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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Islamic Ethics: Exploring its Principles and Scope

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Abstract: Islamic ethics is deeply rooted in the teachings of the Qur'an and the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), which together provide the moral framework for guiding Muslims. At the heart of this ethical system is the core belief in the oneness and supremacy of Allah (Tawhid). This belief in Tawhid mandates submission to His will and encourages Muslims to cultivate and embody virtuous qualities in all aspects of life. The teachings of Islam are not just abstract ideals but are intended to guide individuals in their personal conduct, interactions with others, and their roles within larger societal structures. The ethical principles derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah offer comprehensive guidance on how to live a just, compassionate, and honorable life. The scope of Islamic ethics is broad, encompassing personal behavior, social relationships, economic dealings, and even governance. The Qur'an and Hadith collectively address various virtues such as justice, compassion, honesty, and respect for others, providing a framework that informs how Muslims engage with the world around them. For instance, the Qur'an emphasizes fairness in trade and transparency in dealings, while the Hadith often highlight the importance of kindness and humility in personal interactions. This ethical guidance is intended to promote a balanced and equitable society, reflecting the divine principles of mercy and fairness. Studying Islamic ethics requires a multifaceted approach that integrates both analytical and descriptive methods. Researchers analyze the ethical principles found in the Qur'an and Hadith, exploring how these principles have been interpreted and applied throughout history. This examination often involves looking at how Islamic ethics has evolved in response to various historical and cultural contexts, and how it continues to address contemporary issues. By delving into these teachings, scholars aim to uncover the deeper philosophical foundations of Islamic ethics and understand their practical implications. This research is not only important for Muslims seeking to live according to their faith but also contributes to broader discussions on ethics and morality. By offering insights into how Islamic principles inform ethical behavior and decision-making, this research provides valuable perspective that can enrich the understanding of ethics for both Muslims and non-

Muslims. It highlights the relevance of Islamic ethics in fostering moral and just societies and contributes to the global dialogue on universal values and ethical practices.

Keywords: *Islamic Ethics; Justice; Truthfulness; Unity of Mankind; Peace*

1 Introduction

Islam plays a pivotal role in addressing both our physical and spiritual needs by offering a comprehensive framework of behavior and a profound sense of purpose in life. Central to Islam is its distinctive ethical system, which emphasizes equality, justice, and the inherent dignity of all human beings. This ethical framework, known as Islamic Ethics or *Ilm al-Akhlaq*, is rooted in a fundamental philosophy: Allah is the sole creator of the universe and everything within it. Allah is unique in His omnipotence and omniscience, free from all imperfections and flaws. His purity and sanctity are beyond measure, as highlighted in the Holy Qur'an. For example, Allah declares:

“Say [O Muhammad (SAW) to mankind]: ‘If the sea were ink for (writing) the Words of my Lord, surely, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord would be finished, even if We brought (another sea) like it for its aid’” (Al-Qur'an, Surah Kahaf, 18:109).

Recognizing the Supremacy of Allah leads us to align our lives with His commands, accepting them without question and embracing the hope of His grace and forgiveness. Islam provides a clear and comprehensive concept of ethics that permeates every aspect of human life. Understanding that ethics is central to Islamic principles is crucial. This research paper aims to delve into the concept of ethics within Islam, examining both the Qur'anic understanding of ethics and the ethical teachings imparted by the Qur'an. Through this exploration, the paper seeks to illuminate how Islamic ethics guide behavior and interactions, shaping a holistic and principled approach to life.

2 Review of Literature

Islamic ethics, while a central aspect of Islamic teachings, is often addressed indirectly in many books. These works typically explore ethical principles within broader discussions of religious duties, spirituality, Islamic law (Shariah), and social responsibilities. Islamic ethics covers topics like justice, compassion, honesty, and social conduct, often drawing from the Qur'an, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence. While classical texts may focus on legal or spiritual matters, modern works apply Islamic ethical principles to contemporary issues like bioethics and human rights. Here is a list of some important titles which deal with ethics in Islam directly or indirectly:

Dr. Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi's *Ethics in Islam* offers a comprehensive exploration of Islamic ethical principles, emphasizing the connection between faith and moral conduct. The book

covers various topics, including the importance of intention in actions, the pursuit of justice, rights and duties, family ethics, economic fairness, and environmental responsibility. Al-Qaradawi emphasizes that ethical behavior is deeply rooted in Islamic teachings, drawing on the Qur'an, Hadith, and classical jurisprudence. The work is both practical and theoretical, providing guidance on applying Islamic values to contemporary challenges. While the book is accessible, some sections may be complex for readers unfamiliar with Islamic philosophy. Overall, it is a valuable resource for anyone seeking to understand Islamic ethics.

