

EXPLORE ISLAM SERIES

THE VIRTUES OF ISLAM



Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

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OF
ISLAM

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1. HEAVENLY CHARACTER

“The true servants of the Gracious One are those who walk upon the earth with humility and when they are addressed by the ignorant ones, their response is, ‘Peace.’”

Al-Furqan 25:63

A man’s way of walking symbolises his whole personality. Those in whose hearts belief in God has taken firm root, become the embodiment of humility and modesty. The fear of God takes away any sense of superiority they may have. This sense of servitude to God permeates all aspects of their lives.

God requires men of excellence to take up their abode in paradise. To this end, He has provided models throughout the cosmos to inspire human beings to attain that level of excellence. Take the iron found in the cosmos. That is man’s model for human resoluteness. The water which gushes forth from barren rocks is his model for leniency and compassion. The immutability of the laws of nature shows man how faithfully he must keep his promises. The fragrance, colour and beauty of the material world are there to inspire man to deal equitably with others. The fact that billions of stars remain in orbit without colliding is an example of how a man should operate within his own sphere and avoid clashing with others. Returning good

for evil is exemplified by the trees that take in harmful carbon dioxide and supply us with life-giving oxygen in return. The mountains and everything that stands erect cast their shadows on the ground as if in self-prostration: man is required in the same way to be humble. He should never be proud or domineering. Whoever wishes to share in God's eternal blessings should be pleased only with that which pleases God; he should obey God, as the cosmos does.

The iron of the cosmos should be the model for human resoluteness. The water which flows forth from hard rocks gives man an example of leniency and compassion. The laws of nature are immutable, so man is required to be faithful to his promises. The world of matter is fragrant, colourful and elegant; man following the same pattern should deal equitably with others. Billions of stars revolve continuously but never collide with one another; man following this cosmic pattern should operate within his own sphere, being careful to avoid clashing with others. Trees take in carbon dioxide and supply us with oxygen in return; this action is required on a human level in the observance of certain ethical values, such as doing good to those who harm one. Mountains and everything that stands erect cast their shadows on the ground as if in an act of self-prostration, so man is required to be humble in the same way; he should not be domineering or proud.

2. THANKFULNESS

*“So remember Me; I will remember you.
Be thankful to Me and do not be ungrateful.”*

Al-Baqarah 2:152

It is those who fear God who are guided on the path to Him. God remembers those who remember Him. Only those who are filled with fear of Him are free of fear of all else besides Him.

Man is never satisfied with what he has; he always seeks more. As a result, he never ceases to be discontented. God has favoured everyone in some way or another, but man is more concerned with what he does not have; he pays scant regard to what he has. People who have this attitude cannot be moved to offer thanks to God. They lack that priceless virtue that is essential for admission into paradise.

No one can be absolutely happy on earth. That is the way the world has been made. If cold climates have their drawbacks, so do hot climates. If low-income groups encounter difficulties, so do high-income groups. If the weak have a hard life, it is not easy for those who wield power. There is no end to the problems of this world, but man should persevere in spite of all the difficulties he encounters, for he is being tested in this world. He should concentrate on earning God's pleasure and not on

achieving a trouble-free life, for that is something which can only be achieved in the next world.

The greatest offering that anyone who wishes to earn a place in paradise can offer his Lord is a thankful heart. The only way to cultivate a feeling of thankfulness is to rise above the difficulties and problems of life. The price of heaven is gratitude; only those who have paid this price will enter heaven.

Good Advice

God commands you to hand back your trusts to their rightful owners and to pass judgement upon people with fairness. Noble is the advice God gives you.

He hears all and observes all.

Al-Nisa'4:58

He who fears God will take heed, but the most sinner will flout the warning. He shall be cast into the great Fire, where he shall neither die nor live. Successful is he who purifies himself, who remembers the name of his Lord and prays. Yet you (The unbelievers of Mecca) prefer the life of this world, although the life to come is better and more lasting.

Al-Ghashiyah 87:10-17

3. VIRTUOUS LIFE

“I swear by the passage of time, that man is surely in a state of loss, except for those who believe and do good deeds and exhort one another to hold fast to the Truth, and who exhort one another to steadfastness.”

Al- ‘Asr103:1-3

At every moment man is advancing towards his death. This means that if a man does not make the best of the time which is still available to him, he will finally face total destruction. In order to be successful, a man has to exert himself, while for failure he has to do nothing. It is itself rushing towards him.

