strength in youth, and back to weakness in old age.
This cycle underscores human dependency on Allah.

a. Life Stages are Allah's Design

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا
وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ

“It is Allah who created you in weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength gave you weakness and gray hair. He creates whatever He wills, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful.”

— Surah Ar-Rum (30:54)

◆ Meaning: Allah reminds us that weakness in old age is part of His divine plan — a cycle that brings humility after pride and strength.

b. Reminder of Human Dependence on Allah

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ
ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي
تُتِبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

“And We have enjoined upon man kindness to his parents; his mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with

hardship... until, when he reaches his full strength and reaches forty years, he says: ‘My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor...’”

— Surah Al-Ahqaf (46:15)

◆ Meaning: Reaching middle and old age should increase gratitude and awareness of Allah’s blessings, not despair.

c. Old Age as a Test and a Mercy

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَى أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ

“And among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing.”

— Surah An-Nahl (16:70)

◆ Meaning: Forgetfulness, weakness, or dependence in old age are tests from Allah — reminding us of our limits and need for His mercy.

d. Old age as reminder of Allah’s power

وَمَنْ نُعَمِّرْهُ نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ

“And he whom We grant life-WE reverse him in creation. Will they not then understand?’ Surah Yaseen (36:68)

- ◆ Meaning: This refers to the physical and mental decline in old age, like returning to a childlike state, as a reminder of Allah's power.

e. Reminder for children to be kind towards elderly parents:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا إِمَّا يَبُلُغَنَّ عِنْدَكَ الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أَفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

وَاخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا

Surah Al-Isra (17:23-24) instructs: “If one or both of them [parents] reach old age in your care, never say to them even ‘ugh,’ nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully. And act humbly to them in mercy, and say, ‘My Lord, have mercy on them, since they cared for me when I was small.’”

- ◆ Meaning: This emphasizes kindness toward aging parents

f. Outlines life stages

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا أَشَدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لَتَكُونُوا شُيُوخًا وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُتَوَفَّىٰ مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا أَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

- Surah Ghafir (40:67) outlines life stages: “It is He who created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot; then He brings you out as a child; then lets you reach your maturity; then lets you become old—though some of you die

before—and lets you reach a specified term; and perhaps you will use reason.”

- ◆ Meaning: Old age is depicted as a natural end point in human development.



2. Hadith on Old Age and the Elderly

a. Honor and Respect for Elders

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“He is not one of us who does not show mercy to our young ones and does not respect our elders.”

— Tirmidhi, 1920

- ◆ Meaning: Respecting and caring for elders is part of faith and good manners.

b. Old Age as a Blessing

The Prophet ﷺ said:

“No one who grows old in Islam but that Allah writes for him the reward of all the good deeds he used to do when he was healthy.”

— Ahmad, 24708

- ◆ Meaning: Even when elderly people can’t fast, pray, or serve as they once did, Allah still grants them the reward of their earlier

deeds.

c. The Dua for Longevity with Righteousness

The Prophet ﷺ used to seek refuge in Allah from:
“cowardice, miserliness, and reaching a miserable old age.”
— Bukhari, 2822

◆ Meaning: He didn’t ask to avoid aging, but asked protection from the kind of old age that leads to humiliation or loss of faith.



3. Why Allah Created Old Age

1. To Remind Us of Our Mortality:

Old age teaches us humility — that no matter how strong or wealthy we become, we will one day return to weakness.

2. To Inspire Compassion:

Caring for elders softens the heart, earns Allah’s pleasure, and builds social mercy.

3. To Encourage Repentance and Reflection:

As life nears its end, it’s an invitation to seek forgiveness and prepare for the Hereafter.

4. To Test Gratitude and Patience:

Physical decline is a test of sabr (patience) and shukr (thankfulness) — both lead to great reward.



4. Dealing with Normal Old Age Problems (Spiritually and Practically)

Challenge Islamic Guidance Benefit/Reward

Weakness / Pain Accept it with sabr; remember Allah promised reward for every hardship (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:155–157). Sins are forgiven, ranks elevated.

