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THE NEED FOR MORALS AND CHARACTER BUILDING, IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

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ABSTRACT

In a world that is increasingly interconnected and diverse, understanding and embracing these concepts can foster harmony and cooperation among different cultures and religions.

Pluralism refers to the acceptance and recognition of diverse beliefs, values, and practices within a society. It recognizes that no single ideology or worldview can claim absolute truth or superiority. Instead, pluralism promotes the idea that multiple perspectives can coexist and contribute to the enrichment of society. In the context of Islam, pluralism is rooted in the Quranic principle of "no compulsion in religion" (Quran 2:256). This verse emphasizes the freedom of individuals to choose their faith and the importance of respecting the beliefs of others. Islamic philosophy encourages Muslims to engage in dialogue and exchange ideas with people of different faiths, fostering mutual understanding and respect. Tolerance is closely related to pluralism and involves accepting and respecting the differences of others, even if one does not agree with them. Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of tolerance towards people of different faiths and backgrounds. The Quran states, "To you, your religion, and to me, mine" (Quran 109:6), highlighting the need for peaceful coexistence and respect for diversity.

Islamic philosophy also promotes the concept of "rahma" or mercy, which encourages Muslims to show compassion and kindness towards all beings. This principle extends to people of different faiths, emphasizing the importance of empathy and understanding in building peaceful relationships.

The implications of pluralism and tolerance in Islamic philosophy for global peace and conflict resolution are significant. By embracing these principles, societies can move away from divisive ideologies and work towards building inclusive and harmonious communities.

Keywords: *Quran , Hadith , Character building , Moral Values , Islamic teachings.*

1. Introduction

Moral values and character formation constitute the very basic pillars in the process of individual and social growth. The moral principle of acting in an ethical manner has been a cornerstone of social harmony, social justice and human dignity throughout history. Nowadays, however, the rapid globalization, technology development, materialism, and cultural change have resulted in a decline of moral values especially for younger people. Lack of integrity, intolerance, violence, corruption and the breakdown of family values are growing issues and there is a need to educate and form good characters.

Islam gives a complete and well-rounded guidance to develop moral qualities and good character. Islamic morality is not based on the social norms or philosophy, but is firmly based on divine revelation, which is the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Moral behavior in Islam is not only a social duty, but also a form of worship and a way to earn the pleasure of Allah. The ethical norms in the Islamic religion are a system of rules that govern all aspects of a Muslim's life, such as personal conduct, family relationships, social relations, economic transactions and leadership.

The Holy Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes virtues such as honesty, justice, patience, mercy, humility, forgiveness, generosity, and compassion while condemning immoral behaviors including arrogance, deceit, oppression, envy, and injustice. Likewise, the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) serves as the perfect practical model of exemplary character. Allah Almighty declares in the Qur'an:

"And indeed, you are of a great moral character."

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) emphasized the central purpose of his mission by stating:

"I was sent only to perfect noble character."

This statement illustrates that moral refinement occupies a central position in Islamic teachings and is essential for both spiritual growth and social well-being.

The forming of character in Islam starts with the purification of the heart (Tazkiyah al-Nafs), strengthening the faith (Iman), developing God conscious (Taqwa), and turning these good qualities into good deeds. Islamic education aims at not only knowledge but also to foster integrity, responsibility, self-discipline, empathy, and accountability to Allah. The holistic moral nurturing helps to build peace in families, responsibility among citizens, ethics in leadership and a just society.

This article explores the importance of moral values and character development in Islam, drawing on relevant Quranic verses and the Qur'an translations of the Prophet (S) and the classical and contemporary Islamic scholars. It deals with the principles of Islamic moral education, the part played by the family, educational institutions and society in the process of character building, and the contemporary issues facing moral values. The Islamic character-building model is intended to show that it is an evergreen and comprehensive remedy for current ethical problems and individual and social reforms.

2. Importance of the Study

The role of morals and character construction has gained in significance, particularly in the contemporary world where the societies face challenges of dishonesty, corruption, intolerance, violence, substance abuse, family disintegration and degradation of social values. These challenges not only impact individuals, but they also undermine the integrity of communities and countries. Islam's teachings provide a holistic and enduring approach to developing good conduct, individual character, and social cohesion in this regard. Thus, the study of morals and character development from the Islamic point of view has tremendous educational, religious and social value.