Those who are patient and do not despair in the face of disaster are fit to live in paradise. They pray for those who hurt them. They do not mind being criticized. They act justly to everyone, even those who wrong them. They are fair and honest in their dealings with others.

The true believer requires evil with good. Only those who are ever mindful of God are blessed with pure lives of this nature, that is, those who discover God on such a profound level that He permeates their beings and becomes the focal point of their emotions.

Where unbelievers are arrogant, believers bow in humility. Where unbelievers are contemptuous, believers

are considerate. Where unbelievers bear ill will, believers are well-wishing. Where unbelievers usurp others' rights, believers render everyone his due. Believers are not prevented by false pride from acknowledging the truth. Believers never forsake justice, even when they are tempted to seek revenge.

Suppressing one's anger is a sign of good character.

“For those who spend, both in prosperity and adversity, who restrain their anger and are forgiving towards their fellow men—God loves those who do good works.”

Al- 'Imran 3:134

When the Prophet was once asked which action was best, he said that there was nothing better than good character. The questioner then approached him from the right and put the same question to him. Again, the Prophet answered: “Good character.” Then, coming from the left, the man once again addressed the Prophet and asked him which virtue was best. The Prophet told him for the third time that good character excelled in all other actions. When the man came from behind and asked the Prophet once again which virtue was best, the Prophet replied: “How is it that you do not understand what is meant by good character? As far as you are able, you should not become angry: that is what is meant by having a good character.”

Muhammad Ibn Nasr Al-Marwazi

4. THE VALUE OF FORGIVENESS

“So overlook [their faults] with gracious forgiveness.”

Al-Hijr 15:85

Graciously overlooking or turning away from others' improper behaviour is an essential part of the preacher's task in spreading the word of God. That is, when the addressee of his call starts some irrelevant discussion or picks a quarrel, politely ignoring him instead of answering him is the best policy.

Almost every day of our lives, we meet with some kind of bad experience, great or small, which is inescapable. One has two options: either ignore it or try to take some countermeasure. The first option is a form of forgiveness, while the other amounts to seeking revenge. Which is the better option? We must decide by looking at the outcome, for that will be the determining factor.

Forgiveness is certainly the better option, for it is based on a proven formula for saving yourself from even worse experiences. For example, forgiveness saves you from unworthy distractions, saves your precious time, and saves you from creating even more problems. It is an instant solution to any problem. On the contrary, taking revenge is bound to complicate the problem, for that means making everything go from bad to worse. Where forgiveness can

buy time, taking revenge just wastes time without there being any benefit.

In such a situation, people are generally too prone to place the onus for the predicament entirely upon others. But this is an unwise reaction. The better plan is to examine one's own role in the affair. In other words, if you are having some sad experience, don't focus on the other party. Think about your own self and adopt a course of action which is better for you. Many times in our lives, we are faced with two kinds of choices: anti-other thinking and pro-self thinking. Anti-other thinking makes you descend to the animal level, whereas pro-self thinking elevates you to a higher plane of human behaviour.

If forgiveness is a full stop, revenge is punctuated by commas. Forgiveness means ending an unwanted situation while taking revenge means endlessly extending it. Forgiveness maintains your positive thinking uninterruptedly, while revenge fosters negativity. And negative thinking can lead to all kinds of evil actions.

Some would argue that forgiveness does not always work, and that it is better to adopt the tit for tat policy. But tit-for-tat is not a real solution; it does not end the problem, it only leads to a chain of action and reaction. Forgiveness puts an end to the problem once and for all, while a tit-for-tat policy only aggravates and prolongs it. There are those who will argue that the policy of forgiveness will only encourage others to indulge in further wrongdoing against us. But this

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is a flimsy supposition and, moreover, runs counter to the law of nature.

Psychological studies show that every human being is born with an ego and a conscience. If you follow the tit-for-tat policy, it arouses the ego of the other party, whereas if you follow the policy of forgiveness, it will activate the other person's conscience. And it is a fact that, in controversial matters, the conscience always plays a positive role.

Forgiveness and revenge are two different moral cultures. The culture of forgiveness helps in the building of a better society – a society where positive values flourish, where the spirit of cooperation prevails, and where disparate groups join together and turn themselves into a peaceful society. The outcome of vengefulness is quite the reverse. The revenge culture creates an environment of mistrust, in which everyone takes others to be his or her rivals. In the last analysis, it rules out the growth of a healthy society.

