

BOOK SUMMARY OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN ISLAM BY SHAHEED
MORTEZA MOTAHHARI:

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SECTION 1 – Development:

DEVELOPMENT:

Development means Nurturing, which is associated with living things only. Development (Tarbiyat) is building potential abilities to real abilities. Hence, non-living things does not have development. It is not like building a house structure where you mix and combine different materials. It is a feature only in living things that grow.

We also deduce that development should be done according to the nature of things. If something does not have certain potential, we should not try to build those abilities. What does not exist cannot be developed. We cannot make a bird learn Mathematics. It should be clear that fear and threat are not part of growth process. A plant does not become a flower by force. It can only become flower through natural process by picking right soil, water, air, light, and temperature.

Keeping state of soul in consideration:

Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) advised not to force self in performing any activity. Every action should be done whole heartedly. Forcing self to do something turns us away from what we are trying to do. Just like mind gets tired, heart (soul) gets tired as well. Do not strain heart when tired. Instead, keep it relaxed and find tasteful activities for it. Push yourself for performing recommended prayers only when your heart is delightful. Resort to only mandatory prayers when your heart is not inclined.

Russel Bertrand writes in his book, Marriage and Morals, that Children should not be threatened with sin, fear, or stress. It brings us to the question, Is fear a method of child development? Fear

should be used not to develop children skills but to stop them from rebellion. It is not the method to bring child up but to stop him/her from falling. If the child does not understand why he is been praised or warned, then his soul will be doubtful about everything.

If a baby wet his clothes while sitting in his mother's lap and the mother gets angry or start punishing the baby, the child would not know why he got the punishment. he will go through spiritual anxiety every time he will have the nature's call. This can cause physical and psychological disorder. We can find in Hadiths that people used to bring their children to Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) so he could pray for them. Sometimes these children would wet their clothes while on Prophet's lap, but Prophet advised their parents not to get mad at them and if the child starts urinating, let him/her finish. If the child urinates knowing full well that it is not appropriate to do such act, then we should be strict with him/her.

Stage of Self-fulfillment (Takmeel e Ruh):

The goal of development should be the perfection of self. Some stages of life are more appropriate for developing skills and abilities. Many Hadeeths have emphasized focusing on child development after seven years. Seven to thirty years is the best time for skill development. These skills include educational, religious, and moral. A student's life is the best time of every person. Even though students are not self-sufficient financially, but those times are the most memorable because their information, thoughts, and personality improves each day.

Physical and Spiritual Development:

What is it that should be developed? Human possesses physical body and some physical capabilities, and spiritual existence with some spiritual capabilities.

Physical Development in view of Islam:

Does Islam emphasize on physical growth and development? It is a misconception that Islam dislikes people building themselves physically. For example, does Islam appreciates working towards improving your eyesight or does it promote those acts that weakens your eyesight? We read in a supplication after every obligatory prayers, O Allah benefit me from my hearing, my sight and my strength and give my eyes *Noor* and wisdom in religion.

Islam admires having physical strength and build. Physical development means maintaining fitness of the body. Neither eat too much nor too less. Hadeeth in Safinat-ul-Bahar says that stomach is the house of every disease and eating less is the best remedy. Islam gives recommendations regarding physical cleanliness, taking bath, brushing teeth etc for physical development. Those who think that caring for physical self is worshipping self or vanity are mistaken. There is a difference between paying attention to physical self and worshipping physical desires. The first thing a person who worships his carnal desires does is hurt his

physical body. Weakening your physical self is against Islamic teachings. It is favored in Hindu ideology because they see physical strength as source of physical desires.

However, if someone focuses entirely on body building, he is wrong in not giving importance to spiritual aspects. *Tan parvari* is not a problem, *Nufs parvari* is. In Islam, strengthening your body is not the end goal but a means.

Spiritual Capacity of a person:

As explained before, Development/Tarbiyaah means nurturing/growth of abilities. What are those abilities? How much Islam emphasized on it? and what does it say about them?

Experts in psychology who have studied human spiritual aspect have explained it in detail. An article in the first issue of annual periodical "Maktab-e-Tashayyu", titled "Din Bu'd-e Chaharum-e Ruh-e Bashar" (Religion as the fourth dimension of Human Soul) which relied on the views of Carl Jung categorizes human soul into four abilities

- Ability of truth seeking, knowledge, and intellect - Explained in detail in Section 3

- Ability of Morality - Explained in detail in Section 4

Human beings are ethical by nature and are created to love others. Human conscience inclines him to do good and if he does something wrong, he feels guilt and remorse. It is an age-old dilemma to find out what makes us feel for others and help others? Is it in our nature or in our nurture? If it is in our nature, then what aspect of our nature is associated with it? Do we feel for others because we do not want it to happen to ourselves or is this feeling without any motive?

- Religious aspect and Worship - Explained in detail in Section 5

Religious inclination is basic and natural tendency of human being. Human wants to follow the true, pure, and higher authority.

- Aspect of Art, and Beauty

Human being likes and appreciates beauty. Has Islam asserted emphasis on Art and beauty? Some people mistakenly think that Islam is very dry when it comes to talking about beauty. They made their opinion because Islam did not have

positive things to say about art and music. It is because women have been used to promote it.

When the sound or voice captivate the mind and you get high like with drugs or alcohol, such Music is called Ghina. Islam protects the intellect and mind of people and forbidding Ghina is one of the examples.

Sculpture is prohibited because it is jihad against idolatry. If people had made Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) idol, people would have been worshipping him without any doubt.

Dancing is prohibited because it is against the respect and dignity of a person to be performing such acts.

These prohibitions do not mean Islam is against art and beauty. There is a chapter in the Hadeeth book Al-Kafi names “al-Zay wa al-Tajammul”. Al-Tajammul means beautifying yourself. A hadeeth in Furu e Kafi says that Allah is beautiful and loves beauty. One of the miracles of Islam is the beauty and delicacy of Quran.

We can name a fifth ability as well which is the ability of invention and discovery.

SECTION 2 – Training and Education:

TRAINING:

Human training/upbringing is more difficult than other living beings. Unlike other living beings, there are many aspects of human development and all require balance. For example, when raising flowers there may be one or two aspects that you need to pay attention to. Human Training is not something that can be made in a factory like manufacturing a car or building a house.

There are two thoughts about training, Ancient Scholar’s approach and Modern Western thinker’s approach.

Old school approach towards Training:

Ancient scholars clearly thought that etiquettes should be instilled in a person so those actions can be done easily without putting much thought to it. A person should be skilled in performing distinctive acts. A person performs act exceptionally well if it becomes part of a person’s outward self, otherwise it is just the presence of the act.

Early scholars defined “Just person” as someone who had mastery in Taqwa and Parhaizgari (righteousness and consciousness). They believe that a person has attained Ikhlāq e Hasna

(morality and virtuousness) if he holds those moral standards even in his/her dreams. For instance, be so truthful that you do not even lie in dreams.

Training, to them, is the art of making habits. Human soul is flexible like a pottery, it assumes its shape based on how you mold it. It can be molded into a human being or a pig or a bird. A saying goes like, “childhood knowledge is like carving on stone”. Rather, the saying should be that a childhood training is like carving on stone. A preschool child is more trainable than a primary school child. Primary school child is more flexible to change than a middle school child and so on and so forth. Although a person can repent and change anytime but childhood age has more flexibility and over time psychological state becomes habits and difficult to change.

Good or bad habits early on stays with a person long term. Sheikh Saadi gave parable of wet and dry wood. Wet wood changes its form easily as compared to dry wood until when it completely dries out and cannot be changed at all. Molana Rumi explains it with a story that once a person grew a spiky plant on a way where people passed, and it bothered them a lot. He promised to remove that plant next year but every year he would delay to another year. With the passage of time he got older and weaker and the plant grew stronger. Our habits are like that plant whose roots become stronger and we get weaker over time. Molana Rumi also say that people give a lot of importance to the beginning of love. If love is strong in the start, it will stay strong till the end. Similarly, if you sow hatred for someone in start, it will remain till end. In other words, what has been fed in mother’s milk will stay until death. Muawiya used to say that he would do such things that children would be raised to hate Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam)

Ancient scholars believed that training comprise of building habits the way we want. Building habits is like building foundation while development is enhancing existing potential. Every nation molds her citizens the way they like and instill habits in them the way they want.

Western Thinker’s View towards Training:

Western scholars see moral training as related to mind and will. Their focus is on individual freedom. They do not consider religion or conventional wisdom as the standard. They are against the idea of making habits because it increases dependency. They contend that an action due to habit is neither done intellectually nor morally and neither with the recognition that it is good or bad.

Immanuel Kant and Jean Jaques Rousseau are at forefront of scholars who believe that Habit (that becomes part of existence) rules over a person. Rousseau writes in his book, Emile, that I should build a habit in people not to have any habit. he also says in the same book that a child is captive when born and dies being a captive.

What is training then according to modern western thinkers? It is developing will power with the freedom of mind and making moral decisions freely without any influence of habits.

There is a hadeeth by Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) in Bihar ul Anwaar volume 71, page 9 which is explained by Imam Jaafar Sadiq ('Alayhi Salam) that do not look at the prolonged Rakuh and Sajood of a person as he is accustomed to it and if he tries to avoid it, he will become afraid. This hadeeth tells us that habit defeats the moral value of an action.

HABITS:

Should we not have habit of good deeds? Modern Westerns thinkers are correct regarding disadvantages be they good habits or bad, but it does not mean that having habits are bad regardless.

Habits are of two types, 1- Habits due to practice that leads to effective action (Aadat e fayli) 2- Habits that appear due to external factors (Aadat e Infiali).

Aadat e Fayli

Many types of skills, for instance the art of writing, are due to the habit of performing the action over and over. Similarly, many traits in a personality are due to habits that leads to effective action, for instance habit of waking up early. Firstly, these habits do not interfere in a sense that a person is dependent on it. In fact, it gives strength in performing intended actions. Secondly, these habits make difficult tasks easy. Thirdly, western thinkers question the morality of these habits because they exclude religion being the standard. We Muslims, do take moral position with the influence of Intellect and Religion. Following Rational thinking and Religion does not mean we weaken other capabilities like physical power and growth power (good Habits).

Power of mind and will can be attained either by weakening your physical self or by controlling yourself while having best physical fitness. Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) did not allow people who used to come and ask him if they could become impotent so they could control their carnal desires. Someone who wants to make himself weak physically and sexually is like that wrestler who always fights weak opponent. There is nothing special in winning those fights.

We are of the stance that mental and will-power should be such that it controls habits if the habits start making one captive instead of making tasks easy for us. Some people fast even when they are old and medically unfit. Some people say I will not break fasting even if I die. They would not even listen to God and Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) due to their habits. This is something that should be avoided.

Aadat e Infiali:

Habits that a person performs due to external factors like smoking cigarette, comfortable bed, tasty food are Aadat e Infiali. It causes likeness and excitement in a person. These habits are bad regardless. In contrast to Infiali habits, Fayli habits cannot be considered bad just on the basis on having the habits.

EDUCATION:

Importance of Education:

Education and training make a Human out of a person. Instilling political, legal, and economic system is only possible through education whether the target is individual or society.

Education System:

With the presence of individual and collective freedom in society, there should be a **plan and program** to nurture individuals in society (or in a family)

Goal of Education is to build Ideal Islamic Personality:

Does Islam give importance to intellectual upbringing and awareness? What type of knowledge has been given importance in Islam?

With respect to upbringing and Training, Islam's moral and educational goal is well defined, to establish ideal Islamic personality. Although, the goal is clear but what should be the way to achieve it? How much importance does psychological aspects hold in Islamic education?

We will also analyze that how much our education has been according to Islamic way in the past and present.

Old Education system:

Our old education system was in such a way that a person would be learned but if you ask something aside from the books, you would find him blank and sometimes he would negate things what he established before.

A learned person describes his information while a reflective and thoughtful person uses his intellect. Having thinkers and intellectual personalities in society is important. Teacher's responsibility is to nourish students creative mind.

Too much learning for a prolonged time feeds in too much information but exhaust you from thinking and absorbing the information yourself. Human brain and stomach are alike. You should feed enough into it, so it processes it. Too much information or food does not leave any room to process/digest.

SECTION 3 – Training and Education through knowledge and Intellect:

KNOWLEDGE:

Knowledge is learning as well as absorbing:

Knowledge needs to address two issues. First is learning and second is development of intellect. Knowledge should not be only about learning. It should develop thinking capacity of students and should provide self-confidence and sufficiency. Teacher should be a catalyst to empower creativity within the pupil.

Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) said in Nehj ul balagha, "Knowledge is of two kinds: that which is absorbed (Iilm e Matbuh) and that which is just heard (Iilm e Musmuh). The one that is heard does not give benefit unless it is absorbed." (Peak of Eloquence Sermon 218, page 904)

The knowledge that is absorbed and gets conditioned by the character and attitude of the person, is not learned from anyone but is formulated by the seeker. Knowledge is of no use if it is only heard and not transformed into absorbed knowledge.

Contemplation is worship:

Murhoon Aqa e Hujjat explained ijtihaad very beautifully. According to him, if a new issue come across that has not appeared in the books or mind, then a mujtahid should apply the rules correctly and reach a solution else if someone has learned issues through book only and consult them to align their answers accordingly then that is not Ijtihaad. You will see One in a century who brings up new idea and change rules and the rest follows. This is true in every field like medicine, mathematics, and physics.