In *Islamic Ethics: A Very Short Introduction*, Tariq Ramadan explores the foundations and evolution of Islamic ethics, which are rooted in the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholarly interpretations. He highlights the ethical duties Muslims have to God, society, and themselves, emphasizing principles like justice, compassion, and personal integrity. Ramadan also notes that Islamic ethics share common values with other religious traditions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism. He stresses that Islamic ethics are not static but evolve to address modern challenges while maintaining core values, showcasing the tradition's adaptability and relevance in contemporary issues.

Syed Ameer Ali's book *The Ethics of Islam* provides an in-depth analysis of the ethical principles and values that underpin the Islamic faith. It covers a wide range of topics, including the concept of God, human nature, morality, justice, and social responsibility. The author explores the Islamic perspective on various ethical issues, such as honesty, charity, forgiveness, and compassion. The book also examines the role of ethics in Islamic law and society. It discusses the importance of ethical conduct in personal and public life, and how it can contribute to the development of a just and harmonious society. The author draws on a range of Islamic sources, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and the works of Muslim scholars, to provide a comprehensive understanding of Islamic ethics. Ameer Ali's book *The Ethics of Islam* is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the Islamic faith and its ethical principles. It offers a clear and accessible introduction to Islamic ethics, and provides insights into the moral and social values that guide Muslim communities around the world.

Oliver Leaman's *Islam and Morality: A Philosophical Introduction* considers how Islam, the Qur'an, and other Islamic texts have approached the ethics of a variety of contemporary and historical issues. Oliver Leaman provides a varied, balanced, and thought-provoking account of how Islamic thinkers discussed medical ethics, wealth, poverty, the environment, and law. He explores the work of a range of Islamic thinkers, including Rumi, Ibn al-'Arabi, al-Ghazali, Mutahhari and Barlas, while taking into consideration the different branches of Islam and Islamic theology and law. The book also considers how Islam understands the concept of free will, the relationship between good and evil, and far less abstract topics like what we should eat and drink. Aimed at upper level undergraduates, postgraduates, and researchers working in Islamic Studies and ethics, this is one of the first books to provide a sustained reading of the importance of ethics within Islam.

The book Principles of Islamic Ethics for Contemporary Workplaces written by Abdus Sattar Abbasi and Razaq Raj explores how Islamic ethical principles can be applied in modern work environments. The book integrates foundational Islamic teachings—such as honesty, fairness,

accountability, and respect—into practical guidelines for the workplace. It addresses key issues like leadership, decision-making, and corporate responsibility, offering a comprehensive approach to ethics that is relevant for both Muslim and non-Muslim audiences. Strengths of the book include its practical framework, clear writing, and inclusivity. It provides actionable insights and connects traditional Islamic values with contemporary business practices. However, the book could have benefited from more real-world case studies, a deeper exploration of global business contexts, and a more nuanced discussion of challenges in implementing these ideals in competitive environments.

Sameeullah Bhat's book *Ethics and Human Rights in Islam* offers a thorough exploration of Islamic ethics and human rights, serving as both a valuable resource for students and a guide for educators. It aligns with the latest syllabus of the University of Kashmir and incorporates insights from international journals, ensuring relevance and academic rigor. The book is divided into two main sections: *Islamic Ethics* and *Human Rights in Islam*, with a total of seven chapters. The first section covers key topics such as the meaning and significance of ethics in Islam, the ethical teachings of the Qur'an, and the concept of *Fara'idh* (duties). It also discusses the relationship between religion and ethics, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the perfect model of conduct, and the social duties towards family, relatives, and neighbors. The second section focuses on human rights in Islam, examining their sources and the rights to life, property, progeny, faith, equality, and justice. The book also highlights the rights of non-Muslims in Islamic society, advocating for tolerance and respect.