Sooner or later, everyone is bound to do something wrong. But then the well-known saying 'To err is human' should be borne in mind. This being so, taking revenge means making not just one mistake but making mistake after mistake. On the contrary, forgiveness means undoing wrongs with rights. It is better to concede that if to err is human, to forgive is even more human. Indeed, it is this concept which is expressed in the well-known saying: 'To err is human, but to forgive is divine.'

5. PATIENCE

“For those who do good in this world will have a good reward—and God’s earth is spacious. Truly, those who persevere patiently will be requited without measure.”

Al-Zumar 39:10

To build up one’s life on the basis of faith involves a tremendous trial. Only those succeed in this trial for whom faith is the greatest wealth, for the sake of which they are prepared to forego everything else. A life of faith is a life of patience. Those who are prepared to become believers at the price of patience will be the ones who will be blessed with the superior grace of God.

The literal meaning of *sabr*, the Arabic word for patience, is ‘to stop’. A purposeful person does not take any step as an emotionally driven reaction. When faced with any situation, he stops and thinks about what response he should make that is in accordance with his principles and purpose in life, distinguishing this clearly from responses that militate against his principles and purpose. In this way, he exercises *sabr* or patience.

Patience is connected with every aspect of our lives. Suppose you feel overwhelmed by a certain desire. You choose not to set about fulfilling the desire as soon as it emerges. You control the desire think about it and then

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do what wisdom demands of you in that situation. This is exercising patience.

Suppose someone has caused you trouble. You feel overwhelmed by the desire for revenge. But you stop yourself and then do what your faith wants you to do. This is exercising patience. In other words, impatience is reflected in a hasty response to a situation, while a considered, well-thought-out response is what patience is about.

6. IDLENESS

“And made the day for earning a livelihood.”

Al-Naba’78:11

The physical events of the present world are indicative of the nature of the Hereafter. The ‘present’ of our world implies that it should have a ‘future’ consistent with it. Considered from this point of view, it must be accepted that there is going to be a great end to match a great beginning. This world is not going to finish without a befitting end.

The second Caliph, Umer ibn Khattab, often used to express his sense of disillusionment about people he had come to like when, on further acquaintance with them, he discovered them to be idle. “On learning that he does not work, he appears to me of no value (he has debased himself in my eyes).”

Whichever way you look at idleness, there is no gainsaying the fact that it is a great evil, causing one to fritter away one’s best talents and leaving one unqualified to face life. A student who is too lazy to study cannot ever hope to acquire knowledge or have his critical faculties sharpened in any way, and his failure in examinations will leave him without the ‘paper’ qualifications which is the ‘Open Sesame’ to good jobs. Without the necessary groundwork, he will find himself leading a vacant existence, simply drifting

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from pillar to post. Even people who have managed to qualify themselves suitably cannot afford to rest on their laurels. When the period of education is over, it is equally necessary to be consistently hard-working. Many make the excuse between the receipt of a degree and entry into a profession that they are waiting for the right job to come along. But one cannot go on waiting forever, simply idling away one's time.

Sometimes, one inadvertently slips into idle ways because there are no economic pressures in one's life. Those who inherit legacies or have property or investments that bring them some return are easily prey to idleness. But this is no existence for a human being. Anyone who allows the poison of idleness to creep into his system might as well be dead.

Either one must opt for a regular job, which brings one a suitable income and keeps one mentally healthy so that one never becomes a financial or emotional burden on anyone else, or, if one is financially independent, one should turn one's attention to higher things, pursue noble ends, serve worthy causes and keep oneself fruitfully occupied day in and day out. A person with no sense of commitment is only living on the fringes of existence. He is out of touch with reality and will soon lapse into utter degeneracy. No really superior being has ever been found among the ranks of the idle.

As the old saying goes, the Devil finds work for idle hands.

7. GOOD ACTIONS

“God commands justice, kindness and giving their [due to] near relatives, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and transgression. He admonishes you so that you may take heed!”

16:90

Three things have been prohibited in this verse. The first thing is moral evil (*fahsha'*), which is clearly judged to be such by the human conscience and universally considered shameful. The second is the perpetration of such deeds as are judged improperly by common moral standards. This includes all those things which are considered as evil by man and which man's nature refuses to accept. *Munkar* is the opposite of *ma'ruf*. *Ma'ruf* consists of such things as are considered good in every society. The third thing is transgressing all limits (*baghi*). This includes arrogance when a man exceeds his recognised limit and attacks another person; his engaging in sinful behaviour in order to harm another's life, property and honour; his making use of his strength and influence to gain an illegitimate advantage.