Contemplation/reflection/thinking is not possible without education and training. Islam calls reflecting/thinking as worship in addition to considering education as worship.

Islam's invitation towards Knowledge and Education:

Quran says in the very first revelation "Read in the name of your Lord who created. Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous. Who taught by the pen. Taught man that which he knew not." (Surah Alaq, Verse 1-5)

"...Are those who know equal to those who do not know? ..." (Surh Az-Zumr, Verse 9)

Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said "I have been sent to educate" (Bihar ul Anwaar, Volume 1 Page 206).

Quran says about Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) "It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom - although they were before in clear error" (Surah Jummah, Verse 2)

"He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever has been given wisdom has certainly been given much good. And none will remember except those of understanding. (Surah Baqarah, Verse 269)

Mandatory knowledge according to Islam:

It is important to consider scope of knowledge. If Knowledge is the objective like *Tawheed* (Oneness of God), belief in Prophethood, Angles, Holy Books and Judgement day, it is **Wajib Aini** (Mandatory to have) because according to Islam, belief should be based on knowledge and certainty. If it is a preface to the objective, then it is mandatory as well. Such knowledge that paves way to another Mandatory knowledge is called **Wajib Muqadami** (Wajib as prerequisite like Wudhu). Wajib/Mandatory commandments are **Tamheedi Wajib Nufsi** (Wajib in itself like Namaz). For example, Knowledge of Morality (Ikhlāq) is mandatory because it helps in purifying Nufs. Similarly studying medicine is **Wajib e Kifai** (responsibility of community as a whole) because community should have doctors. It does not have any limit defined and should be pursued as much as needed. Another example is of Trade. Does Islamic economic system need people who are the medium between producers and consumers? If so, then Knowledge of trade is Wajib as well.

“And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. And whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged.” (Surah Anfaal, Verse 60)

It is inaccurate to say that only religious knowledge is compulsory on a Muslim.

INTELLECT:

Intellectual training:

Our previous discussion was focused on Islam’s emphasis on Knowledge as well as reflecting/thinking and the difference between them. We will now discuss some ideological topics in the context of intellectual training.

Aqal should act as a Filter:

“Who listen to speech and follow the best of it. Those are the ones Allah has guided, and those are people of understanding.” (Surah Az-Zumr, Verse 18). Imam Musa Kazim (‘Alayhi Salam) addressing Hisham bin Al-Hakam (r.a) said that God the Elevated foretells good to the people of reason and understanding in His Book. Imam (‘Alayhi Salam) references above Aayah (Surah Az-Zumr:18) and after that said, O Hisham bin Al-Hakam, God the Majestic has certainly submitted His arguments to people perfectly through minds. (Tuhaf ul-Uqoul The masterpiece of mind, Page 335). Distinguishing between truth and lie, weak arguments and strong arguments, logical and illogical statements is a prominent distinction of Aqal.

Some people forward whatever they hear without putting any thought or research. Ibn-e-Khuldoon criticized some historians by saying that these historians are only concerned with the chain of narrators. He mentions that it is important to analyze the contents for accuracy as well.

Just like metal coins are analyzed for their purity, similarly speech should be analyzed as well separating correct contents from incorrect ones.

There is a hadeeth of Prophet Isa/Jesus (‘Alayhi Salam) that says take *Haq* from *Ahl-e-Batil* (People of falsehood) but do not take *batil* from *Ahl-e-Haq* (Truthful folks). It means we should focus on what is being said instead of who is saying it.

Result consideration and Consequential thinking:

Educating in Islamic system emphasis on focusing on future and not constraining self to present only. Every action should be performed with consideration to the results, necessities and consequences and conclusion.

Once a man came to Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and asked for advice. Prophet ask him three times if he is going to act on what he is going to advise, and the person said yes. Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said whatever you do, think and reflect upon the conclusion of it.

Knowledge and Intellect (iilm o Aqal):

Knowledge and intellect should be together. Having intellect but less knowledge can be compared to a factory that does not have enough raw material. Similarly, if there is too much raw material but the factory machines do not run, then raw material will be of no use.

Keeping Intellect free from Culture and Tradition:

“And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say, "Rather, we will follow that which we found our fathers doing." Even though their fathers understood nothing, nor were they guided?” (AL-Baqarah, 170) Imam Musa Kazim (‘Alayhi Salam) mentioned this beforementioned verse while explaining to keep intellect free from cultural practices.

There are many verses on this topic, and it is interesting that whichever prophet invited people to the message, they always faced the same answer. Even though every prophet came across different people with different traditions and different issues. “And similarly, we did not send before you any warner into a city except that its affluent said, "Indeed, we found our fathers upon a religion, and we are, in their footsteps, following." (Surah Zukhruf, Verse 23).

Imam Jaffar Sadiq (‘Alayhi Salam) visited one of his follower’s house which was very small and ordinary even though he could afford a better one. Imam (‘Alayhi Salam) asked, why do you live here. he said because it is his forefathers house and he feels attached to it. Imam (‘Alayhi Salam) said your father did not have awareness (Shaoor), do you want to live in the prison of your father unawareness? Go and build a better house for yourself.

Majority deception:

“And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying.” (Surah Inaam, Verse 116) Doing what most of other people are doing should not be the standard of actions. Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) said “O people! Do not wonder at the small number of those who follow the right path because people throng only around the table (of this world) whose edibles are few but whose hunger is insatiable.” (Peak of Elequence, Sermon 200)

For instance, if there are two paths and if majority of people takes one path while very few takes the other. A person making decision would be afraid and would pick the path where majority are heading, thinking whatever happens to most of the people would happen to him/her as well.

Another issue is getting Influenced of other’s decisions. Other people decisions should not be a standard for us. Those issues that are solely related to an individual should not be open for influence from other people.

Once there were some students who wanted to take day off and did not want to study. When the teacher came to the class, one student sitting next to him told him that he does not look well. After few minutes, another student commented that he looks pale. Teacher avoided their comments but after a while upon putting a thought on these student comments, he got sick and took bed rest after letting students go.

Imam Musa Kazim (‘Alayhi Salam) advised his follower Hisham not to care about other’s decisions. Imam (‘Alayhi Salam) said if you have a walnut and everyone tells you that you have a precious stone, it should not affect you when you know well that it is a walnut. On the other hand, do not be influenced by people who ask you where you got this walnut when you have a precious stone. Do not rely on people comments. First be comfortable with what you have, what skills you have, what is your faith and belief. If you see that you are not what people think then it should not make you delusional. Instead worry about improving yourself. On the other hand, if you feel that you are on the right path, then stay on that path even if people criticize you.

Spirit of Knowledge:

There is a difference between knowledgeable person and having the spirit of knowledge. There are many people who have the spirit of knowledge but does not have knowledge and many are knowledgeable without the spirit of knowledge. Wanting to know facts according to the actual composition of things is the spirit of knowledge. The true knowledge has both knowledge and spirit of knowledge. To conclusively reach the reality of a subject requires unbiased analysis. God helps when a person tries to reach reality without any bias or conjecture. Quran says “And those who strive for Us - We will surely guide them to Our ways. And indeed, Allah is with the doers of good.” (Surah Ankabut, Verse 69). We should not think that we are know it all when we attain some knowledge and should remember that “... and mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little.” (Surah al-Isra, Verse 85). The one who has the spirit of knowledge

reach to conclusion based on facts, proof, and sound arguments. They go from proof to conclusion instead of conclusion to proof.

Hadeeth states that Knowledge is attained in three stages. Knowledge seeker come across pride in first stage. In the second stage he realizes that he cannot be proud of what he knows. In third stage he realizes that he does not know anything about what he is supposed to know.

Intellect according to the Muslims:

Intellect (Aql) and faith complement each other in Islam. They are not seen as separate aspects. Iman without aql is only preached in Christianity.

In the Quran, intellect is sanctified and highly thought of and sought after, but in the logic of Muslims, the intellect or knowledge is sometimes looked down upon. Three main events regarding the discussion of Intellect (as a subject) happened in Islamic history. 1- Theological event related to Asharites and Mutazilites 2- Jurisprudential event related to Abu Hanifah's analogy (qiyas) and the opposition to it 3- Mysticism (Irfan) and Sufism (tasawwuf). These are the distinct schools of thought that have their own understanding related to intellect. You see other sporadic proverbial statements that have influenced Muslim societies which will be discussed first before going into the details of those 3 main thoughts.

The disparagement of Intellect and Knowledge:

In these disparaging statements intellect is condemned for being an alleged enemy of man. For instance, people say "ignorance is a bliss" or "Fortunate is so-and-so as he cannot understand certain things!" or "How fortunate are you! You are at ease that you cannot understand. I am unfortunate as I can sense, and I can understand."

The purpose behind these statements is to emphasize pain and discomfort associated with the harsh realities, defects, and inadequacies but when we rationalize it, we wrongly infer it against intellect by assuming that pain is bad. Is pain good or bad? Pain is awareness. Pain is not good in the sense that it's cause should not exist. When we say there should be no pain, we say there should be no cause of pain.; otherwise, if it causes pain then it is an ailment or defect. The human body feels pain because of discomfort. It is like the red fuel light in front of the driver's seat indicating the car is low on gasoline. The driver is expected to be displeased by it, but without red light engine would explode. Pain is wakeup call for man to seek treatment. The worst ailment is that which is painless in the sense that it shows no indication of existence. Some types of cancer are a case in point, when the patient is aware of it, it is already too late; otherwise if the cancer had been detected in its initial stage, it could have been treated easily.

Rumi says

As there is begrudging and lamentation in a sick person

The entire period of sickness is wakefulness

So know this principle, O principle-seeker

Whoever is in pain has a smell of Him

Whoever is more awake feels more pain

Whoever is more aware is paler faced

Whoever does not feel pain and is indifferent to problems and only minds his own business, is lax and senseless. Consider a person who gets what he wants fulfilling his needs without any regard to anyone else's needs and the one who feels for other pain. What is better? having aloof to other pain or feeling for it?

Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) advising Uthman ibn Hunayf in a letter said "Shall I lie with a satiated belly while around me there may be hungry bellies and thirsty livers? Or shall I be as the poet has said? It is enough for you to have a disease that you lie with your belly full while around you people may be badly yearning for dried leather" (Peak of eloquence, page 768)

Feeling pain is better in the sense that it is a sign of solidarity with other human beings; It shows that he really considers himself like a part of single body and because of ailment and wound in another part, he is not at ease.

Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) has a saying in this regard "The parable of the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other is that of a body. When any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 5665 and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim 2586)

To have such pain is praised by Islam.

Another matter, if taken seriously is far more unsound. It is treating knowledge and intellect as a tool to acquire material comforts in life. When a person who thinks is more learned and knowledgeable see uneducated and illiterate people having more material comforts, he begins to curse the intellect and knowledge. According to him, what is the use of all this knowledge that cannot even buy him vegetables? He does not see any value in knowledge that does not make him gain any material goods.

One must not value knowledge in terms of money and wealth.

Intellect according to Mutazallites and Asharites:

The most damaging effects in the history of Muslim thoughts were due to the arguments between Mutazallites and Asharites that took shape of ideologies.

A group of Muslims that later became known as Mutazallites believed that intellect and rationality is the basis of Islamic laws. They considered Aql as the standard in believing God, Prophecy, Angels, and all the religious edicts. It all started from the concept of beauty of Intellect (Aqli Husn o Qaba). Mutazilla considered Actions as inherently beautiful or wicked and that human Aqal recognizes beauty and wickedness. From this, Islamic law can be inferred because it cannot be departed from the intellect. Their primary example was question of justice and injustice.

Against them were Asharites, who were convinced of servitude and submission with or without rational justifications. They argued that Aql is not the deciding factor in Islamic edicts. All Good and Evil is what God commands or forbids. Asharite did not see any beauty and wickedness in things and did not consider intellect able to distinguish between good and bad. Only Islamic jurisprudence and laws are the standard of good and bad.

Sunni and Shia:

Asharite thought just because God has allowed and disallowed, things are good and bad. Mutazilite said God allowed and forbade things because they are either good or bad. This turned into war between Tafakur (reflection/contemplation) and Ta'abbud (servitude/submission). This conflict appeared towards the end of Banu Ummayah dynasty and reached its height during Abbasids dynasty. During Haroon and Mamoon rule, Mutazillite reached their peak where huge intellectual gathering, discussions and debates were conducted. Scholars of Hadeeth like Ahmed bin Hanbal had to bear harsh punishments from Mamun, Mutasim and Watiq. Tide turned when Mutawakil came to power and he was much friendlier to traditionalists and Asharites. He brought Ahmed bin Hanbel back to Baghdad from exile and elevated his rank. This new movement that started against Mutazillite, found Ahmed bin Hanbel as religious leader and Mutawaqil as political leader. From there, traditionalists established Jurisprudence as well as theology and became known as Sunni. The word Sunni did not come about in opposition to Shia but was used as distinction from Mutazillite. In today's world, both Mutazillite and Asharites are Sunnis. The followers of Imams are called Shias who agreed with Mutazillite and remained even after the whole Mutazillite movement was crushed.

