

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SOCIAL MORALITY IN ISLAM

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Abstract: *The Holy Quran is the Book of Almighty Allah which was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.) peace and blessings upon Him. It is the Book of guidance not only for Muslims but for whole humanity. A real perfect life is that which is lived in strict conformity with Qur'anic provisions. In this article we have made an attempt to give brief idea about the core Islamic moral values by which men live. Without these values we are all incomplete. It is because these values are necessary for right living and good conduct. Everything that Islam commits leads us to the highest levels of morality. There is a moral message infused in every single element of Islam. In this paper we also explored how Qur'anic teachings and sayings of prophet peace be upon him, clearly differentiates between right and wrong and seeks to deliver the goodness to all humanity according to its rules and principle.*

Key Words: *Quran, Sunnah, values, social, moral.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Quran is the Book of Allah deals with man and his ultimate aim in life. Its teaching contains all areas of this life and the life after death. Quran contains main beliefs, principles and instructions for every sphere of human life. The theme of the Quran broadly consists in three fundamental ideas: Oneness of Allah, Prophet Hood and life after death. The success of human beings on this earth and in the life hereafter depends on obedience to the Qur'anic teaching.

Allah has blessed man with this distinctive quality. The Quran is the holy book of Muslims. A Muslim recites the Quran in his daily prayers. He recites the Quran whenever he find an opportunity to satisfy his soul for spiritual nourishment. Holy Quran declares: that Islam is a complete and perfect religion which abrogates all previous revelations and it is the last religion. Allah says in the Quran, "this day I have perfected for you your religion and completed my favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion". (Quran; 5:3).

Islam comprises a number of acts of worship, among which some are verbal, physical and creedal acts of worship; these acts of worship play an important role in refining one's manners, purifying one's soul, reforming oneself, and maintaining the integrity and unity of Muslim society.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the first person in known history who initiated a world revolution, under the banner of Islam, that stood for progress of mankind in every field of human activity, and laid down eternal principles of revolution. He established the rule that a revolution of the right kind is the prime stimulator and basic source of human development. Islam when defined incorporates in its fold, safety and security for the whole mankind. Holy Quran, the divine scripture addresses all human beings, not only the Muslims. Islam is universal in its nature and its message is for the whole world.

2. Islamic concept of morality:

Morality is generally considered as a code or set of principles by which men live. Its theoretical study concerns itself with such questions as 'what is the good life' and how ought men to behave' and so on. Islam gives a higher conception of morality which is that, good morals are actually the shadow and reflection of Allah's Attributes and are the manifestation (though minute in nature and quantity) of His perfect Attributes. In a Hadith it is stated that the good moral character is the Majestic 'Khuluq' (moral) of Allah. Those morals are good which the reflections of Allah's Attributes and those are bad which are against His Attributes. There are some Attributes of Allah which only belongs to Him which cannot be Attributed to anyone else, e.g. his being one, creator, His Magnificence.

Islam has measured good morals as the means of perfection in one's spirituality only because they are the reflections of Attributes of Allah. The more one workout good morals the more is he elevated spiritually. And the more one persist in adopting and exercising these good morals, the more he advances spiritually towards goodness and purity of soul and ultimately gains spiritual perfection, knowledge of spiritual mysteries and Allah's love and love of His Messenger. In hadith it has been said by holy prophet (S.A.W); among the slaves of Allah the dearest to Him is the one

who is the best in his conduct. In another Hadith the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is reported to have said that the most likable to him, and the nearest to him on the Day of Judgment would be those who possessed and exercised the best moral character.

Islamic concept of morality is not meant only to provide man with hypothetical principles and rules of morality as is the case with the philosophers, but it wants to give emphasis to its practicality. Islam wants to see man is an executor of good morals and abstainer from bad morals. This is the reason that it does not approve of such knowledge and preaching which is not associated with the actions. Allah says in the Quran:

“O Faithful! Why do you say that which you do not do? Most odious it is to Allah that you say that which you do not do. (61:2-3)

3. Sources of Islamic Morality:

The morality in Islam has three parts; virtues and vices, rights and duties, and good manners. These are derived from the two main sources of Islam, namely the Holy Quran and the Sunnah (i.e. the deeds, the words and the indirect commandments of the holy prophet (S.A.W.) and therefore in the strictest sense, divinely inspired.