This study is significant as it draws attention to the pivotal place of morality in Islam as a vital part of faith (Iman) and righteous living. Islamic instructions make it clear that success in this life and the afterlife is not solely through deeds of worship but through having a noble character as well. Moral lessons and values are consistently taught in the Qur'an, and the Sunnah encourages us to practice them.The Qur'an and Sunnah repeatedly teach us moral lessons and values and encourage us to practice them, and they discourage us from practicing immoral traits such as arrogance, deceit, oppression, greed and envy. The study examines these teachings and illustrates how Islam instructs Muslims to produce individuals of good character.

Moreover, the contribution of the study is to the knowledge about the relationship between moral education and character formation. It presents an explanation of character building, which is a continuous process of spiritual purification (Tazkiyah al-Nafs), self-discipline, God-

consciousness (Taqwa), and following Divine guidance. This comprehensive perspective makes Islamic moral education different from other modern moral education models that tend to focus on the social or psychological aspect of moral education without spiritual accountability.

The study also is unique in tackling the current moral crisis among children and youth. The era of technological progress, social media influence, cultural globalization and the transformation of lifestyles exposes young people to conflicting values and challenging moral choices. This study provides valuable insights for parents, educators, religious scholars, policy makers, and educational institutions to foster responsible, compassionate, and morally sound future generations by incorporating Islamic principles of moral development.

Academically, this work has enriched the body of knowledge on Islamic ethics by combining the principles of the Qur'an, the Prophetic traditions, and the scholarly views regarding the development of character. It is a convenient guide for scholars, students and teachers in Islamic studies, education, ethics, sociology, psychology and comparative religion.

Finally, this research highlights the importance of the re-emergence of moral values for the restoration of social peace, social justice and sustainable development. Honesty, trust, compassion, respect and accountability are the fundamental building blocks of a society that can more effectively handle social conflict, foster unity and collective good, and achieve good.A society based on honesty, trust, compassion, respect and accountability is better able to manage social conflict, build unity, and ensure collective good. This study underscores the timeless importance of Islam as a holistic system of personal transformation and social improvement by showing how Islamic moral principles are applicable to the current problems.

3. Companion Characterization and Construction of Biography:

It was narrated from Hazrat Muadh bin Jabal, may Allah be pleased with him, that the last will that the Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, gave me, while I was stepping on the stirrup, was:

To improve your character for people.

The Messenger of Allah was sending Hazrat Mu'adh to Yemen, where he was to perform the duties of his leadership, to enforce religious orders among them, and to give him religious education and training. They had to build their

own character and character there, for such a preacher, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) considered it necessary to exhort him to be the best example of good morals.

. So that he can win the hearts of people with his morals. Because the fields that can be won by the morals and character of a Da'i cannot be won by the sword.

It was narrated on the authority of Ali bin Husain bin Ali bin Abi Talib that the Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, said:

The beauty of a man's Islam is to give up useless and pointless activities.

It is an even higher and ultimate standard of morality that one should leave what is unnecessary, doing what is purposeful brings beauty to a person's Islam. The more a person avoids useless activities, the more beautiful his Islam will be.

A person tries to get closer to Allah by performing acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, Hajj and Zakat.

In order to gain status with Allah, he gives up sleep at night and keeps his bed apart, and pleases Allah by staying hungry and thirsty during fasting. The Messenger of Allah, may God bless him and grant him peace, says that this is right, but good manners are a recipe for alchemy. You say:

Indeed, a person with a good character can attain the status of a worshiper by waking up in the dark night.

The Prophet (PBUH) used to say: Indeed, the best person among you is the one who is the best in morals.

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has declared the building of character and character to be of fundamental importance. Allah addressed the Holy Prophet and said: Indeed, you occupy the highest ranks of mankind

The high standards you set your character and morals on, you desired these levels of character and morals for the Ummah as well. You considered this to be the main goal of Islam. And as a Da'i himself, his responsibilities included that you should adopt such morals, which would cause people to be drawn towards you. Among your morals was that great character, which Allah Almighty described. :

" So by mercy from Allah, (O Muhammad), you were lenient with them , and if you had been rude(in speech) and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you .

Teachings about the qualities of a supplicant:

It is necessary for the claimant to present corrective issues, the style should be serious, wise, instructive, and benevolent. When it comes to discussion and discussion, his style and style should be so beautiful that there cannot be a better, charming and loving style. Misguided, recalcitrant, mischievous, bad characters, those who are meant to be shown the right path cannot be expected to respond with seriousness and dignity, especially those whose interests are affected.

Forgive, enjoin goodness and avoid the ignorant.

Although the law is that: Retribution for evil is equivalent to evil, but the principle of the claimant is not to repay evil for evil. The principle of the claimant's right is that: By means of good, one defends against evil ,What a claimant wants, he gets it in this way. Therefore Allah says:

"Good and evil are not equal. Defend yourself in the best way. By doing this, the person with whom you have enmity will become like your best friend.