Loneliness Engage in dhikr, Qur'an, and prayer; seek companionship of family or masjid community. Heart stays alive, close to Allah.

Forgetfulness Recite Qur'an regularly; make dua for memory; keep good company. Qur'an refreshes mind and soul.

Dependence on others See it as a chance to gain reward through gratitude and patience. Builds humility and trust in Allah.

Fear of death Increase istighfar, salat, and dua; remember that the believer's soul is welcomed by angels (Hadith – Ahmad).

Brings peace and readiness for Akhirah.



5. Duas for Old Age

“O Allah, make the best part of my life the end of it, the best of my deeds the last of them, and the best of my days the day I meet You.”

— Al-Hakim, 1/712

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stressed honoring the elderly, viewing it as a communal and spiritual duty. These narrations promote mercy and promise rewards for respectful

treatment.

- The Prophet said: “He is not of us who does not have mercy on young children, nor honor the elderly.”(Narrated in Al-Tirmidhi.)
- Another hadith states: “If a young man honors an elderly on account of his age, Allah appoints someone to honor him in his old age.” (Al-Tirmidhi, graded hasan.)
- Ibn Abbas reported the Prophet saying: “Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your illness, your riches before your poverty, your free time before your work, and your life before your death.”This highlights old age as a time when abilities diminish.
- In Sahih Muslim, the Prophet emphasized caring for parents in old age with respect and obedience. Additional narrations encourage giving elders priority in speaking, seating, and service.

Conclusion:

The Phenomenon of Old Age in the Eyes of Allah

From an Islamic viewpoint, old age is not a punishment but a divinely ordained phase of life, serving multiple purposes as part of Allah’s wisdom and creation.

- Natural Cycle and Test of Faith: Old age is a return to weakness after strength, reminding humans of their mortality and dependence on Allah. It’s described as a “second childhood” without innocence, where physical decline (e.g., feebleness, forgetfulness) encourages reflection on the afterlife. Scholars note it’s unrelated to sins; rather, it’s a natural development to foster humility and preparation for death.

- Sign of Maturity and Wisdom: While it brings challenges, old age can symbolize accumulated knowledge and spiritual growth.

However, the Quran cautions that age doesn't always equate to wisdom (e.g., Prophet Abraham's father in Surah Maryam 19:43). It's a gift from Allah, testing patience and gratitude.

- Reminder of Transience: Life, including old age, is temporary—a bridge to the eternal. It encourages turning to Allah, as proximity to death heightens religiosity for some. The Prophet's teachings frame it as an opportunity to honor others, ensuring reciprocal care.

In essence, old age humbles humanity, highlights Allah's control over creation, and serves as a mercy to prepare for Judgment Day.

Dealing with Normal Old Age Problems in Islam

Islam provides practical and spiritual guidance for addressing common issues like physical decline, health problems, loneliness, and dependency. The focus is on holistic care—physical, emotional, social, financial, and spiritual—rooted in family and community responsibility.

- Seek Medical Treatment: The Prophet said: “Make use of medical treatment, for Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, namely old age.” While old age itself has no cure, treatable ailments (e.g., illnesses) should be addressed through hygiene, healthy living, and professional care.
- Family and Community Support: Children must provide comprehensive care for aging parents, including physical help (e.g., daily needs), emotional support (e.g., companionship to

combat isolation), and financial aid. Honoring elders brings Allah's pleasure; neglect invites His anger. For difficult behaviors (e.g., dementia), respond with patience, dua (supplication), and istighfar (seeking forgiveness).

- **Spiritual Practices:** Engage in prayer, Quran recitation, and remembrance of Allah for mental peace. The elderly should use their time for worship, as it gives purpose. Dua for mercy and strength is encouraged, as in the verse praying for parents.
- **Social and Psychological Care:** Combat loneliness by fostering community ties, visiting elders, and giving them respect (e.g., letting them speak first). Islam views elders as valuable, not burdens, promoting their inclusion to enhance belonging and empowerment.

Overall, Islam encourages proactive care, viewing service to the elderly as an act of worship that earns rewards in this life and the next. If facing specific issues, consulting knowledgeable scholars or resources is advised.