Ibn Taimiyaah and Wahabiyat:

The biggest opponents of Intellect and reasoning are the followers of Ahmed ibn Hanbal. Ibn Taymiyyah (661 AH or 1263 CE - 728 AH or 1328) is at the forefront of it. His vast study and compilation of preaching is extra ordinary, but he was a literalist. Wahabiyat that rose around 150 years ago is the continuity of Ibn Taymiyyah ideology. Wahabiyaat is a movement against Aql which is why they are against philosophy and logic.

Akhbariyat:

Shias were immune from literalists mainly because Imam ('Alayhi Salam) teachings were very similar to Mutazillite so much that in history Shias and Mutazillites both are mentioned together as Adliyyah (Justice-advocates). The literalist movement found way among Shias four centuries ago when a man name Mirza Muhammad Astarabadi and later his student Mulla Amin Asterabadi adopted Ahl al-Hadith literalist style. Mulla Amin Asterabadi sternly rebuked Allama Hilli and accused Shia Ulemas for being allegedly responsible for introducing intellection in Islam. he respected Quran but considered that it is not for us to interpret it. Only Imams understand what the Quran states. he discarded reason saying "what we have is only the Hadeeth, what we have is only the Sunnah". He was against taqleed and ijtehad. He initiated the movement of Akhbaris which did same to Shias as Ahmed ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymiyaah did to Sunnis.

According to late Ayatullah Burujardi, Mulla Amin Astarabadi was influenced by Europe's movement against reason and for sense perception and empiricism that was originated by Decartes, Bacon and others. Europe made a case against rationality using sense perception as an argument while he used Hadeeth as counter to Aql.

Intellect according to Islamic Jurists:

Imam Abu Hanifa laid the foundation of Qiyas (deductive analogy). Qiyas means comparing two sources and deducing laws based on them. Although, it is an important method in Sunni Jurisprudence, it has not always been liked by some famous Jurists. It is Conjecture which is prohibited by Quran. Imam Malik ibn Anas did Qiyas two times in his life and even on that he was regretful. Ahmed bin Hanbal was outright against Qiyas. Imam Shafi took a middle position.

Aimah Ahl-e-bayt school of thoughts supported Mutazilla in their stance of reasoning and justice but they did not agree on Qiyas. In fact Shia Aimahs have strictly forbidden using Qiyas in Jurisprudence because Qiyas is not using intellect/Aql but it is a speculation. Sunni methods of Jurisprudence are Quran, Sunnah, Ijmah and Qiyas whereas Shia's base their Jurisprudence on Quran, Sunnah, Ijmah and Aql.

SECTION 4 – Training and Education through Morality:

MORALITY:

Difference between Training and Morality (Tarbiyat and Ikhlaq):

Even though moral development is itself a type of training, However, there is a sanctity in morality which is one difference between training and moral development. You can train a dog or a horse, but you would not use the terminology of moral development in these contexts. Similarly, training can be associated in negative sense like someone being trained for a crime.

Natural acts vs Moral acts:

Ethical/Moral conduct is above animal acts. They are not natural. Sometimes we use the term humanity when talking about certain acts. Morality is one of those qualities that are only in human. Our discussion is about finding out the standard that identifies moral acts.

Standard of Morality:

How do we figure out what is considered moral?

And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness (Surah Shams, Verse 7-8)

It can be said that benefiting others and negating self is one aspect common in almost all ideological views about Morality. One of our discussions is regarding those acts that benefits others but still cannot be considered Moral acts.

Materialists have lowered moral standard. Our time is considered the time of declining morality. All schools of thought are vocal about moral values, but their definition has lowered the bar.

Different Views on Standard of Ethics/Morality:

- **Selflessness –**

Based on this view, any selfless act is considered Moral. As soon as a person's act become selfless, it become Moral.

This view is not complete because even selfless acts can be natural sometimes. A mother's love for her child is selfless but natural. We find mother's love in human as well as animals. Do we see mother's love with her child as Ethical/Moral or Natural?

In addition, every action of a person is to either get some benefit or keep self from harm even though it may appear to be selfless.

- **Acquired Selflessness –**

This view, which is like the Selflessness perspective, considers acquired selflessness (which is not Natural selflessness). If a person loves others as a mother loves her child, then that action is considered as Moral.

- **Love for Humanity –**

Some scholars have mentioned selflessness in broader scope. They defined moral conduct with respect to love for humanity. This view is getting much traction these days. In ancient scholars, Aristotle believed man is a social animal. He believed man loves self as well as the society. Modern thinkers like Bacon also recognized this idea but recognize that such opinion has not been proved scholastically.

- **Sacrifice –**

Another view to measure Moral conduct can be in terms of sacrifice. It is important to see why a person sacrifice for the sake of others. Sometimes people sacrifice for fame, or for self-love, or to maintain social status or due to the feeling of patriotism. They even sacrifice their own life for their cause.

This view is not comprehensive because sacrifice can be due to self-cause or self-love.

- **Internal conflict between real and illusory spirit:**

In a bid to confirm their point, present day psychologist says that there is an internal conflict regarding what we should do and what we incline to do. It is a conflict between Fitrat vs Tabiyat. For example, if a person decides to exercise or eat less, one impulse would motivate to control self while the other impulse tempts to let go. he feels good when the moral self dominates and feels defeated when nature dominates.

What is it that gives us satisfaction when we feel successful against self and defeated when we lose from self? It is something deep within human that generates these feelings. This theory is associated with Kant.

Why do we feel defeated when we lose from our own nature and feel triumphant when our “moral self” wins as if we won from another person? Should it not be like how a father wrestle with his son and at the end it does not matter who wins. Feeling defeated is the success of the spirit as well because the so called illusory/unreal self is human spirit as well.

- **Inner Beauty:**

Others view Morality from the perspective of inner beauty that attracts other people to the person possessing it. They define Morality in terms of beauty in acts like the act of kindness, patience, steadfastness, truthfulness. This perspective is found in the attitude of Saints, Mystics and Sufis.

- **Balanced Acts:**

A rational theory that sees spiritual beauty as much a reality as physical beauty. Acts are either good or bad. Good and beautiful acts can be considered Moral. Human intellect can distinguish good and bad. For instance, everyone understands that truthfulness is good, praiseworthy, and beautiful act. The proponents of this idea consider human intellect and mind as the guiding force for moral acts. An ethical person is one who is ruled by his intellect instead of animalistic traits like lust, anger, or power. Scholars consider Justice as the basis of Morality. Justice means balance according to them. Just as there is symmetry in physical beauty, similarly symmetry in spiritual matters leads to beauty. When people meet an intellectually beautiful person, they feel the affection towards him.

According to Moralist scholars, Justice is in the root of Morality. Doing justice in your manners bring about beauty.

Will Durant in his book quotes from Plato that "intelligence, he argued, is no merely intellectual affair; it is an esthetic or artistic harmony of the elements in a man's character, a symmetry, or order, or proportion, in human conduct; and the highest virtue is not brilliance of mind, or unmoral strength, but the harmony of the parts with the whole, whether in the individual or the state." (The Pleasures of Philosophy, Page 89-90)

How do we find the balance in Moral matters to Achieve Beauty in acts? It is, Afterall, the perfect balance and proportionality that makes a thing beautiful. One answer is that it an intellectual matter, and it is not something that can be described but perceived. Another answer is that you can measure it against the desired outcome. To explain it further, every power is made for a specific purpose. Using the power excessively is Ifrat (Extremism) and using it less is Tafreet (Negligence). There should be a balance or perfection in using the power (for instance, sight, might, sensual powers). Hence, one view is that a person achieves beauty from his/her action and another view is that action possess beauty.

- **Mind over body:**

This view considers that the excellence of mind is to rule over the body. It maintains the duality of mind and body while recognizing the unity of it as well. Body is lowly and cannot be the source of inspiration. A perfect balance between all the powers/capabilities yields a perfect mind and soul. Lustfulness, selfishness, self-indulgence or over ambitiousness makes the mind and soul submissive to the bodily desires.

This perspective is also in favor of the balance of human powers but not because the balance of these powers brings about the beauty but because rule of Soul depends on it.

Classical thinkers considered only mind to be the virtue of soul and considered rest of the powers as bodily. Even thinking was considered temporal.

According to this ideology, Morality is neither a form of love nor beauty but the freedom of mind and its permanent rule over body.

- **Moral/Ethical Consciousness –**

According to this view, credited to Kant, Morality is not associated with love or beauty or mind but consciousness that is built in human. It says that Moral Acts should not be associated to anything. Moral acts are free from feelings and should be based on responsibility. The basis of responsibility is human consciousness. They should be done without any motive but should be done based on conscious determination.

Kant sees Moral action independent of any condition, restriction, or motive. It should be done only through a sense of responsibility. Here, according to this view, a person condition is such that as if he is acting according to what he has been told from the inner self.

First, it is important to discuss the objective of performing good deeds. Is it possible that a person does something good without any intended benefit to self? Even when a person seems to lose from his/her action, he is still expecting some benefit when looked at from a different perspective.

Materialist inaccurately says that our every action is solely to benefit self. Others believe that moral actions should be done with the only aim of benefitting others.

Our stance is that pleasure is a factor in performing an action. Some people act to benefit others and seek pleasure in doing so. Do we get pleasure from performing a good deed or displeasure by avoiding it? Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) helped others wholeheartedly but if he ('Alayhi Salam) did not feel the pleasure of performing good deeds, would he ('Alayhi Salam) still have done it? Sometimes a person can get more joy by benefitting others, even when it means preferring others above self.

Now according to Kant, a moral act should be unconditional. By unconditional if he means it does not benefit self then we can accept this position. On the other hand, if impartial and unconditional act means that benefitting others should not be the objective, and it should be empty of any pleasure, and it should be done only to fulfill our responsibility then we disagree.

- **Farsighted Intellect:**

Another rational view, that has been acknowledged by most materialists as well as Bertrand Russell, is called individual intellect or farsighted intellect. According to them, moral

consciousness and love for humanity are of no use. Farsightedness is in the roots of Morality. If I steal my neighbor's cow, he can steal my cow as well. If I lie to someone, that person can lie to me as well causing much more damage to me. Dealings based on mutual benefit requires us to be moral to others.

Darwinsim, whose philosophy is based on survival of the fittest, says that every living being is selfish. According to this view, Cooperation and mutual help does not exist as a feeling but stem from survival. Darwin as well as others who favored his philosophy tried to define moral conduct but could not do so.

This ideology negated all these views of humanity, inner beauty, mind, moral consciousness. Instead, it advocates intelligence and cleverness as Moral acts. It sees self-serving as the primary motive. Accordingly, intelligence is used to benefit self and when the intelligence increase, others benefit as well. It is based on individualism that sees mutual benefit a necessity in society which leads to respecting other's rights and domain. You can achieve most of what you want if you go along with the society and tune your aim according to the society. Bertrand Russell is proponent of this ideology and explained it in his book "The World I Know".

This concept has brought down the level of Morality because it is based on egocentric ideology. This type of Morality can only work where there is balance of power where everyone has the same potential influence over others. Moral values are neglected whenever one side is more powerful than other.

- **Likeness:**

They consider Human as the criterion of everything including knowledge, philosophy and truth. According to them, truth is relative to human. Truth follows man and man does not follow truth. Truth does not exist, and it is what an individual consider it to be. Ancient Greeks believed that Moral actions depends on human likeness and choice. Mutazilite school of thought in Islam held similar view and considered Ijtihad of Mujtahid to be the truth and that there is no room for error. If Ten Mujhtahids giving ten different rulings on same issue, then all ten are forms of truth. Mukhattah, on the other hand, saw truth only in one form and Ijtihad to be in conformity of reality or against it.

Jean Paul Sartre believed society grows by itself like a plant. Being an existentialist, Sartre measures everything from individual perspective. Moral standard does not exist without individual according to him. In order words, morality is an individual phenomenon which is defined by individual and can change with time.

- **Zeitgeist (Spirit of the age)**

Hegel used the concept of Zeitgeist (Spirit of the age) to talk about collective spirit that helps society improve and progress. This collective spirit affects thoughts and attitude and guides people towards improved morality that sometimes rejects old outdated moral values. Even though he believed in God but in this case, he considered Zeitgeist to be the guiding source of morality instead of God. It is one of those thoughts that has left a deep effect on the world generally and Europe specifically. It shook the roots of fundamental values. People in Europe were first believer in Ruh ul Quds (Sanctity of Spirit) and now believe in Ruh e zaman (Spirit of time). In doing so, they have switched from permanent/absolute moral standard.

Even though it is not mentioned in European books but there is a methodology in acting upon the spirit of the age. Does it change at the turn of each century or does it change gradually? Even if it changes gradually, are there some people who are ahead of others who get the inspiration first and the rest receives it later? Is there a progressive and intellectual class who act as Prophets, with the exception that these prophets receive inspiration from the spirit of the age and not from God? These intellectuals are considered the prophet and messengers for the elites.

- **Selfishness and Self-Indulgence:**

Most of world's moral ideologies consider Jihad against selfishness and self-indulgence as the standard of Morality. It means, any act where goal is not self is Moral. Only two or three ideologies believe that we should feed into self and the criteria of good is to take care of self. Nietzsche believed that goodness is to be struggling for more power and influence. Self-control does not mean anything. Weak should not be helped and we should let them to themselves until there are no more. If someone dies in a well, we should throw more stones at him. Such person's biggest sin is they being weak. Accordingly, If we base Morality upon these principles we can have the ultimate form of humanity and in few generation we will have ideal race.