Dr. Burhan Rashid's *Ethics in Islam: Basic Concepts and Significance* is a thorough exploration of Islamic moral philosophy. The book delves into fundamental ethical principles in Islam, such as good and evil, piety (*Taqwa*), wisdom (*Hikmah*), and justice, drawing on Qur'anic teachings, Hadith, and Islamic jurisprudence. Rashid presents Islamic ethics within the framework of *Tawhid* (the oneness of God), emphasizing moral responsibility and accountability to God. The book also addresses contemporary ethical issues, such as women's rights, environmental ethics, and the challenges of modernity, highlighting the relevance of Islamic ethical thought in today's world. While it is intellectually rich, some readers without prior knowledge of Islamic philosophy may find certain sections challenging. Overall, the book offers a comprehensive and accessible guide to understanding Islamic ethics, bridging the gap between theory and practical application in daily life. It is a valuable resource for scholars, students, and anyone interested in Islamic moral teachings.

These works on Islamic ethics offer a comprehensive understanding of the moral framework in Islam, highlighting the central role of faith in guiding ethical behavior. Key themes include justice, compassion, personal integrity, and the relevance of Islamic teachings in addressing contemporary issues like human rights, workplace ethics, and environmental responsibility. The texts explore these themes from historical, philosophical, and practical perspectives, emphasizing how Islamic ethics can adapt to modern challenges. However, a more detailed discussion of the principles and scope of Islamic ethics is needed to fully understand their foundations and applications.

3 Methodology

The study employs both descriptive methods, aimed at providing comprehensive insights, and analytical methods, intended to delve deeper into the subject matter. The primary sources utilized will predominantly stem from Islam itself, encompassing foundational texts such as Qur'an and Hadith, as well as the writings of Muslim scholars and Orientalists. This approach is designed to facilitate a thorough analysis of fundamental concepts, fostering enhanced comprehension among intellectuals and scholars engaged with the study's subject matter.

4 Ethics in Islam: Defining and Understanding the Concept

The word "ethics" originates from the Greek word "ethos", which means "character, spirit and attitude of a group of people or culture" (Loeb: 1971). In Islam, ethics is defined as Akhlaq (plural of khuluq) which means character, nature, and disposition. The word Akhlaq has a very close relationship with the word Khaliq (the Creator) and Makhluq (the creature). Therefore, Akhlaq assumes a good relationship between Khaliq (the Creator) and Makhluq (the creature), and between Makhluq (the creature) and Makhluq (the creature) themselves. The term khuluq appears in the following Qur'anic verse:

"And You [Muhammad (SAW)] are on an exalted standard of character" (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Qalam, 68:4, Surah As-Shura, 26:137).

Khuluq (Akhlaq) or character has been referred as the state of the soul that determines human actions. It is neither the soul nor the action. Such character could be acquired through training and practice. In addition, to differentiate between the words character and action, character is the internal and hidden state of the soul, while action is its outward manifestation. Character or Akhlaq is the inward cause while action is its outward consequences. A good character hence begets good action whereas a bad character yields bad actions (Omar, 2003, p. 4).

Al-Farabi (d. 950) was to be known as the earliest great Muslim philosopher who acknowledged the interrelation of Akhlaq or the state of the soul with human action (Omar, 2003, p. 4). Indeed, he defined Islamic ethics or Akhlaq as 'a science that studies the state of human soul'. Besides al-Farabi, Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030) in his work *Tahzib al-Akhlaq* defined Akhlaq as 'a state of the soul which causes it to perform its actions without thought or deliberation'. The definition of Akhlaq as the science of the human soul was further elaborated by successive writers and philosophers of Islamic ethics, such as, al-Ghazzali (d.1111), Fakhruddin al-Razi (d. 1209), al-Tusi (d. 1274), al-Dawani (d. 1502), and others. These successive writers and philosophers defined ethics or ilm al-Akhlaq as the science of the human soul which defines the characteristics and qualities of the soul as well as the methods of how to control and moderate them (Omar, 2003, p. 6).

Al-Ghazali stated that man consists of two forms, Khalq and khuluq or Akhlaq. Khalq refers to the physical form of mankind while khuluq or Akhlaq refers to the spiritual form of mankind.

Thus, Akhlaq from al-Ghazali's point of view is rooted in the soul and manifested through man's actions. Good soul will produce right action and vice versa. Al-Ghazali defined Islamic ethics or *Ilm al-Akhlaq* as the way to acquire the well-being of the soul and to guard it against the vices. It is also a study of certain religious beliefs and of rightness or wrongness of actions for the purpose of practice, and not for the sake of mere knowledge. For him, the study of Akhlaq includes the study of right actions towards God, family members, and society. Thus, the scope of Akhlaq, according to al-Ghazali, is very wide (A. Q. Muhammad, 1983, p. 22).