A new human generation comes into existence with each child born of a man and a woman. This child, cared for and nourished by its parents, grows up to be a fully-rounded

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human being. This is a system devised by nature for the nurturing of human life. Its purpose is to teach man a proper sense of rights and duties, to produce such feelings within man that will make him grateful to his benefactors and pay homage to them. This feeling tells man, on the one hand, to fulfil his obligations to those who have helped him to grow up and, on the other, to pay the far greater dues to his Creator and Sustainer.

Those who learn such lessons from nature, which make them thoroughly aware of what is due to their parents and to God and act accordingly, are the people who will deserve God's eternal blessings in the life to come.

Home serves as the first training ground for man, and this training, which starts with the parents, later extends to the whole of society. If man fully accepts such training from the outset, he will be morally equipped not only to give human beings their due but also to render to God what he owes Him in the vaster sense.

8. ADJUSTMENT—A GOLDEN PRINCIPLE

“You may dislike something although it is good for you, or like something although it is bad for you: God knows but you do not.”

Al-Baqarah 2:216

What man may dislike might be pleasing to God. For that alone will benefit in the next, infinitely vaster world. In God’s sight, evil lies in man giving preference to his own pleasure rather than the pleasure of his Creator. Evil may benefit a person in this temporal world; in the hereafter it will do him only harm.

What is adjustment? Adjustment means living with a normal mind in an unwanted situation. Adjustment is a way of life. Apparently, adjustment is a behaviour that you adopt towards someone else, but in fact, it is for your self.

The problem is that according to the creation plan of God, our world is a world of differences. Every human being is either Mr. Different or Ms. Different. Also, everyone has the freedom of choice to behave in whichever way they want. In such a situation, every human being is compelled to live in a jungle of differences. You cannot change this creation plan. Then, what to do in such circumstances?

8. ADJUSTMENT—A GOLDEN PRINCIPLE

The only realistic option for you is to adjust with other people. Here, adjustment means not reacting, not trying to change others, not becoming negative, and not taking the situation as an obstacle, but managing it smoothly.

In every situation, you have two options: either to adjust with others or to opt for the way of not adjusting. If you opt for the principle of non-adjustment, then it will only enhance your problems. You will live in tension and disturbance of mind and thus waste your time and energy. But if you opt for adjustment, then you will be able to instantly free up your mind. You will be able to save yourself from all kinds of negativity.

Adjustment gives you a chance to continue your journey. The policy of non-adjustment is bound to halt your life's journey, either temporarily or permanently.

Adjustment is not a submissive attitude; it is rather an attitude of wisdom. It is the same principle that everyone follows when they are on the street. On the street, traffic comes from both sides. So, everyone opts for the keep-right or keep-left policy in accordance with the traffic rules of their country. This is a way of adjustment on the roads. If you refuse to follow this traffic culture, you may face a disastrous situation, maybe even death. Adjustment is based on a natural formula: 'Save yourself'. When you are not in a position to change others, change yourself. It is this behaviour that is called adjustment.

One of the teachings of the Quran is mentioned in chapter *Al-Nisa'* (Women) in these words: *As-sulh khair*, that is, Settlement is best. (4:128)

Settlement is only the other name of adjustment. This Quranic verse refers to a law of nature. According to the law of nature, settlement is the best way of life. When you face any difference with the other party, do not adopt the confrontation method, but adopt the adjustment method. This is best for you in terms of the result. By adopting this formula, you will reach your goal without any delay. Be practical: do not waste your time and energy. Adopt the way of adjustment and ensure your success.

9. GOOD CHARACTERS

*“Who refrain from heinous sins and gross indecencies;
who forgive when they are angry.”*

Al-Zukhruf 42:37

The bounty of this world is of a temporary nature, while the good things of the Hereafter are eternal and never ending. A short-lived benefit in comparison with eternal bounty carries no weight whatsoever.

Good character is the sum of personal virtues, which guarantees correct and agreeable behaviour in daily social interaction. A person of good character will invariably conform in his behaviour to a strict code of ethics.

What should be the underlying principle of this code of ethics? According to a hadith it is simply this –you should like for others what you like for yourself, that is, you should treat others just as you want to be treated by others.

Everyone likes to be addressed with good manners and pleasing words. So, everyone should speak gently to others. Everyone wants his existence to be problem-free, so he should avoid creating problems for others.

Everyone wants others to deal with him in a sympathetic and cooperative manner. So what everyone ought to do while dealing with others is to give them his full sympathy and cooperation.