Nietzsche ideology criticized Prophet Isa (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) ideology due to his emphasizes of love and kindness among each other.

In Islamic ideology, Khudi (Self) has two types. One should be destroyed like selfishness, self-indulgence and following carnal desires and the other type of Khudi should be developed like self respect, dignity, and courage.

- **Religious Morality:**

It is another school of thought where they claim that religious actions are moral actions. Moral standard cannot be knowledge, philosophy or intellect but should be only based on Religion.

One way of explaining this ideology is that it was an ancient moral conduct which was based on fear and hope for next world. This ideology resembles ideology of farsightedness (which people like Bertrand Russell hold) who does not see any value in human soul and to them everything is based on personal benefit. To them, Moral actions are an opportunity to benefit self as well. In the case of religious morality, you gain or lose (hope and fear of heaven and hell) from moral actions based on religion instead of intelligence.

Another explanation can be that Religious morality should not be viewed based on benefit or loss. Instead, every person needs and wants to worship God. It is in their original nature.

- **For sake of God –**

According to this view, we should see Morality according to Religion. All the other views defining Moral conduct are theoretical and philosophical who have ignored religion while defining Morality.

All actions with the goal and intention of God's pleasure are Moral acts. Selfishness is negated in this view as well but at the same time the goal is not to benefit others. Although, it may happen that others do get the benefit, but the target is seeking the pleasure of God.

"We feed you only for the countenance of Allah. We wish not from you reward or gratitude."
(Surah Ad-Dahr, Verse 9)

Dilemma of modern-day Moral definitions in non-religious societies:

We are at a discussion where the question is, can Morality exist without Religion? Even if it exists, Religion play the role of backbone in Moral conduct.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, a Russian novelist, said that if there is no God, everything is permitted. Morality is held back wherever Religion has been separated from Morality. As much as human civilization and technology has progress in non-religious societies, Morality has been degraded. Why? Because Moral conduct is not well defined in non-religious ideologies, even though there have been several attempts to define it. Getting away from practicing religion and weak faith has declined morality as well. Even if we do not consider Religion as the only driving force of Morality, we still cannot deny that religion plays an important role in defining Morality.

Another question is whether Morality is universal or bound to class, status, day and age. Denying the universality of Morality is denying it to be an established phenomenon.

One perspective is that Morality changes according to changes in conditions, especially economics. Morality of a farmer is viewed different from the morality of a hunter. This idea has

raised many issues. Matters regarding Men, Women, honor, and respect during agricultural age and industrial age have been dealt differently. Some people misinterpret Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) saying that "Do not raise your children the way [your] parents raised you, they were born for a different time" and imply that Moral/Ethics changes with generation. Another issue associated with changing morality is with upbringing. If Morality changes with time, we cannot have well defined rules for upbringing.

Basis of Moral Standard:

It is not enough to focus on good Ikhlaq/Morality and good training. All these ideologies of Ikhlaq around the world are different. One Moral ideology calls one action moral and other calls it immoral. Morality is a traditional and legal activity in terms of "how should it be" and "behave this way".

What is good conduct? If you task an engineer to build a mosque, then ask what idea does he have about the building? We have to see first what he means by good building. Or if you ask a tailor to make a good dress. What does he see as good dress? We will understand Morality in Islam if we find out what does Islam considers good and bad.

Moral development of people or society depends on Moral standards defined by people or society. The one who considers humanity as standard of morality wants to see people and society based on love for fellow human beings. Those who view Morality as a form of beauty wants to instill beauty and balance. Others who consider inner consciousness as standard wants to train their conscious self by doing good according to their gut feelings. The one who believes in dominant soulful mind wants to train people to rule their mind/spirit over their body.

Morality backed by Religion:

All the mentioned moral standards are acceptable if they are backed by religious doctrine.

All these moral standards reveal reality of moral conduct but if we do not separate these definitions from physical/material aspect, we are not going to validate it since Morality/Ethics itself is metaphysical concept. Humanity in a person would be apparent when the person is convinced of meaningfulness/maanviyat because Humanity itself is maanvi.

One who says Morality (Ikhlaq) is related to beauty must believe in the ultimate beauty, we cannot be convinced of any other beauty. Without God, there is no reason to do beautiful acts. Moral consciousness is meaningless without ultimate moral authority. One who base his/her Ikhlaq on gain or benefit should believe in Justice in after world.

We can be associated with multiple Moral (Ikhlaqi) ideologies/perspectives and do not have to be limited to one provided we do not have selfish and materialistic goals.

Basic rule of training is believing in God. Under the conviction of God, we should deliberate the feeling of serving humanity, enhance the sense of beauty and perfection, invigorate mind and soul, and benefit from the sense of gain and loss as well.

Is morality absolute or relative?

Analysis of Ethical Relativism:

Islamic rulings consist of three basic parts 1- Thoughts and intelligible matters which are called “Principles of Belief” (Asul e Aqaid) 2- Soul related matters which are called “Ethics/Morality” (Ikhlaqiyaat) 3- Physical matters or actions which are called “Laws/Jurispudence” (Fiqh).

Morality hold an extra ordinary importance.

There are numerous instructions and teachings in Quran that are Ikhlaqi (about Morality). First, we will figure out if Morality is absolute or relative then we will find out if Islamic teachings about Morality are absolute or relative. This question is profoundly related to our previous discussion about standard of morality because some perspectives consider morality absolute and others do not.

Ethics/Morality is absolute or relative?

Those who consider that Moral actions depends on **human likeness** and **choice** does not see morality as absolute. They see truth dependent on human mood, it can change over time and depends on personal and social perception. Greeks discussion about Truth and Reality was in context of Being and Existence. If someone says that there is god, they will say since so and so said there is god then there is god. If someone else says there is no god, then they would say there is no god because so and so said so. This was a philosophical discussion about truth, but it led to the same opinion about Morality and they contended that Man is the criterion of Morality.

Morality and Truth are related in the sense that Morality is what should be, and Truth is what is.

Likes and dislikes change over time. If we accept this perspective, then we will have to accept that Morality changes over time as well. With this ideology, we do not have any moral code of conduct because the standard is personal likeness.

If one accepts this theory, then Morality is totally relative. A well-known thinker with this theory is Sartre who measures everything on individualistic level. He sees Ikhlaq dependent of individual self. According to him, anyone performing an action does it with intention that it is a good act and since it is good, he will choose it for others as well.

Complimentary to the concept of Likeness, another perspective is related to social inclination and likeness. It is based on Hagel’s concept of **Zeitgeist (Spirit of the age)**. They talk about improved morality by collective spirit of society. Their morality changes as society progresses. They reject actions and behaviors associated with previous generation/time as not progressive.

However, all the changes by society are not always progressive. Quran mentioned many nations that became morally corrupt after much progress which resulted in the destruction of those nations.

One of the Perspective we discussed previously is **love for humanity**. The target of this view is outside self. Loving and serving others cannot be temporary. It must be permanent, hence their Morality is Universal. It does not change with time or individual. When we say humanity, we do not mean a skin and flesh human like animal. Rather, we mean human with wonders and unique distinctions from other animals. Some can argue that it's fundamentality can be challenged because some people are cruel and oppressor and should not be loved. To respond to it, Loving humanity is used in general and does not addresses any specific person. Avoiding fight is not a condition for loving humanity. If a person is cruel and does not have humanity. he possesses the potential of becoming human but cannot be considered human.

Standard of morality by **farsighted intellect perspective** (derived from Russel and others) is the harmony between personal interest and collective interests. Based on this definition, Morality is absolute and does not change with time and age.

Those who hold the rule of the **mind over body perspective** see Morality as absolute.

Plato's concept of Attaining excellence through **intellectual beauty** holds morality as absolute as well.

Morality is Absolute and Moral actions are Relative:

Morality and Moral actions should be considered differently. They are not the same thing.

Certain actions/Fayl cannot be always considered Moral and neither can be said that certain action is against Morality. An action can be Moral from one perspective but immoral from another. For instance, bowing to another person can be moral or immoral depending on who the person is and the intention of the one who is bowing (if it is out of respect or being subservient)

Primary and Secondary Rulings (Ahkaam e Awaliya aur Sanviya):

Scholars say that everything has a unique identity but sometimes a different attribute is applied to it. For instance, Zaid is human, this is his primary identity but ihis secondary identity could be a cruel human, someone's son, and an engineer etc. Due to his secondary properties, different rules apply to him. For instance, Goat meat is halal and pork is haram but if you steal a goat, the meat will be haram. Similarly eating pig meat becomes wajib if it can save your life.

If we consider Moral conduct relative to other things then it would appear as relative (not absolute) as Hagel, Sartre etc believed but if we consider Morality as primary identity of its own, we see it as absolute.

It has been said that modesty was a necessity during farming age when it was important for woman to stay at home, it is not needed anymore because now machines can perform same repetitive tasks in homes. Now woman came into workforce, so chastity and modesty are not important anymore. However, according to our view this perspective is not valid. Modesty is a spiritual state and holds a permanent status in our society. It is related to mind's rule over carnal desires. Since the idea behind Modesty has solid foundation, the Morality of it is permanent as well. There can be flexibility in the act of modesty (way or degree to it) but the concept is absolute. A woman can be touched and seen by a doctor if her life is in danger and if there is no lady doctor available.

Morality and Moral Actions:

Morality act as a mold that shapes a person's soul. With the well-defined moral principles, a person may react certain way at one situation and react differently at another. But without the moral principle, he could be one person at one situation and a different person at another.

We should identify Moral issues and advise to implement moral habits but at the same time we should not mix moral acts with morality. We should find modern and innovative ways to perform moral acts.

Example of Truthfulness:

Sometimes moral act is considered immoral and immoral act is considered moral. Being truthful is good and lying is bad but is truthfulness always good and lying always bad? Sometimes lying is good when there is wisdom behind it and truthfulness is bad if it causes chaos or affliction. Here, one can argue that every lie is spoken due to some reasoning behind it. To counter that argument, a lie is almost always spoken to gain some benefit. Why do we tell truth and why do we lie? If you must lie to achieve collective welfare and there is no other way around it then it is a moral act.

Many intellectuals criticized Sa'adi for saying that falsehood resulting in conciliation is better than truth causing trouble. Mentioning this saying about falsehood and truth, Muhit Tabatabai mentions in an article that Britishers banned many books including Gulistan e Sa'adi because they considered it causing Moral corruption but the actual reason of banning the book was something Sa'adi mentioned in the start of the book. Sa'adi calls out Zoroastrians and Infidels (British Christians in this case) as the enemies of God which was considered ingraining unfavorable teaching to the children.

In cases where reconciling two parties and saving life of an innocent is involved, telling lie is lawful.

Imam Ali Hadeeth explanation:

Is morality different for men and women? If it is a constant phenomenon then it must be same for both. Perhaps, one can argue that morality for men and women is different and quote Imam Ali hadeeth in Nehj ul Balagha where certain traits in women are appreciated and same are disliked in men. "Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib ('Alayhi Salam) said: The best of women's attributes are the men's worst: self-conceit, cowardice and miserliness. So if a woman is self-conceited, she will not let one approach her. If she is miser, she safeguards her wealth and that of her husband. And if she is a coward, she is scared of anything displayed before her." (Peak of Eloquence Quote 234, page 871).

Self-conceit/Pride, cowardice and miserliness all are defects so how can they be considered qualities? In Arabic, some words are used that does not mean the psychological condition but the action at certain point. In the same hadeeth, Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) explains what he means by it. Pride will keep strangers away from her, cowardice will keep her cautious and away from trouble, miserliness will make her spend money carefully.

Pride according to Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) Hadeeth:

In tradition, it is mentioned that "arrogance with the arrogant is (a form of) worship" If someone is arrogant, we should not behave to make him/her more arrogant. Pride is considered distasteful even during war but there are exceptions.

In the treaty of Hdaybiya, it was decided that Muslims would go back that year and would be permitted to perform Umrah the following year. In the treaty, it was agreed that people of Makkah would avoid seeing Muslims (so they do not get influenced), so everyone moved out of their houses to the nearby mountains for three days during Umrah tul Qadah (Umrah in 7th Hijri one year after treaty of Hdaybiya). Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) advised Muslims to move boastfully so nonbelievers of Makkah see Muslims as powerful and zealous. Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) knew that they could still see them hence asked Muslims to walk in pride to leave an impression in their hearts.

Another example is when Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) was walking back with pride after killing umru bin abdu during battle of the trench, Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said that this way of conduct is disliked by Allah except during time like this.

The hadeeth about pride in woman is admired while dealing with stranger men, just as pride was recommended during Umrah tul Qadah in front of nonbelievers or was liked when Imam Ali a.s was walking back during battle. This action is associated with specific situation. A woman attitude with other women, parents, brothers, sisters, relatives should be opposite to self-conceit. Although, in Hadeeth the word Zahw (self-conceit) is used which is not the same as pride. It means the attitude should not have delicacy, courtesy, humility, and humbleness. This pride should be a moral action but not attribute of morality.

Islam appreciates hijab (cover/protection) between man and woman be it physical or practical.