In contrast, Ibn Taimiyah viewed Islamic ethics or *Ilm al-Akhlaq* as a science that seeks to know which actions should be done and which should be avoided. It is a practical science meant to be applied. This perspective emphasizes the application of ethical principles to maintain virtues and prevent wrongdoing (R. G. Hovanniasian, 1983, p. 11). Accordingly, Islamic ethics involves maintaining virtues at their highest level; ensuring one avoids immoral actions and engages in those that are right and commendable (M. D. Sheila, 1984, p. 5).

The scope of Islamic ethics is numerous, far reaching and comprehensive because it influences various aspects of human life:

- It guides how individuals should worship and obey God, stressing the importance of a sincere and respectful relationship with the Creator.
- It addresses interactions among people, promoting justice, compassion, honesty, and integrity. It encourages kindness, fairness, and social support.
- It advocates for the responsible stewardship of nature, emphasizing the protection of animals, plants, and the ecosystem.
- It focuses on personal development, urging virtues like patience, humility, and self-discipline while fostering self-awareness and moral integrity.

4.1 Islamic Ethics in the Qur'an: Exploring Key Themes

In Islam, while the Qur'an lays the foundation of ethical concepts and standards, the Sunnah (way of life) of the Prophet (SAW) contains the actual practices of such concepts. For instant, in chapter 68 of the Qur'an, verse 4, the Qur'an states that: "You (Prophet Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character". When Āishah (RA), the wife of the Prophet (SAW), was asked about the personality (character) of the Prophet (SAW), she replied: "it was a reflection of the Noble Qur'an" (Sahih Muslim, Hadith no. 746). As ethical concepts taught by the Qur'an are embodied in the way of life of the Prophet (SAW), both the Qur'an and Sunnah are the source of the Islamic ethics. Various Qur'anic verses and number of Prophetic narrations provide a code of ethics, which covers the dimensions of human behaviour, some of which are the followings.

To begin with, according to the Qur'an, belief in Allah, humility, better communications and continuation of good deeds are the foundations of good morals. The Qur'an states that the best

person is the person who upholds these moral foundations and invites others to practice these values.

“Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness, and says, I am of those who bow in Islam”? (Al-Qur'an, Surah Fussilat, 41:33).

Furthermore, the Qur'an associates good morality with fair and compassionate behaviour towards parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours, while arrogance and vainglory have no place in the Islamic morality.

“Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; and do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near; neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), and what your right hands possess: For Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious” (Al-Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:36).

Similarly, the Qur'an prescribes the behaviour of being truthful in speech and actions. Truthful actions and sincerity illuminates the heart and improves the conditions of the mind, which eventually enhances the person's outlook and worldview.

“O ye who believe, fear Allah, and (always) say a word directed to the Right, that He may make your conduct whole and sound and forgive you your sins: He that obeys Allah and His Messenger, has already attained the highest achievement”. [Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahzab, 33:70-71]

In another chapter, the Qur'an prescribes the moral duty of authenticating received reports and narrations. The intellectual attitude of classification and scrutiny of given information is part of the moral duty of every man and women.

“O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest ye harm people unwittingly and afterwards become full of repentance for what ye have done” (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:6).

With regards to trust, the Qur'an states that man and woman need to uphold trusts and responsibilities (Amanah) that are bestowed upon them. According to the Qur'an, those in a position of trust including company managers, political leaders, decision makers, householders (husband and wife), etc., are required to uphold and discharge their duties in the best possible ways.

“Allah doth command you to render back your Trusts to those to whom they are due; and when ye judge between man and man, that ye judge with justice: Verily how excellent is the teaching which He giveth you! For Allah is He Who heareth and seeth all things” (Al-Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa, 4:58).

According to the Qur'an, corruption (Fasad), which basically means misappropriate and mishandling, leads to destruction of life; hence, the Qur'an commands Muslims to avoid Fasad, instead it calls them to do Ihsan (doing good or better).

“Do no mischief on the earth, after it hath been set in order, but call on Him with fear and longing (in your hearts): for the Mercy of Allah is (always) near to those who do good” (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf, 7:56).

The Qur'an promotes the moral behaviour of kindness, generosity, self-discipline and the culture of forgiving.

“Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men; -for Allah loves those who do good.” (Al-Qur'an, Surah Ali Imran, 3:134).