This standard of ethics is very simple and natural. It is so simple that anyone may easily learn it, be he literate or illiterate, able-bodied or disabled, regardless of his likes and dislikes. This hadith has given such a criterion for human ethics that no one can find it difficult to understand. In this way, Islam has set forth, in the light of everyone's personal experience, what behaviour may be indulged in and what behaviour has to be refrained from.

According to another hadith, the best of us is one who is best in moral character. Accordingly, becoming a good human being is not ambiguous. Its simple formula is that of avoidance of double standards. One who lives his life by this formula is indubitably a person of the highest moral character.

10. HUMAN EQUALITY

“Mankind was once a single community, [but then people developed differences].”

Al-Baqarah 2:213

Religion, as revealed by God, is one religion. Yet men differ on this point, putting a variety of interpretations upon divine religion, so that it may fit in with their mental make-up. In this way different viewpoints, all claiming allegiance to one divine scripture, come into existence.

According to Islamic tenets, all human beings are equal. In prayer, all members of the congregation stand in the same rows together, and on the Hajj pilgrimage, all the believers belonging to different countries don identical white seamless robes for the performance of the obligatory rites. On the occasion of the Final Pilgrimage, it is noteworthy that the Prophet of Islam declared that no Arab was superior to a non-Arab and that no white was superior to a black. All were equally servants of God. In Islamic society, everyone is accorded the same status, his or her being, ideally, no higher or lower social strata.

How, then, can we rationalize what are apparently very great differences in human beings in terms of colour and race, etc., considering that the concept of human equality ranks so high in the value system of Islam? We

find the answer in the Qur'an, which makes it clear that such outward differences are meant to serve as means of identification and were never intended as indicators of superiority (or inferiority). People in different parts of the world may have a diversity of skin colourings and other distinctive racial characteristics, but that is only so that they may be easily distinguished from each other. By Islamic standards, this is designed to facilitate social and national interaction.

The sole basis of superiority in Islam is *taqwa* – the earnestness with which one leads a God-fearing life; as such, it bears no relation to colour or race. Physical attributes certainly have their effect on the social interaction of this world, but in the Hereafter, no value is attached to them. There, the only things which count are inner qualities, for upon them depends the essential excellence of man's distinctive character. That is why, according to a hadith, God sees the heart and not the body. He reserves a place in Paradise only for those found deserving in terms of their inner worth.

According to Islam, all greatness belongs to God. God, as the Supreme Being, is ineffably superior to all men. While there is this infinitely great difference between God and man, there is no difference whatsoever between man and man.

11. PIETY

“Their flesh and blood do not reach God: it is your piety that reaches Him.”

Al-Hajj 22:37

The rites of sacrifice have been prescribed, not because God needs meat and blood, but purely as symbolic actions. The sacrifice of an animal is symbolic of the man who has sacrificed himself for the sake of God. This is, in fact, the sacrifice of one's own self which takes the shape of the sacrifice of an animal. Such people are fortunate for whom the sacrifice of animals becomes synonymous with the sacrifice of their own selves.

Taqwa means piety, which means leading a life of caution and restraint in this world.

Umar Farooq, the second Caliph, once asked a companion of the Prophet what *taqwa* was. He replied, “O leader of the believers, have you ever crossed a path which has thorny shrubs on both sides?” But the companion, instead of replying, asked another question, “What did you do on such an occasion?” Umar Farooq replied, “I gathered my clothes close to me and moved ahead cautiously.” The companion said, “Now I know what is meant by *taqwa*.”

The present world is a testing ground. Here, various kinds of thorns have been scattered for the purpose of testing

man, such as negativity, false issues rose by non-serious people, the lure of worldly things. Besides these, there are many unpleasant occurrences which disturb people's minds and lead them away from the path of virtue.

All these things are like thorny shrubs lining both sides of the path of life. At any moment, it is feared that man may embroil himself in these thorns and then, instead of going forward, remain entrapped in these snares of life.

In such a state of affairs, the wise man travels the paths of life by gathering up his clothes to avoid becoming entangled in these unpleasant snares. In this way, he is able to continue his journey unhampered. Yet, at all times, he must remain conscious of the fact that he must protect himself. He has to adopt the path of avoidance, not of entanglement.

Man has been created with an upright nature. If no hindrance comes in the way, then every man will, on his own, take the right course. That is why the utmost precaution must be taken against allowing unnatural obstacles to come in the way.