Cowardice according to Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) Hadeeth:

In this hadeeth what does cowardice means? Here it is the matter of woman's dignity and respect and not cowardice and bravery. Bravery as morality is appreciated for both man and woman.

All the hadeeth about bravery never separated men from women. Muslim women have always been brave. During the battle of trench, an enemy soldier saw Hasaan bin Thabit hiding among women so he attacked everyone. Hazrat Safia bint e AbdulMusalib took Hasaan bin Thabit sword and finished the enemy. Hazrat Fatima a.s and Hazrat Zainab a.s are role models in bravery and will power.

Woman is the guardian of human modesty (Insaani Amanat). It does not only affect her individually but affects the whole humanity. Men and women in this respect are not equal. Women have the responsibility of safeguarding Modesty. It is not bravery for woman if she goes into the crowd of men alone. Defending dignity is not the matter of bravery but a matter of guardianship of modesty for women. A person carrying very precious and delicate antiques was being provoked by some idlers. Any reaction to those provocations could possibly break those antiques so he did not pay attention and went about his way. Here he preferred to care for those antique instead of showing bravery because those antiques were dearer to him than the bravery.

Miserliness according to Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) Hadeeth:

“So keep your duty to Allah as best ye can, and listen, and obey, and spend; that is better for your souls. And whoso is saved from his own greed, such are the successful” (Quran 64:16)

Quran calls stinginess and snobbery as greediness of soul (“Sheh Nufs”) when a dollar out of the pocket feels like a part of body being detached. Tawheed means disassociating self from all dependencies. It was considered a great virtue when Hazrat Fatima ('Alayhi Salam) gave away her wedding dress in the way of Allah.

In this Hadeeth, miserliness is not implied in individual and personal affairs. Instead, responsible spending in husband and wife's mutual wealth is alluded. Hazrat Ali ('Alayhi Salam) was the most generous in spending personal wealth but he was the most strict in matters related to government treasury. Once Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) was doing official work under the treasury candle when some people came for personal meeting. Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) turned off treasury candle because the visit of these people was not related to government affairs.

Defense with Courage and Truth:

Defense are of two kinds in Islam 1- Defense of Haqq and Truth 2- Defense of Collective Rights. Both kinds of defense applies to both men and women. Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil is incumbent upon both men and women.

Wal mu'minuna wal mu'minatu **ba'duhum auliya'u ba'din**... (and the believing men and the believing women some of them are Auliya (helpers/guardians/allies) of others. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong ...)(Quran, 9:71)

Regarding Collective Rights, Quran mentions “Allah does not like the public mention of evil except by one who has been wronged. And ever is Allah Hearing and Knowing.” (Quran, 4:148) Here Quran uses the Arabic word “Mun” for “by the one who” which is not specific to men but includes both.

Hazrat Fatima (‘Alayhi Salam) Bravery:

Hazrat Fatima (‘Alayhi Salam) and Hazrat Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) as a couple were free from any material or monetary desires but she confronted caliph of the time very bravely to defend her rights over garden of Fadak. Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) talking about Fadak said “What shall I do? Fadak or no Fadak, tomorrow this body is to go into the grave” (Peak of Eloquence, Letter 45, Page 768)

At the time of death, Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) whispered to Hazrat Fatima (s.a) something upon which she started crying. Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) whispered something again and she (s.a) started smiling. When asked about the reason of crying and smiling, Hazrat Fatima (s.a) said that first time Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) told me that soon he will depart this world and second time informed me that I will join him soon as well.

Hazrat Fatima (‘Alayhi Salam) was unwell after Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) death and was bed rested quite often. She (s.a) knew that her death is near. During that time, Fadak (a garden some 80 miles away from madina) gets taken away from her. It did not have any material value to her, but it was a right that was taken away.

She fought for it with the caliph of the time and spoke very eloquently for her right in Masjid e Nabvi. When you know your death is near, interest in material things decrease and you do not tend to indulge in material disputes. During those last days of her, she leaves her house at multiple occasions and defends her rights.

Bravery of Hazrat Zainab (‘Alayhi Salam):

If cowardice was a moral trait of woman, Hazrat Zaynab (‘Alayhi Salam) would not have publicly spoken to the people of Kufa, or in ibn ziyad court when she was threatened to be killed or at yazeed court where the pomp and splendor of court matched Roman empire castle. There were intricate palaces with intricate doors and guards. There were golden chairs where nobles were seated. An extraordinary assembly full of magnificence. Yet, Hazrat Zaynab (‘Alayhi Salam) did not pay attention to all this and said to yazid that “you are too despicable and insignificant for me to address – you do not deserve to be my interlocutor”. Could a coward woman say those words when there was a real threat to her life.

Therefore, there is no difference in the moral personality of a man and a woman. Moreover, the difference has to be with the behavior and not the character and personality.

SECTION 5 – Training and Education through Worship:

Ibadat and Training Program:

Under the “Spiritual Capacity of a Person”, **One factor** we discussed was Aqal and thinking. Thinking acts as a lamp which provides enlightenment. **Second factor** that holds special importance is Taqwah and taskiyah e Nafs. It helps strengthen moral courage by means of action. Only understanding and clarity is not enough, it takes strength and will power to act. **Third factor** is Ibadat. It should be done in such a way that it increases love and spiritual wayfaring and increase faith.

The spirit of Ibadat is longing for God and freedom from the unmindfulness. Quran says “Indeed, I am Allah . There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.” (Surah Taha, verse 14). Another verse state “... Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.”(Surah Ankaboot, verse 45)

Fighting against things that cause forgetfulness to prayers is Jihad as well.

Ibadat’s outward form and Training program:

Islam has given a specific form and shape to Worship. It has included some training programs as part of worship. For example, it is important to be wearing clean clothes for Prayers. There is a famous tradition quoted in Al-Jamiah al Sagheer Volume 1 that God looks at your hearts and not at your outward appearance. Then why is it mandatory to pray in clean clothes? Islam includes the element of training in worshipping sometimes mandatory (Wajib) like wajib Ghusl/Bath and Wudu/Abulution and other times recommended (Mustahab) like always staying in ablution and staying clean.

Ibadah and Mutual Rights:

Considering other’s rights, Islam has rules regarding Worshipping. Offering prayers on someone’s property or rug require permission of the owner. Prayers of a worshipper is affected by the spiritual state of the worshipper but not by the ownership of the worship place or cleanliness of clothes but still it is important to get the permission of the owner to preserve other’s social rights.

Namaz and facing towards Qiblah:

Why Islam instructs us all to face towards Qiblah while offering Salah when God is everywhere in all directions? These instructions do not have anything to do with the spirit of worship but important for unity and integration. “And to Allah belongs the east and the west. So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allah. Indeed, Allah is all-Encompassing and Knowing” (Al-Baqarah, verse 115)

“Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for mankind was that at Makkah - blessed and a guidance for the worlds” (Surah Aal-e-Imran, verse 96). In addition, God link us to the history as well and remembers Prophet Abraham (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and earlier prophets. Prophet Abraham (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) rebuilt Kaaba following Prophet Noah (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and Prohpet Adam (sallallahu alaihi wasallam). The very first place of worship on the world is given so much importance that everyone turns towards that direction to pray.

Exercise in Self-Control (Zabt e Nufs):

Self-control during Worship is very important aspect given by Islam. Salah, Hajj, and Fasting all are different ways of controlling self. Worshipper controls his/her desires like eating, sleeping and controls emotions like laughing, crying for anything other than God during Salah. Looking here and there invalidate prayers as well.

Exercise in Punctuality:

One of the focal point of prayers is punctuality. Even minutes and seconds are considered.

Peace and Harmony:

In Surah Hamd (which is compulsory in every Salah),we say “Iyyaka Na Budu Wa Iyyaka Nastaaeen Ihdinas Siratal Mustaqim siratal Ladhina An-Amta Alayhim Ghayril Maghdubi Alayhim Waladdalin” Even if Salah is performed individually, the words You alone “we” worship and You alone “we” ask for help are uttered. Even though the spirit of worship is to focus only on God, Islam gives us the collective spirit and unity. We say “Asalam o alika ya ibadallah e saleheen”. (May peace be with the good among Allah’s servants). It is an open declaration that we want peace and harmony among the servants of Allah.

Intention: (Nivvah)

The spirit of Salah is Intention. Asul e Kafi mentions Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) saying that action is useless without intention. Similarly, a hadeeth in Sahih Bukhari mentions that ““The deeds are considered by the intentions, and a person will get the reward according to his intention.”

While it is enough to make the intention in heart, Ayatullah Burujerdi emphasized that we should set intention for the prayers loudly as if we are talking to ourself.

The Elements of Intention:

A person's action can be either machine like (for example walking or doing something habitually without putting any thought to it) or with focus and well intention with a goal or target in the view.

Intention includes what am I doing and why am I doing it. There should be Ikhlas (sincerity) in worship and should not be done habitually without putting any thought to it.

Importance of Intention:

Mentioned in Asul e Kafi, Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) says that the Intention of the faithful is better than his action. What does this hadeeth mean? Does it mean intention alone is better than action with intention? No. It means Intention is an important part of action. If action is the body, intention is the soul. Although both soul and body make up a person, but soul is more important than body.

Habit makes things easy. The more you are habit of doing something, the easier it is and takes less effort and thought. Actions out of habit are performed in auto pilot. To avoid effects of habit, intention is given high importance. Intention keeps motive alive in worship and gives meaning to the act of worship.

Worship and Devotion:

Many analysts and psychologists consider Worship and Devotion as natural remedy to many personal problems. One of the factors that makes human distinct from animals is the pursuit of seeking truth.

Some may question the motive for Worship and argue that Religion teaches people either to worship to go to heaven (preaches greed) or to avoid hell (preaches fear). They say such person is greedier than worldly greedy people. However, this criticism is not valid. There are multiple levels of Worshipping. It can be understood from following quote in Nehj ul balagha "Some people worship Allah out of their desire for rewards; this is the worship of traders. Another group worships Allah out of fear; this is the worship of slaves. Yet another group worships Allah out of gratitude; this is the worship of freemen" (Peak of Eloquence, Page 55)

Freeman worship to seek nearness to God out of love and servitude. Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) used to spend most of his night in prayers. Hazrat Aisha observed that Prophet spend so much time standing in worship at night that sometimes his feet would swell. One day she asked why do you spend so much time in worship. Regarding you God says "That may Allah forgive you what has passed of your sin and what is to come". Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) replied, "should I not be a grateful servant?"

Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said "the best of people is he who loves to worship". Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) also said "Blessed is he who loves to worship, loves it heartily, is attached to it by his body, and is detached (from everything else) for its sake"

Ibadat is not only related to spirituality but it is an action as well. Those who love worship use Faraghat (freeing self from everything you are doing) and Khilwat (seclusion) to enjoy their closeness to God. First, worshiper long for physical isolation and later they achieve inner isolation where they are among people, doing what they are supposed to do but not attached to anything. When a person reaches that stage, every ease and hardship look the same to him/her. All the struggles of life does not affect his stature and state of existence.

You will not find any statement about heaven or hell in Dua e Komail. There are other numerous prayers of Imam that we can not fully grasp the meanings of it and are way beyond heaven and hell.

Although the worship of the one who does it out of love of Allah is by far superior than the one done for the purpose of heaven and fear of hell but it still holds some weight. On one hand you have some people who does a greedy act and would do anything for it and on the other hand you have people who does greedy act but ask God for help. If we want to train people in such a way that their livelihood stay maintained and they attain nearness to God as well, then we should start with the way of wishing for heaven and fear of hell. Heaven of physical pleasure is more practical to talk about and then advance towards higher stages. Many people do not go beyond physical desires and pleasure and for them pleasure of heaven and fear of hell is enough to consider. Quran says “Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but pleasure of God is greater. It is that which is the great attainment.” (Surah Tawbah, verse 72)

Role of Ibadah in Training:

If a person wants to train himself and his children according to Islam, then he should emphasis on Prayers, Worship and devotion (Dua and Ibadah).

Besides the fact that Ibadah (worship and devotion) is part of human need, it helps in other aspects as well. Even if a person serves humanity all day long, he still has the need to take time out for worship. In a day, a person should at least give one hour to himself where he disconnects from the rest of the world to look at his inner self and seek help from God. Few moments of his day should be spent where he does not have anything else in his mind but God. Every day he should evaluate himself (Muhasiba) to find out what have he done throughout the day. Then realize mistakes, ask God for forgiveness and sanction self not to commit that mistake again (Musharita).

“al-ṣābirīna wal-ṣādiqīna wal-qānitīna wal-munfiqīna wal-mus'taghfirīna bil-ashhār “ (The patient, the true, the obedient, those who spend [in the way of Allah], and those who seek forgiveness before dawn) (Al-Iman, verse 17). You can see how the Quran includes all dimensions. On the contrary, an extreme dervish would only talk about repentance and devotion and nothing else. Whenever the Quran talks about al-ṣābirīna (the patient), it refers to battles. Al-ṣābirīna refers to

those who have self-control in battles. Al- ṣādiqīn refers to the rightful and truthful who do not stray at all from the right path. Al-qānitīn refers to those who express obedience in perfect humility. Al-munfiqīn refers to those who give whatever they possess. Al-mus'taghfirīna bil-ashār refers to those who spend the dawn seeking Allah's forgiveness. These traits must go hand in hand.