4.2 Islamic Ethics: An Analysis of Ahadith of the Prophet (SAW)

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) mentions that the aim of his mission (bi'thah) is to complete the good morals. For the Prophet (SAW) was sent to upgrade and inculcate the better moral values taught by all prophets (AS), religion of Islam aims to uphold and perfect universal values of human conduct. As such, the entire religion of Islam aims to serve good morality. The Prophet (SAW) said, “I have been sent only for the purpose of perfecting good morals” (Al-Bukhari, 1999).

Furthermore, the Prophet (SAW) was asked who are those whom Allah loves the most? The Prophet (SAW) replied: “those who possess good morals” (al-Tabrani). On another occasion, the Prophet (SAW), taught his companions to avoid indecency and immoral conducts, and stated that: “the best amongst you are those who are the owners of the best morality” (Tirmidhi, Hadith number 1975). In another occasion, the Prophet (SAW) stated the defining attributes of the Muslim character. He (SAW) said: “A Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands” (al-Bukhari, Hadith number 10).

Imam Al-Qurtubi quotes in his exegesis the Prophet (SAW), saying: “you cannot afford to win the hearts of people through your wealth, but you can win their hearts with smiling face and good morals” (Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol.7, p. 345). In other words, the real property that man owns and can share with and perhaps extend to others is the good character. As reported by Imam Muslim, the Prophet (SAW) said: “in the eye of Allah, the worst amongst people in rank on the Day of Resurrection is one whom people abandon in order to avoid his indecency” (Sahih al-Muslim, Bab al-Bir and Silah). Generally speaking, ordinary people turn to avoid and abandon those indecent individuals, while those decent individuals are loved by all.

5 The Ethical Framework of Qur'an: Principles and Scope

The Qur'an is a crucial guide for humanity, offering comprehensive moral and ethical teachings. It addresses a wide range of aspects of life, including faith in God, religious practices, social conduct, decision-making, intellectual pursuits, consumption habits, and communication manners. The Qur'an provides fundamental moral norms and values, aiming to elevate human behavior to its highest moral standards and prevent societal chaos.

Every page of the Qur'an contains moral guidance that is relevant for all people, offering practical and down-to-earth advice for living a good life. For instance, it advises recording transactions involving future obligations and having witnesses to ensure fairness and prevent disputes (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:282). This practical guidance underscores the Qur'an's role as a comprehensive moral framework.

The teachings of the Qur'an are universal, intended for all individuals regardless of their background. They aim to enlighten, unify societies, purify morals, and replace oppression with justice and fraternity. The Qur'an's ethical teachings span both individual and social aspects, promoting good over vice in every facet of human life. The following are some of the important ethical teachings of the holy Qur'an:

5.1 Justice

Justice is a central and pivotal ethical principle within the teachings of the Qur'an, and it is emphasized as a crucial aspect of moral behavior in all areas of life. Allah underscores the importance of justice in the following verse:

“Surely Allah enjoins justice, kindness and the doing of good to kith and kin, and forbids all that is shameful, evil and oppressive. He exhorts you so that you may be mindful” (Al-Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl, 16:90).

The Qur'an presents a comprehensive vision of justice that extends beyond mere legalistic applications. It calls upon individuals to uphold fairness in all their dealings and judgments. Specifically, Allah instructs people to:

5.2 Judge Fairly

The Qur'an urges individuals to render judgments with fairness and impartiality. In Surah An-Nisa (4:58), Allah directs believers to judge with equity, reflecting the inherent value of justice in maintaining societal harmony and trust.

5.3 Utilize the Qur'an in Judgments

According to Surah An-Nisa (4:105), the Qur'an serves as a fundamental guide for resolving disputes and making decisions. It is to be consulted to ensure that judgments are aligned with divine wisdom and moral guidance.

5.4 Avoid Partiality

Justice requires one to remain impartial, irrespective of personal biases or relationships. Surah An-Nisa (4:135) emphasizes the need to be steadfast and equitable even when dealing with one's own family, friends, or those in positions of power. This principle underscores the necessity of resisting personal inclinations that may distort one's sense of justice.

5.5 Truthfulness

The Qur'an places immense value on truthfulness and consistently encourages Muslims to adhere to honesty in both speech and action. Believers are urged to associate only with those who uphold the virtue of truthfulness, as highlighted in Surah At-Tawbah (9:119):

“O you who have believed, fear Allah and be with those who are true.”