Islam is the religion of peace, perfect and pure, and for all time, so is its morality. The Quran and Sunnah contain the broad principles needed to discuss (deliberate) the problem that arise in human societies in different ages. As a complete way of life, Islam orders economic, political and devotional activity as well as manners relating to everyday human exchange and routines. Islam is not confined merely to devotional and legal manners; it embraces criteria and values, attitudes, customs and manners in all reaches of human concern and relationship. Though the foundation of all religions is laid on the morality, but islam gives a complete and perfect code of life, like other disciplines (or matters) of religion islam meets the criterion of perfection in this field also. Since our holy prophet (S.A.W) himself has said, “I have sent to perfect the morals”. Islam has not left untouched any corner of human life and society, with regard to the morality. Allah says in the Quran:

“O You who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and worship Your Lord, and do well; haply you may thrive (both in this world and the Next). (22:77)

It is clear from this Qur’anic verse that after the spirit of faith, the body of the message of the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) has two wings; one is (worships) and the second is (Morality); one is the duty towards the creator, Allah, and the other, the duty towards fellow beings.

In Islam, while the Quran lays the foundation of ethical concepts and standards, the Sunnah (way of life) of the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) contains the actual practices of such concepts. It has been mentioned in the Quran chapter number. 68, verse no. 4, Allah says; “You (Prophet Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character”. As ethical concepts explained by the Quran are embodied in the way of life of the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), both the Quran and Sunnah are the main sources of the Islamic ethics. Various Qur’anic verses and number of prophetic narrations provide a code of ethics, which covers the dimensions of human behavior.

To begin with, according to the Quran, belief in Allah, humanity, better communications and continuation of good deeds are the foundations of good morals. Allah says in the Quran that the best person is the person who supports these moral basics and invites others to practice these moral foundations.

furthermore, the Quran associates good morality with fair and compassionate behavior towards parents, relatives, neighbors, orphans, and those in need, while arrogance and vainglory have no place in the Islamic morality.

4. Fundamental values of Islamic social Morality:

(a) Good manners: For Muslims, our “*Adab*” or manners and behavior, relate directly to our character, or ‘*Akhlaq*’. *Adab* (manners), which we follow was not developed over many centuries. Rather, one man taught us everything about how to be good to others and good to ourselves. It was blessed prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and none other, who taught us the finest mode of civilization that ever existed. By following his great example our character or *Akhlaq*, becomes refined, cultured, pleasant and full of social graces.

The challenge now is to learn what ‘*Adab*’ or Islamic manners, entail, and then to put them into the practice. Nearly every Muslim knows that we say “*Assalamualaikum*.”(Peace be to you), to each other when we meet. But this is just one small part of the many manners we should make a part of our daily life. The Blessed Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is our model and his path is best to follow.

“The blessed prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) once remarked that he was sent to perfect manners. And the best of you are those with the best character”.

The great lady Hadrat Aisha (R.A.) was once asked what the blessed prophet’s manners were like. She gave a very interesting reply. She said, “His manners were the Quran.”

(b)Manners for Greeting: Our ‘*Adab*’ or manners comes from the Quran and Sunnah. Any one cultural practice that one follows must not go against these two sources of Islam. Islamic culture must come first if we are true believers.

When two Muslims meet each other, after exchanging the greetings of peace they should shake hands. The Blessed prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) said the better one is the one who let his hand go last. The Blessed prophet said, “Those who are nearest to Allah are those who are the first to give greetings.”... (*Hadith-Tirmidhi*).