Shaykh Al-Hindmulana Mahmood Hasan has written while explaining the meaning of this verse: Goodness cannot be equal to good and evil cannot be equal to evil. One should not return evil with evil. Rather, as far as there is room, behave with good in comparison to evil. If someone says harsh words or does bad things, one should adopt a behavior against him, which is better than that. Compared to this behavior, you will see that harsh Even the fiercest enemy will loosen up and the one who does not become a friend from the heart, but a time will come when he will start treating you like a deep and warm friend in appearance, but it is possible that after a few days he will become a true friend.

4.Rights of Neighbors:

Islam gives much importance to keeping good relations with neighbors, and respects their rights as being a part of faith and moral character. A Muslim must be kind and respectful and generous and compassionate towards neighbors, no matter what their religion, ethnicity or social status may be. The Qur'an and the Sunnah have repeatedly emphasized that harmony, peace and care for neighbors is among the foundations for stability and peacefulness in society.

The Holy Qur'an commands believers to fulfill the rights of neighbors alongside the worship of Allah and kindness to parents and relatives:

"Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be good to parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the distant neighbor, the companion at your side, the traveler, and those whom your right hands possess. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are arrogant and boastful."

This verse demonstrates that caring for neighbors is a religious obligation and an expression of true faith. It makes no distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim neighbors, indicating that kindness and justice should be extended to all.

The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) repeatedly emphasized the importance of honoring neighbors. He said:

"Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should be good to his neighbor."

In another well-known hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) stated:

"Jibril (Gabriel) continued to advise me concerning the neighbor until I thought he would make him an heir."

This narration highlights the extraordinary status that Islam gives to neighbors and the seriousness with which their rights should be observed.

Neighbor rights encompass: protecting neighbors, respecting their privacy, helping them during difficult times, sharing their joys and concerns, visiting them when they are ill, being there when

they fall ill, grieving with them on their deathbed, helping them when they are in need of financial assistance or personal support. Muslims are also encouraged to exchange gifts, warmly welcome their neighbors and have peaceful and respectful relationships.

The concept of neighborly rights is still pertinent in today's society as a lot of relationships are affected by a weakening of community bonds, and people are becoming more individualistic. Neighborly kindness, cooperation, respect and responsibility help to build relationships, prevent conflict and encourage peace and social cohesion within the community. The preservation of these rights is thus not just a social consideration, but a religious obligation that fulfils the Islamic moral outlook and helps to shape the moral values of the individual and of society.

Islam strictly prohibits causing inconvenience or harm to neighbors through offensive speech, dishonest dealings, property disputes, noise, or any form of oppression. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) warned:

"By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer! By Allah, he is not a believer!" It was asked, "Who, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "The one whose neighbor is not safe from his harm."

This hadith illustrates that harming one's neighbor is incompatible with genuine faith and reflects a deficiency in moral character.

Moral and character development has been a hot topic in Islamic scholarship and in modern research. Islamic moral philosophy is based on the premise that there is no separation between righteous conduct and faith (Iman) and worship ('Ibadah). Islamic ethics differs from secular ethical systems which are mostly based on human reasoning or social norms. Islamic ethics is based upon God's revelation given through the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The theoretical basis, goals and applications of Islamic Moral Education have been studied by many scholars with a focus on the development of good and peaceful society and its people.

5. Literature Review

Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) was one of the first scholars to elaborate on the subject of moral improvement. 1111 CE) in his monumental work Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din. According to Al-Ghazali, the purification of the soul (Tazkiyah al-Nafs) is the basis of the moral development. As he said, the Noble character comes from continuous practice in the spiritual discipline, sincere worship, self-accountability and following divine guidance. Education is not just about learning information, he said, but more about transforming people's behavior through developing their virtues like being honest, patient, humble, grateful and fair.

Likewise, about the same time Ibn Miskawayh died (d. In his work, **Tahdhib al-Akhlaq wa Tathir al-A'raq** (Establishing Good Manners and Purifying Morals, 1030 CE), he gave one of the first systematic presentations of Islamic ethics. He considered morality a set of acquired habits, and believed they could be learned through education, practice and discipline. He stresses the importance of moderation, wisdom, courage and justice as fundamental virtues, which contribute to achieving personal excellence and harmony in society. His works had a profound impact on the later Muslim scholars in moral philosophy.