This guidance underscores the importance of surrounding oneself with individuals who embody honesty and integrity. The significance of truth in Islamic teachings is further illustrated in Surah Al-Anbiya' (21:18), where the Qur'an states:

“Rather, We dash the truth upon falsehood, and it destroys it, and thereupon it departs. And for is destruction from that which you describe.”

This verse vividly depicts truth as a powerful force that overcomes and annihilates falsehood. The imagery of truth “crushing” falsehood emphasizes its inherent strength and ultimate victory over deceit.

5.6 Unity and Equality of Mankind

A fundamental principle of Islam is the belief in the oneness of Allah, which teaches the unity and equality of all people in the eyes of Allah. This core belief is clearly affirmed in Islamic teachings, which reject the notion of multiple ancestries for humanity and the concept of caste or class systems that perpetuate discrimination and segregation. The Qur'an states in Surah An-Nisa, 4:1:

“O mankind, be mindful of your Lord Who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the two spread countless men and women. And be mindful of Allah, through whom you demand your rights from one another, and of the wombs that bore you. Indeed, Allah is ever Watchful over you”.

Furthermore, the Qur'an goes beyond simply advocating for love and peace by emphasizing that all people are equal, regardless of their color, language, race, ethnicity, nationality, or background. It calls on humanity to transcend false divisions and recognizes that all human beings descended from Adam and Hawa' (Eve), created by Allah. The Qur'an aims to unite humanity under a single banner, stating that the divisions into nations and tribes are meant for the purpose of mutual recognition rather than contempt. The true measure of a person's worth in the eyes of Allah is their piety, as expressed in Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:13:

“O mankind, We created you from a single pair of male and female, and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another, not that you may despise one another. Indeed, the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is All-Knowing and Aware”.

In Islam, the concept of superiority is based solely on righteousness and moral conduct, not on race, ethnicity, or social status. This contrasts with Hindu beliefs that associate superiority with certain castes, and with Jewish doctrines that posit the idea of a chosen race. Islam also rejects any form of racial segregation, such as apartheid.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) exemplified this principle by appointing Bilāl (RA), an Abyssinian, as the first Muadhhdhin (the caller to prayer), and praised Salmān (RA), a Persian, as a member of his own family. Such actions highlight the importance of brotherhood in Islam, where distinctions based on race, color, or nationality are irrelevant.

The Qur'an's message of unity, equality, and brotherhood is further reinforced by Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) that condemn discrimination based on caste, class, or race:

“He is not one of us who incites class prejudices or fights for class interests or dies in its pursuit” (Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim).

“Seek refuge from the curses of the oppressed, regardless of their community, for the gates of Allah are always open to the oppressed” (Sunan Abu Dāwud and Sunan Tirmidhī).

“The worst type of prejudice is to support one's community even in injustice” (Al-Bayhaqi).

“He who knowingly supports oppression is outside the fold of Islam” (Al-Tabarani).

Thus, in Islam, all members of society, regardless of race, tribe, or language, are considered equal and entitled to the same fundamental rights. Islamic society, therefore, stands as a non-

racial, non-tribal, and casteless community, embodying the principles of egalitarianism.

5.7 Peaceful Co-existence

One of the fundamental teachings of the Qur'ān is the importance of maintaining peace within a community. The Qur'ān emphasizes that conflicts between individuals can escalate into larger disputes among their associates, potentially fracturing communities, states, and even entire nations into factions intent on causing harm to one another. Therefore, the Qur'ān encourages believers to foster peace among those united by faith. Allah instructs:

“If two parties among the believers fall into a quarrel, make peace between them. But if one party transgresses against the other; then resist the transgressor until it adheres to the command of Allah. If it complies, then restore peace between them with justice and fairness, for Allah loves those who are just.” (Surah Al-Hujurat, 49:9)

In cases where fighting is instigated by aggressors, the Qur'ān advocates that believers should cease hostilities as soon as the aggressors show willingness to negotiate peace. The principle of minimizing unnecessary bloodshed is paramount. Muslims are encouraged to embrace peace whenever their opponents demonstrate a genuine readiness to adhere to peaceful terms. True goodness, according to the Qur'ān, extends beyond merely living an upright life or avoiding harm to others; it encompasses a continuous effort to maintain peaceful relations with fellow human beings. The Prophet (SAW) teaches that individuals should strive to spread love and peace, ensuring the well-being and safety of others. Additionally, he advises against meddling in matters that do not concern oneself, as such intrusions can lead to conflict, confusion, and ultimately disrupt societal harmony.