The greeting of Islam, “Assalamu alaikum,” “peace is to you”, has special significance for us. The word “peace” is the highest and most honored term. Allah says about it: “peace! Is a word from a Merciful Lord. “Therefore it is the best word for people to use between each other. Islam teaches us to have regard for others.

(c)Honesty and truthfulness: Since obedience to such principles is basic to mutual trust, responsibility and reliability among human beings as well as to integrity within the personality, these are among the most emphasized qualities in Islam. Such a scrupulous adherence to truth includes absolute honesty and fidelity in all personal relationships and interactions, in business dealings and transactions, and in the administration of justice. The Quran enjoins these qualities over and over again:

“O you who believe, be conscious of Allah and be with the truthful”

.....

(Quran, 9:119)

“(the virtuous are) those who honor their trusts and promise and those who stand firm in their testimonies”.....(Quran; 70:32-33)

(d)Discipline and self-control: As we have seen, to live the life of Muslim with its five daily prayers, month of fasting, each year and obedience to all the injunctions of Islam, a considered degree of self-discipline is needed. This discipline is fostered by the Muslim’s continual awareness that he is not his own master but rather Allah’s slave, who stands ever ready to bear and to obey his lord’s commands.

Self-control in governing one’s temper is very strongly stressed, and forbearance and making allowances for others faults are enjoined. In the case of personal injury, the Muslim is urged to forgive and, although retaliation is permitted, to forgo it for the sake of Allah out of mercy and compassion to the one who has wronged him.

(e) Shyness and modesty: Modesty and bashfulness reveal the temperament of a man. Modesty is the criterion of a man’s worth as regards faith and morality. When you observe a man avoiding an action whose commitment is not proper or you see a flush of redness due to bashfulness on anyone’s face as a result of improper act, you should conclude that his conscience is alive. His nature is clean and pure. His heaven is good. When you see a man devoid of reason and wisdom and unconcerned with what is he doing and with what not? It should be inferred that there is no goodness whatever in such a person.

Islam teaches us the lesson of Modesty and shyness. The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) says: every day of life (Deen) has certain morals, and the morals of Islam are modesty and bashfulness. The purpose of the advent of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) was to generate such revolution among the hearts of the believers which should make them habituated of performing the deeds of virtue regularly and completely keep away from evil. They should be ashamed of giving up virtue and committing vice. The messenger of Allah (S.A.W) says: Modesty and faith are equal partners. To the extent one rises high, simultaneously the other rises too.

(f) Equality and justice: In Islamic value system an important element is the principle of equality. In Islam as we know that all men are equal in the sight of God, but they are not necessarily identical with each other. There are differences of abilities, potentials, ambitions, wealth as so on. Yet none of these differences can by itself establish a status of superiority of one man or race to another. The stock of man, blackness are whiteness of skin, economic effort and the degree of prestige he enjoys have no bearing on the character and personality of the individual as far as God is concerned. The only distinction which God recognize is the distinction in piety, and the spiritual excellence. Equality is an article of faith which the Muslim takes seriously and to which he must adhere sincerely. All men are created by One God, the supreme lord of all. He is just and kind to all his creatures. All people are born equal in the sense that none brings any possession with him. And they die equal in the sense that they take back nothing of their worldly belongings.

Adl or Justice, one of God’s attribute name means that He is embodiment of equality and justice. The Almighty is undoubtedly Adl (Justice loving) and gives His recognition to this Valuable excellence. Hadrat Ibn Abass, the celebrated exegetical writer, is true, when he opines that the creed of Oneness of God is evidence of Justice. System of the universe is totally based on justice. It is mentionable characteristics which pave the way for getting man’s honour and respect. Occurrence of the Day of Judgment is an indispensable requirement of this God’s attribute.

The Qur’anic teachings also highlight the reality that the effort based on justice and balance causes for creating harmony and coordination in a life of an individual and a group. Contrary to that, the personal as well as social life of a man becomes prey to all kind of evil appearances, even the whole society becomes hallow, being deprived of all qualities. Keeping in view the most valuable gift of physique, the justice is meant here for its protection and use in proper way. So far as the purport of justice with the greatest blessing of the Almighty in form of Islam is concerned, it is meant firstly for whole- hearted and conscious concern and then for conveying this deposit to those who are unfortunately unfamiliar with this God- gifted blessing.