Ibn Khaldun (d. In Al-Muqaddimah, he talked about the need of moral education in his theory of civilization (1406 CE). He has maintained that the moral values of the people are the foundation of strength and stability of societies. Ibn Khaldun believed that justice, honesty, cooperation, and discipline are essential for the survival and prosperity of civilizations; and that the sinfulness of man is a sure sign of their downfall.

Recent researchers have continued to study the impact of Islamic values on moral education. The main goal of Islamic education is to produce the "good man," not the "good citizen," says **Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas (1995)**. He stresses that education should be all-encompassing, combining intellectual, spiritual, moral and social aspects to produce people who are aware of their responsibilities to Allah, to themselves and to society. Similarly, **Syed Hussain Nasr** (2002) gives

attention to the Islamic ethics which comes from one of the most basic principles of Islam, namely Tawhid (the Oneness of Allah), which unites spiritual faith and moral behavior. He argues that without the spiritual values there would be ethical failures and a social disorder.

Islamic education research also highlights the importance of developing moral character through the influence of the family, schools and society. In Child Education in Islam, **Abdullah Nasih Ulwan (1992)** has stated that the parents are the first and foremost teachers a child's moral development. He underscores the importance of the development of virtues like honesty, respect, compassion, responsibility and self-control through practical example and constant moral guidance. Alongside the family, Ulwan said that schools need to do more to incorporate moral learning into their programs and operations.

Recent empirical research supports the conclusion that the more people in a society value less, the more they commit to crime, corruption, violence, family breakdown and social conflict. The field of moral education has reached the consensus that moral education is a necessary component of responsible citizenship, emotional wellness and social cohesion. In the Islamic context, moral education goes beyond the concept of social responsibility and focuses on being accountable to Allah as well as on preparing them for success in this world and the afterlife.

While there are many works on Islamic ethics and education, there is still a need for research that would explore the relevance of the moral teachings of the Qur'ān and the guidance of the Prophet (s) in the solution of the moral issues of the modern day. There has been considerable literature on Islamic ethics from a philosophical point of view and more within educational contexts, but there is less literature that provides an integrated analysis of how Islamic ethics are connected to the upbringing of the family, social responsibility, and contemporary ethical problems. For this reason this study aims to fill in the void in between by studying morals and character building in a comprehensive manner starting from the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the works of classical and contemporary Islamic scholars.

6.Analysis and Discussion

Analysis of the teachings of the Qur'ān has revealed that the development of moral character is not a sideline of the religion, but instead is one of its main goals. Islam sets out a complete moral code that applies to all aspects of life – personal behavior, family life, social interactions, economic affairs, government, and so on. It is a principle that has been repeated and repeated in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, that moral excellence is a sign of Faith and the basis of a just and peaceful society.

6.1. Morality as the Foundation of Faith

Islam establishes a direct relationship between faith (*Iman*) and moral conduct. The Qur'an repeatedly associates righteous belief with righteous actions, indicating that genuine faith must be reflected in ethical behavior. Moral virtues such as honesty, justice, humility, patience, forgiveness, and compassion are regarded as manifestations of strong faith.

The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) declared:

"The believers who have the most perfect faith are those who have the best character."

This Hadith illustrates that moral excellence is one of the highest indicators of spiritual maturity.

6.2. The Qur'anic Foundation of Character Building

The Holy Qur'an provides comprehensive guidance for developing moral character. It encourages believers to uphold justice, kindness, honesty, patience, mercy, and respect for others while prohibiting oppression, arrogance, dishonesty, backbiting, and corruption.

Allah says:

"Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression."

This verse summarizes the ethical principles that should guide both individual and collective life. The Qur'an presents morality as a divine command that promotes peace, equality, and social welfare.

6.3. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as the Perfect Model

The personality of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) represents the practical implementation of Islamic morality. His honesty, mercy, patience, humility, forgiveness, generosity, and justice earned him the title **Al-Amin** (the Trustworthy) even before Prophethood.

Allah describes him:

"Indeed, you are of an exalted standard of character."

The Prophet (ﷺ) also stated:

"I was sent only to perfect noble character."

These teachings demonstrate that moral reform was among the central objectives of the Prophetic mission.

6.4. Role of Family in Character Building

The family is the first institution that Islam calls upon to teach moral values. Parents are given authority to foster faith, discipline, honesty, respect, compassion and responsibility in their children. The Qur'an calls for both religious schooling and ethical upbringing, and the Sunnah stresses on the importance of conveying the lessons through a model.

If family members are practicing their Islamic values, their children grow up with a very robust moral identity which enables them to positively contribute to the society.