The Qur'ān calls for peaceful coexistence as a path to achieving happiness, harmony, and stability, thereby enabling individuals and communities to attain the prosperity and tranquility they seek. It also instructs those endowed with power to assist the oppressed in protecting their lives and properties, emphasizing that such support should be motivated by a sense of duty to Allah rather than material gain. Allah says:

“Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not assist one another in sin and aggression. Fear Allah, for Allah is severe in punishment.” (Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:3)

5.8 Fulfillment of Promises and Trusts

In Islam, immense importance is placed on honoring agreements and trusts. This principle reflects a profound aspect of integrity and is a vital characteristic for personal success. It is a mark of true civilization to keep promises and be trustworthy.

A Muslim is expected to fulfill commitments and adhere to pledges. When entering into any contract, he must honor the terms faithfully. A person should be recognized for their reliability, with no concern for broken promises or dubious conduct. Similarly, oaths should be fulfilled with sincerity.

However, the fulfillment of promises and oaths is valid only when they pertain to legitimate and truthful matters. Promises related to sinful acts and disobedience to Allah are invalid, and oaths based on falsehood and wrongdoing are of no consequence and should be disregarded. According to the Qur'an, trust (Amanah) involves a responsibility given to individuals or groups, who are expected to manage it with honesty and integrity.

The Muslim scholars view trust as encompassing various responsibilities, including legacies, wealth, property, moral duties, and leadership. Even our own lives are considered a trust, and Allah expects us to use them wisely, as all actions will be accounted for on the Day of Judgment.

Moreover, trust requires that individuals appointed to high positions—whether public or private—use their office responsibly, not for personal gain or the benefit of relatives. Misusing public resources for personal purposes is a serious crime, and exploiting one's position is forbidden in Islam. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness:

“The successful indeed are the believers... those who faithfully observe their trusts and promises ... these will be the heirs. Who will inherit paradise and they will dwell in there forever” (Al-Qur'an, Surah Al-Mū'minīn, 23:1, 8, 10-11).

6 The Scope of Islamic Ethics

Islamic ethics is fundamentally rooted in the belief that man is the trustee and vicegerent (Khalifah) of Allah on earth. According to this worldview, human existence is part of a divine plan setup by Allah, who has appointed humanity to manage and enhance life on earth (Ta'mir) in accordance with His divine laws (Wahy) as revealed in the Qur'an (e.g., Al-Qur'an, Surah Hud, 11:61).

In this framework, the Qur'an underscores that Allah has endowed humans with intellect, knowledge, free will, and guidance—attributes that elevate man above other creations. The term Khalifah indicates a role of responsibility and duty, while Ta'mir signifies the ongoing process of improving life. As vicegerents (Khalifah), human beings are entrusted with the role of stewards and guardians (Musakhar), responsible for managing and nurturing both human and natural resources to enhance life and ensure the earth remains a habitable place.

Therefore, within this trilogy framework of Khalifah (trustee), Ta'mir (improvement), and Musakhar (steward), human beings have an ethical obligation to continually enhance the

quality and efficiency of life. Actions are deemed ethical in Islam when they contribute positively to life's improvement and adhere to divine teachings. This framework renders Islamic ethics not only divine and transcendental but also universal in its application. The following principles highlight the distinctive nature of Islamic ethics compared to other ethical systems globally:

6.1 Islamic Ethics on Universal Justice and Equality: From Tribalism to Ummatism

As a universal code of conduct, Islamic moral standards teach universal justice and human equality. First of all, ethical propositions do reflect universal moral truths regardless of culture, race, religion, nationality, or any other distinguishing feature; thus moral relativism has no place in Islam. Second, human beings are equal and there is no favouritism of any ethnic groups over another; no individual is closer or nearer to Allah except through good deeds. As such, discrimination and division of mankind into good or bad, intelligent and less intelligent, privileged or otherwise, based on ethnicity and kinship, have no place in the Islamic ethical system. Moral quality (Taqwa) and educational qualifications (Ilm) are what differentiate man. In this conception, tribalism is replaced with Ummatism, while ethno-centrism is replaced with universalism. Concepts like Cast System of Hinduism, Original Sin of Christianity and Chosen Community of Judaism have no place in the Islamic ethics. In this understanding, regardless of race, skin color, language, region, age and social class, man and woman are good only when they command good and prohibit evil (al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy an al-Munkar).