Balanced Path:

We tend to take extreme positions and if we like something, we forget everything else and go overboard. Quran mentions the companions of Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam), "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah ; and those with him are forceful against the disbelievers, merciful among themselves. You see them bowing and prostrating [in prayer], seeking bounty from Allah and [His] pleasure.... (Surah Al-Fath, verse 29). It means they are fearless in battleground but humble and merciful among themselves. Their bravery and daring character does not take over their identity outside the battlefield. Islam talks about all aspects. There was a time when our society was suffering from a disease where people saw Islam limited to worship only. Some societies may emphasis more on collective nature of Islam or only see it as a personal matter.

A Mujahid stays up all night praying, fasts during daytime but the sleeplessness, hunger and thirst does not affect his ferocity in battlefield. A person who stays up all night praying and fast during daytime but never leaves the premises of Mosque would not be a true Muslim. We should not forget this dynamic nature of Islam or else Islam will lose its composition. For example your body needs each vitamin in its required amount and even lack of one vitamin can adversely impact the body.

Strengthening of Will Power - Worship:

Will power is different than Desire. Some people think that Will Power comes from intense desire but that is not the case. Will power is within a person which is related to intellect whereas desire is related to human mood (it comes from outside). Desire is inversely proportional to self-control. A person under the influence of his desires is controlled by external force. On the contrary, strong will power helps a person control his self, his actions and his destiny.

FAITH guarantees rule of Will Power:

None of the training school of thought downplays the role of strengthening Will Power. Sartre and his like (existentialists) have said something about Freedom that alludes to freedom as following desires but the existentialists themselves claimed that they are misunderstood.

All schools of thoughts are proponents of domination of will power over desires but how do we realize it? What guarantees this domination? Knowledge and Intellect is the light that provides clarity, nothing more than that. Apart from this enlightenment, does it guarantees making right

choices? Man is intrinsically self-centered and secures his own interests. Extent of his control over his desires is limited to his self-interest. Here, we come to the point that there should be another “desire” that is above “self-interest” that should provide us direction. It is Faith that prevents from pursuing self-interests as well as present us with desires and wishes beyond selfish materialistic interests.

SECTION 6 – Training and Education through SELF:

SELF:

Root of Islamic morality is to make man return to his eternal/primordial self and understanding his honor and nobility. Attention to one’s essence helps us attain ma’rifat Allah.

Two types of Self:

Man has two types of I’s. One is celestial, which is the same thing mentioned in the Quran as Allah’s spirit. “And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud. And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My [created] soul, then fall down to him in prostration." (15, 28-29)

The other “I” requires the negation of others and strives to ensure his protection and survival. Holy Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said “treat yourself as your arch enemy”. Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) says in *Nehj ul Balagha* that “beware that sins are indeed like wild horses on which their riders have been placed.” Accordingly, we can deduce that Sin is defined as losing control of self. Then Imam says, “Beware that piety is like trained horses on whom the riders have been placed with the reins in the hands” (*Nehj ul Balagha* Page 351-352). This natural “I” must be opposed and crushed. It is a wall that must be broken down. In the words of Aqa Tabatabai, man is an “employer” being in the sense that he wants to employ other creatures including his fellow human beings. In today’s jargon, man is an exploiter in the sense that he treats everyone or everything as a utility for himself. When a person is predominantly controlled by his natural impulses, the result is nothing but war, conflict, or competition.

How come something that should be fought with is respectable? Can this dual self be explained? Does it mean man have 2 contradictory self? If so, is not multiple personality a disorder?

Man is a being with different dimensions and stations. “man is an animal, vegetal, and inanimate angel” is true not in the sense that he is an angel as well as an animal, a plant as well as an inanimate object. Instead, he is only a single being but having multiple dimensions. He is like a multi-story building. One story is one reality, another story constitutes another reality. His higher station is that of an angel, nay even higher than angels in one aspect; that of a plant in another aspect; that of an inanimate object in yet another aspect.

The Physical and Spiritual Pleasures:

The question of Madah (matter) and Ma'na (Concept) or material and conceptual is age old. Intangible things are of value to man. In contrast to animals, there are things in human that are not tangible or perceptible (no body and mass) like freedom.

Money is not supposed to be taken from the palm of the free

Neither patience from the lover's heart, nor water from the sieve

We enjoy physical pleasures associated with our limbs and an external physical factor our limbs interact with like eating. Then we have spiritual pleasures like freedom to choose whatever belief we like for ourselves. Spiritual pleasures are different from physical in that it does not depend on any limb or external factor. Like a thought gives pleasure to someone or winning a contest gives honorary pleasure. This is not the same as interaction of external factor with internal as like listening to music. It is a feeling that originates from within, not related to sight, hearing, taste, smell etc.

At any rate, material and immaterial things are an issue to man. Philosophers categorizes pleasure as three types 1- Physical pleasures 2- Intellectual pleasures 3- Imaginary pleasures.

Physical pleasures are condemned in a sense not to encourage them. Imaginary pleasures are not a form of physical or sensory pleasures. One must be in pursuit of Intellectual, not imaginary pleasures.

Mental Torture and pleasure:

Actions can lead to person's mental torture and mental pleasure that he feels at the depth of his being. This torture and pleasure exist in everyone. How do we explain a confessing murderer asking for death penalty, or the Hiroshima pilot ending up in mental hospital or the person who hung himself to Kaaba curtain due to regret of fighting against Imam Hussain ('Alayhi Salam). It tells man is not limited to physical dimension. It explains humanity. Through self-admonition and attention to the self, we can gain consciousness and inspiration.

On one hand, the western world totally strips man of values and regard him nothing but machine. On the other hand, they talk about human rights and the inherent dignity of man. So ridiculous is this line in the preamble of the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights":

"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world..."

What is "inherent dignity"? The human being you have presented has no difference with the automobile except the former is more complex than the latter.

VALUES:

The root of value: (Reesha e Arzish)

Value is the price or cost of something. We value things and are attached to them. Value is evaluated based on supply and demand and ownership. If you compare land and air, land has value whereas air does not because it is free and abundant and is not owned.

Something has value that has

1- Assigned purpose, 2- not easily possessed and monopolized 3- Not free 4- Increases your Darajaat (Status)

Knowledge of self as root of moral aspirations:

Spiritual matters acquire value in the same way. Just like man is instinctively attracted to physical matters, he is instinctively attracted to spiritual matters. Spiritual values are unique only in human beings whereas material values are found in animals too. The more spiritual value a person has, the more human value he has and hence more perfection in humanity.

Islam emphasis introspection whenever it wants to draw man towards excellent morality. A man sees his own nobility and dignity when he sees his inner essence. He acquires inspiration right there. Man could acquire moral inspiration through self-cognition. This moral inspiration is not taught by any human being but acquired by cognizance of self alone.

“And [by] the soul and he who proportioned it and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, he has succeeded who purifies it, And he has failed who instills it [with corruption].” (Quran, 91:7-10)

Value of Self:

Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) said “The worth of a man is according to his courage (Himmat). His truthfulness is according to his bounds of temper (Muruwat). His valor (Shuja’at) is according to his self-respect and his chastity is according to his sense of shame (ghairah)” (Peak of Eloquence, 840).

At another place, Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) said, “Miserliness is a shame; cowardice is a defect; poverty disables an intelligent man from arguing his case, and a destitute person is a stranger in his own hometown. Incapability is a catastrophe; endurance is bravery; abstinence is riches; self-restraint is a shield” (Peak of Eloquence, 828). Imam (‘Alayhi Salam) also said “He who adopts greed as a habit devalues himself; he who discloses his hardship agrees to humiliation”(Peak of Eloquence, 828).

Self-Respect:

In many Islamic expressions, state of honor and magnanimity or the sense of dignity is mentioned as “self-respect”. Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said “Seek the

needs by self-respect”. That is, if you need anything from others, request for it but do so with self-respect. When honor and dignity is at stake, there is no room for behaving as needy person. In fact you should behave as independent and needless person. Imam Sadiq (‘Alayhi Salam), talking about social interaction, is quoted in Tuhaf l-Uqul “never be so crude that people desist from approaching you and never be so humble that you will be disgraced by whoever knows you”. To be inwardly humble is different from publicly showing oneself to be disgraceful. In Wasayl al Shia, Imam Jaffar Sadiq (‘Alayhi Salam) mentions Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) saying (volume 2, page 203) “you must have 2 contradictory feelings in your heart. Always think that you are in need of the people by behaving as if you need them and always think that you are needless of the people by behaving that you are needless of them.” Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib (‘Alayhi Salam) said: Whoever maintains his own respect in view, his desires appear light to him. (Peak of Eloquence, Saying 458, page 923).

Imam Hussain (‘Alayhi Salam) on the Day of Ashura said “Death is nobler than enduring ignominy” and “may humiliation be far from us”. At another place Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) said “Death with honor is better than life in humiliation”.

Preciousness of the Self:

Quran 63:8 says “...And to Allah belongs [all] honor, and to His Messenger, and to the believers...”

“Truly, We have honored the children of Adam. We carry them on the land and the sea and have made provision of good things for them [to eat], and have preferred them above many of those whom We created with a marked preferment.” (Quran 17:70)

If a man discovers who he really is, he will find himself the most honorable over all creations. The spirit of man is treated as precious thing. Mean qualities devalue it. Man, very Self is an **asset**. Imam Hadi (‘Alayhi Salam) said “do not feel secure from anyone who degrades himself.” Those who do not have any value of their Self, will not value anyone else. Imam ali (‘Alayhi Salam) said “Do not be slave of others. For Allah made you free.”

Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) in Nehj ul Balagha advised his son Imam Hasan (‘Alayhi Salam) in a letter that “Keep yourself away from every low thing even though they may take you to your desired aims because you will not get any return for your own respect which you spent.” This valuable thing is above anything else. It is the thing that national prestige of a country depends on. No nation, not even at the cost of the death should relinquish them. Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) said “The greatest of people is he for whom the entire world is lesser in value than his self. Imam As-Sajjad (peace be upon him) said: “He who honors himself will debase the worldly life.” He was asked to define the greatest of people, Imam As-Sajjad (peace be upon him) said: “The greatest of people is that who does not see the world as great.” (Tuhaf ul Uqool, page 242)

Ghairah (Sense of Honor and Shame):

Imam Ali (a.s) said “Anyone who has Ghairah (honor and shame) never commits adultery” that is whoever commit adultery and violates another’s chastity has no shame. Whoever has sense of shame towards female member of his family has also a sense of shame in relation to another family’s female member. In other words, his sense of shame does not allow him to transgress upon the female members of other families.

Some traditions regarding Power and domination: Sa’di said “I am the ant; which men tread under their feet, and not the bee, of whose sting they complain”. he was mistaken in his approach to say that he is blessed to be incapable of harming others. Rather, according to Islam, you should be like a bee who has power to sting but keep everyone safe from your power.

“This is the abode of the Hereafter which We shall grant to those who do not desire to domineer in the earth nor to cause corruption, and the outcome will be in favour of the Godwary. “(28:83) Quran 3:139 says “So do not weaken and do not grieve, and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.” Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) says in Nehj ul Balagha “Real death is in the life of subjugation while real life is in dying as subjugators”.

Some traditions regarding Poverty and neediness: There is a tradition in Tuhaf ul Uqul, page 279, from Imam al-Sajjad (‘Alayhi Salam): “Asking help from the people degrades and debases life. It removes modesty and shame. It diminishes dignity and soberness. It is nothing but poverty. The less a person asks help from the people, the more he becomes rich and needless”. Poverty means neediness. It is not only associated with money. Dependence on others is poverty. Rich person is the one who does not ask anyone to meet his need. “Asking from people is the humility of life, the remover of pudency, and the debasement of reverence. It is the permanent poverty. Lack of asking from people is the permanent richness.”(The Masterpieces of the Mind, page 243)

Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) said: It is good for the rich to show humility before the poor to seek rewards from Allah, but better than that is the pride of the poor towards the rich with trust in Allah. (Peak of Eloquence, 916).

Some traditions regarding truthfulness: A truthful person is on the height of salvation and dignity, while the liar is on the edge of ignominy and degradation (Peak of Eloquence, Sermon 85, Page 440). Imam Hussain (‘Alayhi Salam) quote that is related to honor/Ghairat is “Truthfulness is honor and lying is weakness”. And do not obey every worthless habitual swearer. [And] scorner, going about with malicious gossip (Quran, 68:10-11). False swearing is unlawful in Islam and even true swearing is Makruh

The undermining of values in the West:

Europeans have detached material things from spiritual matters. They have assigned profit to physical gain but have not been able to recognize gains to spiritual matters. How come physical things have been given value when they have nothing to do with perfection or betterment of

humanity. Material gain is considered perfection and appreciated which is hypothetical, imaginary and nominal.

The reason is lack of distinction between “matter” (maddah) and “concept” (ma’na). There is a denial of believe in a power beyond the physical. They do recognize that man gives value to certain things, but they do not have any answer to what the root of this value is.

Some have said that we ourselves create value. It means he seeks his own welfare and perfection. Looking through Marxist lens and seeing man as only physical being, they see morality, spiritual values, human nobility, and humanity meaningless. To them, Man is a machine or physical entity and does not have any nobility or value. They fail to understand that Man is not limited to the physical dimension. Today’s world is called world of undermining values because they strike at the foundation of values and at the same time, they want to offer value to humanity, and this is a contradiction.