6.5. Educational Institutions and Moral Development.

Islamic education aims at the development of the whole person for which intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and ethical development are integrated. Schools are thus expected to foster values of integrity, discipline, respect, cooperation and social responsibility at every stage of the educational process, in addition to academic success.

The teacher is an important role model for morals. They can have a more profound impact on students than formal learning. An Islamic value-based education system fosters responsible citizenship and ethical commitment throughout one's life.

6.6. Social Responsibility and Community Ethics

Islam has made morality not just a matter of one's actions but also a duty to the society. Muslims are taught to perform their duty towards parents, relatives, neighbors, orphans, the poor, travelers and people in general. Adhering to moral values like justice, honesty, trustworthiness and consultation (Shura) contributes to the unity of society and minimizes conflicts.

The Qur'an states:

"Cooperate in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate in sin and aggression."

This principle establishes cooperation for the common good as an essential element of Islamic morality.

7. Contemporary Moral Challenges

Today's society has many moral issues such as corruption, dishonesty, violence, family breakups, materialism, the use of technology, cyber bullying, substance abuse, and a lack of respect for moral values. With the coming of globalization and social media, people had come into contact with different cultures and ideas, which had led to new moral challenges, especially for youths.

Islam teaches us on a timeless basis and in an evergreen manner how to deal with these challenges in the following ways: through strengthening of Islam, self-discipline, accountability to Allah and strengthening family and community values. The Qur'an and Sunnah have taught that reform of the morals is of long-term nature and starts with purifying the heart and developing Taqwa (God-consciousness).

8. Islam's Rules for Children: The Islamic concept of child labor and its consequences.

Although changes in society have been rapid and the science of technology has advanced, moral principles of Islam are still universal and applicable to all. JUSTICE, HONESTY, COMPASSION, MERCY, RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY are important values that are essential for sustainable development, peaceful living and good leadership.

Islamic values combine individual rights and responsibilities, in which moral conduct is seen as promoting the welfare of both the person and society. Islam combines spiritual values with a practical ethics as one package and this package can resolve many modern-day moral crises.

9. Discussion

Based upon the results of this study, it is clear that the model of character building proposed by Islamic teachings is comprehensive and permanent model in relation to spiritual, intellectual, emotional and social aspects of human life. Islamic moral systems differ from moral systems rooted in cultural norms or philosophical reasoning in that they are based on divine revelation and thus are both religious and social duties.

The findings also indicate that character development must be a joint effort of individual, family, educational institution, religious scholars and society. Moral education is not a theoretical lesson, but must be communicated through real-life examples, a steady and firm moral compass, and positive social settings.

The Islamic model of character development is very relevant in today's world where many ethical issues can be seen. It focuses on elements of the faith, accountabilities, compassion, justice and self-discipline that offer a practical framework for fostering responsible individuals and a sense of social harmony. Hence, the revival of Islamic moral values is not only a prerequisite to the proper development of oneself spiritually, but it is also needed to create a peaceful, just and morally responsible society.

10. Conclusion

Islamic values and moral growth are integral part of teaching and learning, they are the core of individual success and social cohesion. The Qur'an and the Sunnah are a complete code of ethics that promotes the growth of moral attributes like honesty, justice, compassion, humility, patience, forgiveness, responsibility, and more; and it abates the immoral ones like dishonesty, arrogance, oppressing, and corruption. These moral values are not just recommended values but are crucial elements of the Muslim faith to instruct the Muslim to carry out his duties towards Allah, other Muslims and society.

This study has shown that Islam has a holistic approach when it comes to character development, as it involves spiritual purification (Tazkiyah al-Nafs), faith (Iman), God-consciousness (Taqwa), and righteous conduct. The model of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is an example to us in how to live these values in all aspects. Moreover, this study revealed that the family, schools, churches and the society have a joint responsibility to nurture moral values and instill ethics among human beings, especially the youth.

The Islamic system of ethics is very applicable and relevant today in the era of moral relativism, materialism, corruption, family breakdown, violence and misuse of technology. The principles that it has formulated are timeless, giving workable solutions for dealing with ethical crises and fostering justice, mutual respect, social responsibility, and peaceful co-existence. Islam offers a well-balanced approach which focuses on responsibility to Allah and the development of noble character, and it is a model that is sustainable and long-term for personal transformation and social change.

Finally, the reintroduction of Islamic values is critical to the creation of responsible individuals, resilient families and compassionate societies. Obedience to the Qur'an and the Sunnah leads to individual spiritual development, and to the good of mankind as a whole. Hence, nurturing morals and character development in accordance with Islamic values is essential to foster sustainable moral, social and spiritual development in the contemporary world.

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