6.2 Principles of Islamic Ethics: Evaluating Conduct through Intention and Shari'ah

Human conducts are judged to be ethical or otherwise, depending on the intention of the individual and in accordance with the divine texts (Nusus al-Shari'ah). Human conduct is considered morally good (Amal Salih) by fulfilling two conditions. First, the conduct must be done with good motives (Niyyah Hasanah). Second, must be in accordance with the norms of the Shari'ah. In this case, both the motive and means (way) of conduct must be good. Good intentions cannot turn immoral actions into good, while good outcomes cannot justify the morality of immoral means; as such, Islamic ethical system is neither consequential nor utilitarian. Thus, a person's behavior can be wrong even if it results in the best possible outcomes. For instant, stealing or roping the wealthy people to feed needy people is immoral. The reason is because, though feeding needy people is good, however, stealing is immoral in itself and nothing can justify it. Similarly, an act can be righteous even if it results in a negative outcome. For instant, to defend your wealth and family is morally good even if that results your death.

6.3 Balancing Individual Liberty with Public Morality in Islam

Islam grants to all, the right of enjoying their natural rights such as freedom and liberty, but not on the expenses of accountability and justice. In this norm, it is possible to evaluate the individual's behavior based on the issues of accountability and public interest, and characterize his or her behavior as an immoral, even though such characterization might limit the liberty of the individual. Individuals are free to speak of their mind and act according to their freewill, however, their freedom and liberty ends where the rights of others begin. For instance, nudists might defend nudism based on the norms of the individual's freedom and liberty; however in the Islamic moral system, nudism is unethical and would remain immoral, simply because it contradicts with the moral principles of public decency (the concept of Awrah). In this respect, apart from the Qur'an and Sunnah which commands man and woman to cover their Awrah (modesty), nudism violates also the rights of public decency and public order, therefore, it is immoral.

6.4 Inherent Goodness in Islamic Ethics: Understanding Fitrah and Human Nature

In the Islamic ethical system, the nature of man is not evil nor graceless, but good (Fitrah). Man is born with good natural disposition; evil traits are acquired and additional to the human nature. Upon birth, man is innocent and his nature is not ungracious which requires redemption or baptism to wash his original sin; every person begins his life ethically sane and sound, not weighed down by any original sin. In fact, at birth man is already above the zero point in that he has the revelation and his rational equipment ready for use, as well as a world all too ready to receive his ethical deed. In this understanding, man and the world are either positively good or neutral, but not evil. In due time, this good character might become obscured by envy, hate, ego, jealousy, utilitarian and prejudice.

6.5 Principle-Guided Ethics in Islam vs. Utilitarianism: An Overview

It is true that in Islam, ethical values aim to bring human interest (Jalb al-Maslahah) and to prevent hardship (Dar al-Mafsadah); however, this cannot be equated with ethical utilitarianism. This is because, unlike utilitarian theory of ethics where moral conducts are evaluated based on their utilitarian outcome, not principles or motives, in Islam the concepts of Jalb al-Manfa'ah (human interest) and Dar al-Mafsadah (to prevent hardship) is principle-guided; permissibility of means (Wasilah) to serve human interest and (what) type of interest are required. With regard to the permissibility of means (Wasilah), the actions that are set to maximize the human interest (Manfa'ah) are required to be permissible (Mubah).

7 Conclusion

From the above discussion it can be concluded that in order to ensure the happiness and goodness of life, man is in a dire need to follow the Islamic ethics to monitor his relationship with God, with his family, with other fellow men in society, with other creatures of the universe, on one hand and even with his innermost self on the other hand. For example, Islamic ethics provides some manners in performing ritual obligations, such as, performing five daily prayers within stipulated time and also the manners in reciting the Qur'an in which ablution is necessary and the like. Therefore, man cannot ignore the Islamic ethics because negligence of it would lead to the deviation and going astray from the straight path of Islam. In terms of the relationship between man and his fellow men, it is clearly mentioned in the Qur'an that Muslims are brothers; thus, one should possess ethical characteristics, such as justice, truthfulness, righteousness, kind hearted, generous, and polite to one another. Similarly, Muslims should not be telling lies to others, spread false news, backbiting, slandering, and other unethical deeds. If every individual will abide by the prescribed Qur'anic codes of ethics, people can live peacefully and there would be no cases of crime such as, murder, rape, theft, incest, and prostitution and so on. Therefore, Islamic ethical teachings are vividly vital because they are a basic pillar for a healthy society. These teachings aim at establishing life's order and giving it regulation, dignity and serenity.

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