5. Place of morality in Islam:

The fundamental objective of prophet hood is to firmly consolidate the entire edifice of lofty morals for human beings. It is to illumine before their eyes all aspects of perfection and excellence so that they may exert their best endeavors to cultivate these fine morals and merits in the light of their wisdom and foresight. The prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) thus chartered a different path of his own and blazed a new trail in the history of mankind. He made relentless efforts in spreading the light of prophet hood far and wide and thus brought within his fold a multitude of human beings who became the believers and devotees of his message.

Prayers in Islam are tantamount to pillars of faith. They do not relate to such actions which link humanity to an unknown world. Particular gestures and actions which convey no meaning cannot be termed as Islamic rituals. The obligations enjoined by Islam on its followers are continuous exercises. They aim at inculcating good habits and fine morals for leading a morally bound life, however adverse the circumstances.

Islam teaches enlargement of consciousness, equality and fraternity, dignity of labour, brotherhood, social justice and cultivation of habit of doing for others as we do for ourselves. Islam laid great emphasis on Charity, because charity cultivates the sacrificial spirit. Sacrifice is the fountain of all moral qualities. The glorious Quran divides those under two categories. Firstly those that precludes human beings from damaging others life, honour and property, among them specially are chastity, honesty, meekness and politeness. Secondly, those that inspires mankind to do good to others, viz. forgiveness, goodness, courage, truthfulness, patience, sympathy and kindness. It is not only the moral and spiritual beauties which the Quran reflects, but it has also envisaged the finest-ethics for attaining the highest peak of culture and civilization. The Quran proclaims that man is not only Allah's image but his vicegerent on the earth. It delineates man's relations with the rest of the universe. It declares the equality of man in every phase of human life without any distinction of race, creed, colour and wealth.

Quran emphasized many moral virtues and duties for the observance of every Muslim ethics in his dealing with others. Muslim ethics therefore, is mainly social. It also preaches the ethics of the universal brother man and service of humanity. The holy is the methodological analysis of ethics and virtuousness that is declared the rules of morals, and drew the path of right behaviour that achieves pleased life to all society individuals. Islam makes the moral side a criterion for beneficial feats, and the main side in values is the main aim for the message of Islam. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came to complete good morals, and Islam cares for evolution of moral feeling in human nature, and makes rightness the guide of human behavior both publically and in private, as Islam assures the ethical side in all worships.

6. CONCLUSION:

Holy Quran is the book of values which leads the humanity as whole in the realm of morality. The Quran revealed to the prophet is the culmination end of all prophetic revelations for all humanity. Allah has set down a law and a way in conventionality with His universal divine plan. Our prophet was sent down as the epitome of this plan that we should all aspire to. The moral and spiritual teachings of the prophet Mohammad are a living reality in the lives of millions of Muslims today. By following his moral and spiritual teachings, they follow the best of human examples. There are no virtues other than the virtues of prophet (S.A.W); all virtues are subsumed under the virtues of the prophet. Everything that Islam commits leads us to the highest levels of morality and everything that Islam prohibits protects us from the lowest level of morality. True Islamic morality cannot be achieved without the presence of the fear and love of Allah. The most important object of Islam is to relieve man from slavery of man and establish the sovereignty of Allah over the whole humanity. The good manners and manners of greeting, compassion and indulgence, honesty and truthfulness, discipline and self-control, shyness and modesty, equality and justice are the basic and prominent characteristics of Islamic social morality without the knowledge of these morals one cannot differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad because these values can reflect an individual's personality and spirituality and can help in making good relationships in individual as well as professional lives. Islam has emphasized the role of belief in becoming moral in all spheres of life. There is an extremely complex relationship between faith and morality in Islam that if one is neglected the other will in no way work properly.

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