After reaping the fruits of Sartre and Heidegger work, they want to revise those values in another form. It asserts that Sartre and Heidegger have created a superstition and, this superstition serves as their god. They have assumed that man has a collective existence distinct from individual existence and apart from individuals, there is another thing called “humanity” which continuously evolves and always exists. As theists say one must work for the sake of God, they say that one must work for the sake of their imaginary god i-e humanity. They believe in real existence of this imaginary god and in a conventional existence for themselves. They also regard the individual as nothing compared to this god.

They have rejected religion and ethics (Absolute morality).

SELF ENHANCEMENT:

Marriage as first state of exit from individual “self”:

A child is only his individualistic “self”. He sees only himself and desire everything for his own individualistic self. He treats even his father and mother for his own utility. In his early adulthood when he falls in love and chooses a spouse, he and his spouse become a single “self”. In fact, in the words of modern scholars like Will Durant in his book “The Pleasures of Philosophy”, the affection of spouses becomes stronger on account of extensive interaction and communication between them, and this affects them so much that their physiognomics gradually becomes similar.

“And of His signs is that he created for you mates from your own selves that you may take comfort in them, and he ordained affection and mercy between you. There are indeed signs in that for a people who reflect.” (Ar-Rum, 21)

This is the first stage in which a person comes out of the shell of the “individual self”. So long as the relationship of spouses is carnal or sexual in nature, naturally they treat each other as a tool.

For this very reason, Marriage has a moral dimension in Islam in spite of its being a sexual matter. Marriage is labelled sunnah or mustahab (recommended) in Islam. The reason behind this is that as the affection of the spouses to each other intensifies, the more they are detached from their “individual selves”.

Some traits can not be achieved by reading or learning about it. For instance, Bravery cannot be obtained in night solitude as effect of night solitude cannot be obtained in the battlefield. There is a set of moral traits that cannot be acquired except through forming a family which fosters concern of the fate of others. Marriage is considered sacred and a form of worship in Islam while according to Christianity, single life is sacred and marital life an abomination.

After marriage, when one wants to find a job, it is no longer solely for “him/herself”. The “I” turns into “we”. But is it enough for one’s “self” to develop to that extent? There is no doubt that it is not enough.

The tribal “I”:

It is possible for one’s “self” to develop further to include his clan. The pre-Islamic Arabs did not distinguish themselves and members of their tribes but they were non-existent beyond the tribal circle. Thus, it is not enough that one’s “I” develops only to that extent.

The Nationalist “I”:

A nationalist Iranian or a European is not confined to the individual “self”. A nationalist person is more perfect compared to a self-centered person who is only concerned with himself in the world. Although, being a Nationalist does not mean being moral or better.

Humanitarianism:

Let us move a step further and proceed to humanitarianism. If someone is really humanitarian, he/she must render service to all human beings. It seems that the ultimate limit of exit from self-centeredness is to love all human beings. In this form, one’s “self” refers to all human beings on account of their humanity.

There is also an objection to this theory. Why should we be humanitarians and not animal lovers? What is this limit for? Now, the question is: if a person becomes anti-humanity or against fellow human beings by oppressing them, infringing upon their rights or corrupting them – many cases of which we know of – should he be loved on the ground that he is a human being after all? Does humanitarianism means loving two-footed animal?

If we mean something by “humanity” then man is a meaningful being. he may possess this meaning of humanity; he may lack it, or he may be against it. In this case, the concept of humanitarianism acquires different meaning. For this reason, if a person is against the path of humanity, at times, he must be opposed in the strongest possible manner. This gesture is in itself

a form of love for humanity; that is, to oppose an inhumane being for the sake of humanity. Their case is the like that of decaying tooth that must be extracted because if not done so, the decay will spread to other teeth.

We can go beyond this to truth-centeredness or God-centeredness. Since God does not physically exist alongside His creatures, in the course of worshipping God, all things in the world become lovable.

Religious Self:

At this point, one may say: what about a religious “self”? It is also a kind of “self”. Can it be exclusive for us? We ourselves say that Muslims must love one another; Muslims must not have a cordial relationship with non-Muslims:

“[They] are hard against the faithless and merciful among themselves.”

The reply is this: Enmity with the faithless is immoral if it stems from malevolence. Islam wants us to be benevolent to all people or all members of the human race including the faithless (kuffar). Even when yazid ibn muawiyah asked Imam Zain ul Abidin (‘Alayhi Salam) if the door of repentance was open to him, Imam said that it was open.

“Allah does not forbid you in regard to those who did not make war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes.... Allah forbids you only in regard to those who made war against you on account of religion and expelled you from your homes and supported [others] in your expulsion, that you make friends with them.

That is; God does not prohibit you to be good to those unbelievers who have not ill-treated you or waged war against you on account of religion. Any support that would weaken the Islamic front is prohibited (haram).

Universal Conscience:

The “universal conscience” does not refer to love of all human beings but rather something higher than that: it is the love of all things while practically removing all obstacles along the path of perfection as both man and the entire universe are not stationary.

“O you who have faith! Be maintainers, as witnesses for the sake of Allah, of justice, and ill feeling for a people should never lead you to be unfair. Be fair; that is nearer to God-wariness, and be wary of Allah. Allah is indeed well aware of what you do.”

Justice is a fundamental principle; it is not only a human principle but rather a universal principle. Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) advised Malik al-Ashtar which is quoted in Nehj ul Balaghah “Do not stand over them like greedy beasts who feel it is enough to devour them, since they are of two kinds, either your brother in religion or one like you in creation.”

SECTION 7 – Practical Guidelines for Training and Education:

SELF PURIFICATION:

Different Methods of Self Purification:

Now that we have understood how an Islamic personality should shape through intellect, moral acts, and devotion, we will discuss some guidelines that can help build these characteristics extensively.

With different methods of purification, can one method take over another? There are many dimensions to human traits and each dimension requires a different method to perfect.

Maraqiba and Muhasiba (Vigilance and Self-Reckoning):

Muraqiba and Muhasiba is discussed much within Scholars of Ethics and Urafa/Mystics circles It is something that has been given much importance in religious teaching and is not found in non-religious text.

O you who have believed, fear Allah (observer taqwa) and let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow - and fear Allah . Indeed, Allah is all aware with what you do. (Surah Hashr, 18). It can be understood from the first part of this verse that Human deeds are sent beforehand, and the verse ends with “Indeed, Allah is all aware with what you do”. This is a very significant concept to comprehend and Saadi has understood these verses and says in one of his poetries that before we get somewhere our deeds reach there first. There are many verses in relation to it like “...and whatever good you put forward for yourselves - you will find it with Allah...(Surah Baqarah, 110). Allah says that whatever actions you do, Allah is all ware of it.

Maraqiba is treating yourself as if you don't trust yourself. Our actions should be done with sincerity and figuring out the intention of our action is Maraqiba. It is a constant self-evaluation and we should have Maraqiba at all times, at every moment.

Another instruction that is in Islamic books is Muhasiba. Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) in Nehj ul Balagha say “O servants of Allah! Weigh yourselves before you are weighed and assess yourselves before you are assessed. (Peak of Eloquence, Sermon 89 Page 446) On the day of Judgement, Only good deeds will be weighted to find out the lightness and heaviness of your scale. “Then as for one whose scales are heavy [with good deeds], he will be in a pleasant life but as for one whose scales are light, His refuge will be an abyss. (Surah Qariah, 6-9) Weigh yourself here in this world. Here Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) is giving general instruction for Muhasiba. Here is more elaborate interpretation of this point as it is said in Al-Kafi volume 2, page 453 : “Anyone who does not reckon himself in the whole day is not one of us”.

Musharita, Muatiba and Muaqiba:

Musharita comes before Muraqiba. Musharita is promising self to be or to act certain way. If he does not set limits for himself, he would not know how to do Muraqiba. For example, one promise self that his diet, sleep, talk, and life should be such and such. he should write these things down or commit to memory. If he lives upto his self promises, he should be thankful to God but if he does not then he should do Muatiba or Muaqiba. Muatiba is condemning self and Muaqiba is punishing self by fasting or setting other difficult tasks for self.

Sense of Curiosity:

Another factor to consider while training is invigorating sense of curiosity. Almost everyone has the inclination to seek truth. This sense of curiosity should be promoted by encouraging to seek knowledge. Focus on reading, writing, and learning language started from the time of Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and from that religious knowledge emanated advancement in medicine, philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics. Seeking knowledge in all those fields were considered sacred by Muslims. One hurdle in the way of knowledge is discrimination which is highly disliked in Islam.

Reflection/Tafakur:

Reflection/Tafakkur is another topic that has been given importance and is considered worship in many Islamic books.

Three types of Ibadah/Worship:

- Physical worship like Salat, Sawm
- Worship through wealth like Zakat, Khums and Alms giving
- Worship through reflection (Fiqri Ibadah).

Thinking and reflection is the best Ibadah among all. However, It is not a replacement of other types of worship. There are many forms of Reflections:

Reflection on the world of Creation:

Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day are signs for those of understanding. Who remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on their sides and give thought to the creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying], "Our Lord, You did not create this aimlessly; exalted are You [above such a thing]; then protect us from the punishment of the Fire. (Surah Aal-e-Imran, 190-191)

Reflection on History:

Reflection on history or reflection on destiny or fate of past nations and communities.

... So relate the stories that perhaps they will give thought (Al Araf, 176)

And each [story] We relate to you from the news of the messengers is that by which We make firm your heart. And there has come to you, in this, the truth and an instruction and a reminder for the believers (Hud, 120)

Reflection on One's Self:

Man, himself, is the subject of his reflection. Also, Man reflects on his actions and works.

Reflection is basic condition to rule over the destiny of self and society:

Moral reflection (Ikhlāqī Taffakur) is like Self-reflection (Muhasiba tun Nufs). One should pick a certain time of day or night where he completely disconnects from everything and think about himself, his plans, his actions, current state of self and everything and everyone around him.

Choice without thinking/reflection is selection which is not exercised through your free will.

Far Sightedness (Aaqibat Andeshi):

Taddabur and Adbaar both come from root word Dabr and it means far sightedness (Aaqibat Andeshi). Taddabur mean thinking about the end result. Every action/task/deed has a form and another aspect to it. We, usually, looks at the physical aspect of actions but often the hidden aspect is different. Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) said "When mischief comes, they confuse (right with wrong) and when they clear away they leave a warning. They cannot be known at the time of approach but are recognized at the time of return. They blow like the blowing of winds, striking some cities and missing others." (Nehj ul balagha, Page 464)

Habit of Reflection:

Taffakur/self-reflection should be a habit to train our Nufs. Self-reflection means whatever you plan to do, first ponder over it and evaluate it morally every day or night even if you do it for few minutes. Most acts of worship of Hazrat Abu Zar's (r.a) worship were Tafakkur. Without Taffakur, worship appear as an absurd act.

Is Social Determinism dominant over Man?

Sometimes man is like a straw in a flood. Society is like a flood that carries man with him/her in its direction. But Society is not absolute determinist. Environment, Society, and collective conditions does not have absolute control over man. In this flood, man can decide for himself and change his position and even can change his direction against the tide. In fact, man is in control to tilt the direction of the flood that carries people with it. We know that Islamic teachings are based on this fact. If this were not the case, Amr bil Maruf, Nahi anil Munkir, Jihad and such teachings would not have any meaning. Even punishment and reward would not have meant anything.

Keeping company with Saleheen:

Another method of Training and self-improvement is keeping company with pious people. Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) said “A man follows the religion of his friend; so each one should consider whom he makes his friend.” (Sunan Abi Dawud, Book 42, Hadith 4815).

In Nehj ul Balagha, Imam Ali said, “keeping company of people who follow their desires is the key to obliviousness from religion and is the seat of Satan” (Peak of Eloquence, Sermon 80, Page 440). It means when a person goes to such company, he completely forgets his faith.

Allah says in Quran “So do not let one avert you from it who does not believe in it and follows his desire, for you [then] would perish.” (Surah Ta-ha, verse 16).

Love of Awliya:

In society, love and devotion carries extra ordinary effect. Loving a person can be the biggest factor for change in a person. Our social interaction has a forceful impact on us. We have our guard down when we are among friend’s company which is why we accept many things from friends subconsciously. When you have closeness or likeness to a good person, it makes you a better person but if you are close to a bad person, it is like a fire that burns you. Some people are such that seeing them makes a person forget God while the actions, attitudes, dispositions, physical features, and characteristics take him/her away from obliviousness. If you make a person your ideal, then you remarkably accept changes within yourself. When we say Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) was such and such, why do we say it? Is it not Shirk/Blasphemy? It is not if Imam love brings you closer to God. Our duty is only to worship Allah and all Prophets and Imams are helpers in reaching God. Loving Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) and Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam) are the biggest source of training and improvement.

Ziarat e Aminullah is the most authentic ziarat with respect to subject and chain. It is mentioned in the book, Mufateeh ul jinnan and several other books. This ziarat is not associated with any day or event and it is not only associated with Imam Ali (‘Alayhi Salam). You can do ziarat of every Imam with the exception that you replace the sentence Asalm alika ya Ameer ul Momineen with respective salutation.

We can transform by remove moral vices one by one through tafakur, tazakur, muhasiba e nufs, and marakiba or we can transform quickly by loving Awliya. It is like picking particles one by one or using a magnet to gather all particles.

The method of Self Denunciation:

Living in such a way to be disliked or having a bad reputation (to fight selfishness) is not the path of Taqwa/piety and self-sacrifice. One of the parties in Sufis have chosen self-denunciation as a way of Jihad bin Nufs. For example, they would be pretentious to be alcoholic. A good Muslim is an asset of Islam and he does not have the right to lose respect in front of others. Our

actions for the sake of Allah should not be hideous. O Allah, make us such that we are loved both in this world and next. Keep us with Truth so we seek your pleasure.

Marriage role in Training:

Why does Islam exemplify Marriage sanctity and considers it worship even though it basically is an intimate personal relationship? Marriage is not only a physical relation. It is the first step away from selfishness and self-indulgence. Prophet Isa ('Alayhi Salam) was superior in many aspects from the rest of the Prophets. Prophet Yahya ('Alayhi Salam) and Prophet Isa ('Alayhi Salam) both were in par with each other with all the qualities, but Prophet Yahya had the distinction of being married.

Jihad role in Training:

Similarly, Jihad is an action as well that has no substitute. It is not possible that a Muslim who fought in the way of Allah and one who has not are on same level. There is a hadeeth in this regard that is truly amazing, "Anyone who dies without engaging in battle, and it did not occur to him/her to engage in battle, he died upon a branch of hypocrisy." (Sunan Abu Dawood, page 206). Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) identified Jihad as the reason for self-purification and Ikhlāq/Morality.

“When Allah gave Amir al-Mu’minin ('Alayhi Salam) victory over the enemy at the Battle of Jamal one of his comrades said on that occasion, I wish my brother so-and-so had been present so that he, too, would have seen what success and victory Allah has given you. It was then that Amir al Mu’minin ('Alayhi Salam) asked him, “Did you brother hold me as a friend?” The comrade said, “Yes.” Amir al-Mu’minin ('Alayhi Salam) said, “In that case, he was with us. Rather, in this army of ours, even those persons were also present who are still in the loins of men and in the wombs of women. Shortly, time will bring them out and faith will get strength through them.””(Peak of Eloquence, Sermon 12 page 342)

When Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah (r.a) visited Karbala on Arbaeen, a narrator by the name of Obaid was with him. Hazrat Jabir bin Abdullah ('Alayhi Salam) addressed the Martyrs during which he said that “but we were with you and we are with you. The narrator asked, how are we with them? Jabir bin Abdullah (r.a) replied, by God our souls were with them. If we were physically present, we would have fought alongside.

LOVE FOR OTHERS:

Love – Strengthening of Truth-Seeking feelings

One of the issues under Islamic Training discussion is love/gentleness and its opposite strictness/harshness. Love is normally associated with goodness and kindness while hate is associated with strictness and enmity. Islam does not rely solely on kindness and softness in defining love. Some claim that Christianity is religion of love and Islam does not emphasis on

love as much as it should. All major religions including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Islam preach to like for others what you like for yourself and dislike for others what you dislike for yourself. However, the difference that lies between Islam and Christianity is in the interpretation of love.

Two types of love:

Ignorant parents who love their child would give anything their children wants out of love whether it is good for them or not. If their child is sick and does not like medicine, they may not give him/her medicine. Another type of love involves logic and intellect which is farsighted, encompassing present and future, doing what is best for other whether it is likable or not.

If all religions mean to love others just the way they desire, then that meaning is wrong. Loving people cannot be based on what they like. It is possible for people to desire for something which will bring them to the brink of misery and corruption. Behaving according to demand is different than behaving according to welfare. The profound, logical and rational love of parents cannot be limited to child's desire or present time, the future must also be considered.

Some hold childish definition of love and may say that if someone likes to worship idols, why does it bother you. You should love him, and you should know that your forbiddance will hurt his feelings. Letting people do things that hurt others simply because they like or want to, is not love. It is enmity to humanity if it is not the time to show goodness, kindness and favor but you still act softly.

“And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend.”(41:34) Quran teaches us to be good to even those who does bad to you. In dealing with non-believers as well as people of scripture, Quran says “You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves. And you will surely hear from those who were given the Scripture before you and from those who associate others with Allah much abuse. But if you are patient and fear Allah (observe Taqwa) - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of determination.” (Al-Imran, 186). Muslims are advised to stay patient, do not overreact, and exercise Taqwa upon sufferings caused by non-believers and people of scripture.

Collective welfare supersedes individual welfare:

A parent with many kids cannot fulfill an individual child desire. If one's desire or liking is the criterion then the desire or liking of others should also be considered. Love should be based on wisdom in addition to individual needs.

Similarly, sometimes individual interest/expediency (maslihat) conflicts with collective interest and in turn can hurt the individual as well which is why the individual concerns are sacrificed.

Such approach demands strictness in certain areas where collective welfare is at stake. Sometimes, it requires things that are highly disliked like death penalty.

Jihad is a collective measure and Qisas as an individual measure in situations where strictness is required. It should be done with wisdom, and for public good and prosperity.

Philosophy of Recompense (Qasaas):

Quran in its penal code advocates vengeance/payback. If someone commits a murder, his punishment is death as well. One would argue if someone killed a person, why should we kill another person and take another life. Are we not committing wrong by taking another life? Quran says “And there is for you in legal retribution [saving of] life, O you [people] of understanding, that you may become righteous.” (Quran 2:179) Retribution saves life of the society. By punishing a criminal, many lives are saved. Retribution in this sense means loving humanity.

Humanitarianism:

Humanitarianism is a noble concept, but issue is with defining human. Is human an animal who walks straight with 2 legs, who has 2 arms and ears and who talks? Are those who wanted to crucify Prophet Jesus (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) as human as Jesus was? They spoke like Jesus and, biologically speaking, resembled him.

A person is human based on his values and morals. Some people, based on their values, are even lower than animals. We should not love another person due to his physical shape and form but should love based on his human values. If we set biological form as criteria, then why should we not love donkeys and horses the same as we love human?

Goodness to unbelievers:

Quran teaches to treat nonbelievers with kindness, love and compassion to the extent your treatment leads positive effect. Imam Jafar Sadiq (‘Alayhi Salam) once saw a person who was not Muslim but hungry, thirsty and in desperate situation. Imam (‘Alayhi Salam) helped him. When asked if we should love non-Muslims, Imam said yes only that help which benefits him. Any help to non-Muslims that hurt Muslims should not be done.

“Allah does not forbid you from those who do not fight you because of religion and do not expel you from your homes - from being righteous toward them and acting justly toward them. Indeed, Allah loves those who act justly.” (Quran 60:08)

Acting Justly towards nonbelievers:

“O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do.” (Quran 5:8)

Even those who are at war with you should not be treated unjustly. You can hurt them in war to an extent. Exceeding that limit is not allowed.

“Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress. Indeed. Allah does not like transgressors.” (Quran 2:190)

For example, if the enemy gives up and laydown his weapon, you should not raise your weapon on him. His children, women, elders, community, trees and springs should not be harmed.

And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel [evil] by that [deed] which is better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity [will become] as though he was a devoted friend. (Quran, 41:34)

There is a distinction between doing good to nonbelievers and exercising Taqwa with patience.

As discussed before, Morality is universal but moral actions can change. In situations where you can benefit the other person by converting his hate in love and enmity in friendship, you should be kind to him. In other situations, using wisdom and patience is recommended.

You will surely be tested in your possessions and in yourselves. And you will surely hear from those who were given the Scripture before you and from those who associate others with Allah much abuse. But if you are patient and fear Allah - indeed, that is of the matters [worthy] of determination. (Quran 3:186) Here, it is recommended to avoid emotional reaction when nonbelievers and mushrikeen act badly towards you.

WORK:

“Amir al-Mu’minin, ‘Alayhi Salam, has said, ‘Allah, most Majestic, most Glorious, loves persons who are trustworthy and possess technical skills.’” In another Hadith it is said, ‘Allah, most High, loves the skillful believer.’” (AlKafi, Volume 5 Page 209)

A person who works for the livelihood of his family is like one who fight in the way of God.

From various ahadeeths and stories we realize that importance of profession and working. Some Sufis and devoted worshipers wrongly consider work important only during time of necessity. Work is duty. There is a hadeeth that cursed is he who puts his burden on the shoulders of others.

Work is a social duty. Society has a right over man. Whatever a person consumes, a book he reads, house he lives in, clothes he wears is a work of someone else. If a person avoids work under any pretext, his burden is shouldered by others.

If we talk about work from the perspective of training. Is work a duty only as a result of helplessness or out of necessity? It is not so. Work is still essential to mold a person personality and training. he has a body, imagination, intellect, and heart/feelings and work is important for

all aspect of his existence. Work of body is self-explanatory as different body parts performs different functions.

Work and power of Imaginations:

Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) said if you do not get your self busy, your self will get you busy in something else. Man's power of imagination/thinking/reflection is continuously active. If thoughts are not guided in a direction or order, it will be corrupting a person where thoughts can surround him/her from all over and his fantasies make him/her do many wrongdoings. In contrast, if he gets himself involved in work, he makes use of his time and does not waste in useless thoughts.

Work and prevention of sins:

Man is always in the state of give and take with the material world as mentioned by Agha Bazargan in many of his books. On one hand it acquires energy from the external world and on the other it wants to spend it back. The energy and power acquired can not stay unconsumed. If not let out properly, it causes corruption and comes out through sinful and unlawful ways. For instance, when a ruler does not contribute his part and do not work, he becomes oppressor and cruel. If he wants to wear shows or clothes, he asks his servant. he does not do any work by himself and expects others to do it for him.

Women and backbiting:

In old times, it was known that women do backbiting, and people associated backbiting with women nature. It is not accurate as men and women do not differ in this regard. The reason for backbiting was women not doing anything productive. They were not educated so could not read a book. They would resort to slander among other women like themselves. It was an important aspect of their personalities. They would damage themselves more if they would not resort to backbiting.

Once I read a newspaper article about prevalence of gambling in certain US state. Women especially got addicted to gambling so much that public complaint was that wives are doing nothing but gambling. There were many training and educational sessions to bring awareness to the detrimental effects of gambling but to no avail. A new city mayor was elected and devised solution to this problem. he started conducting handicraft, weaving and similar competitions with handsome prizes. Women soon stopped gambling and engaged in these activities.

Many sins are the effect of idleness.

Evaluating personal capability while choosing work:

Every person should choose work according to his abilities and competence. Often, a person does not know his capabilities or liking and chooses work that he is not interested in. Such work

can help him/her in earning a livelihood but causes stress and irritated. It does not help him/her in his moral development.

Work and self-evaluation:

Unless you get into it, you never know if you have the capability to perform that task. When he finds something he is good at, he will do that job whole heartedly resulting in new discoveries. Inventions and discovery are result of Ishq (passion and love) and not income or monetary incentives. You can create a job through money but not a masterpiece.

Work and Logical thought:

Logical thought drive a person to a goal that is natural and wholesome. For example, if a person wants to gets rich through lottery, he is not thinking logically but if a person wants to earn through logical means then his thoughts are logical as well.

When a person starts some work, he starts thinking logically, hence his thoughts get aligned with natural laws. Human beings gained knowledge through work, skills and experience.

Effect of work on a Person's feelings:

A person work affects his feelings. In Quranic terms, those feelings are called Heart. Work, even though is part of one's routine, builds and train a person intellect, logic, thoughts, and emotions.

Work and realization of Personality:

Work provides independence and dignify to a person. Imam Ali ('Alayhi Salam) said that it is easy for me to bring stones from cliff top instead of getting favor from someone.

Bu Ali Sena spend most of his life as a politician and minister. Once he was traveling along his guards and subordinates when he heard a janitor singing while cleaning. The janitor was saying that "I have preserved your dignity o self, so it becomes easy for you to live life". Bu Ali Sina giggled and sarcastically commented on his work. The janitor left Bu Ali Sina speechless when he said that his lowly work is better than being a slave of a worldly ruler.

Freedom, independent and self-reliance is important in life and only possible through work.

Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) Advice:

There is a story in Usul e Kafi that has been discussed in "Dastan e Rastan" as well. One of the Companions of Prophet was very poor. One day he could not bear the hunger and decided to go to Prophet upon the insistence of his wife. While waiting to speak to Prophet in private, he heard Prophet say "We help whoever demands us for assistance, but Allah preserves the needs of those who feel free from want." he returned home without uttering a single word. Soon, he found himself and his family in extreme hunger again and went to the Prophet again. The Prophet

(sallallahu alaihi wasallam) repeated the same words again before he could make a request and he turned back without asking for help. It happened again the third time. he realized that it couldn't be a coincidence that Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) keeps saying the same thing everytime he intends to ask him/her for help so he decided to sell some wood logs and make some earnings. he needed the Ax, rope and a donkey to cut and carry those logs. he borrowed that from his neighbor and went to work. Soon he was able to buy his own Ax and donkey and started living independently. Prophet (sallallahu alaihi wasallam) met him/her one day and said that if he had asked him/her for help that day, he would have been dependent for the rest of his life but you relied on Allah and he made you free from anyone's help.

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