Then, guided by this upright nature, man will continue to walk along the right path until he meets his Lord.

12. SPEECH MANAGEMENT

*“A kind word and forgiveness is better than
a charitable deed followed by hurtful words:*

God is self-sufficient and forbearing.”

Al-Baqarah 2:263

Some soil (earth) may collect on the surface of a boulder. Outwardly, it appears as though this is good, fertile soil, but when a gust of wind brings a rain-shower down upon it, then the earth is washed away, leaving the rock exposed to the elements. The same is true of one who has donned a superficial robe of piety, without that piety having permeated his entire being. Should he be addressed rudely by someone asking for financial help, or should his ego receive wounding blow, he becomes so irritated that he exceeds all bounds of decency in his response.

An important teaching of the Quran is to use words with an extreme sense of responsibility and not let one's tongue get out of control. This teaching is stressed in the chapter Al Nisa (Women) of the Quran:

There is no good in most of their secret talk, except in the case of those who enjoin charity and kindness or reconciliation between people. If anyone does that, seeking the pleasure of God, We will give him an immense reward. (4:114)

This Quranic verse includes talks and conversations. The power of speech given to man is a rare quality, an

exclusive boon. But it involves responsibility and has to be used with great caution. Speech has value only when it is useful. Misuse is liable to punishment. The art of speech management means controlling your tongue, thinking before speaking and calculating in advance the impact of what you say.

Avoid negative talk, lying, and misrepresentation of facts and utterances, which may create rift or suspicion between people or groups. Speech is most commonly misused when the difference between an allegation and a statement based on evidence is not understood. Begin by examining whether what you have to say is supported by logic. If you have good reason to speak, then open your mouth; else, remain silent. What is right speech? It is based on truth and stands up to objective analysis, which is based on verified data that is positive in nature and will not create problems.

Most of our activities are related to speech in one way or another. Each one of us ought to cultivate the art of speaking that is positive, and that creates a healthy atmosphere in the family, society, and the nation. Good speech is the basis of nation-building. People generally lack discipline and dislike constraints on their activities. This is very true of speech. Right speech means disciplined speech, talking in a controlled way—weighing each word before uttering. Well-thought-out speech is a source of building harmony and goodwill. The art of managing speech is vital for everyone. Those with the art of right speech can be declared wholesome human beings.

13. NEIGHBOURS

“Worship God: and do not associate partners with Him. Be good to your parents, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, and the neighbour who is a kinsman, and the neighbour who is not related to you and your companions and the wayfarers and those whom you rightfully possess.”

Al-Nisa’ 4: 36

Whatever man possesses is provided by God. This reality demands that man should surrender himself to God and become His worshipper. Such a person naturally becomes humble and his humility is expressed in his relations with the other human beings interacting in his life. He behaves decently with his mother and father and feels the watchful presence of God while dealing with all those who come into contact with him. He pays everybody’s due in accordance with his relationship and need. To overlook a person, in whatever capacity he has to deal with him, appears to him as if he himself is taking the risk of being overlooked by God.

Neighbours are our nearest companions. After family members, it is neighbours one comes in contact with. Developing good relations with neighbours is, therefore, an important aspect of a God-oriented life.

A neighbour, be he a co-religionist or an adherent of another religion, be he of one's own community or of another, must always be taken good care of. He must be given his dues at all events, according to the demands of the Shariah and of humanity.

According to a hadith, the Prophet of Islam observed, "By God, anyone who is a threat to his neighbour is no believer."

According to this hadith, if a Muslim becomes a source of trouble to his neighbours, his faith itself will become suspect.

The humanity of a person and the first criterion of his religiosity and spirituality are tested by the way he behaves towards his neighbours. The relationship with a neighbour serves as a test of whether a person has human feelings or not and whether he is sensitive to Islamic teachings or not.

If a person's neighbours are happy with him, that is proof of his being a good man, but if his neighbours are unhappy with him, that is proof that his behaviour leaves much to be desired.

The commands in the Shariah regarding neighbours indicate that a believer must make concessions to his neighbours unilaterally. That is, by doing well to them even if they are ill behaved towards him.

Being a good neighbour is the first step towards becoming a good human being. It is the good neighbour who will find a share in God's blessings in the Hereafter.

14. MORALITY

“Say, ‘Come! I will tell you what your Lord has really forbidden you! Do not associate anything with Him; be good to your parents; and do not kill your children for fear of poverty—We shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them—refrain from committing indecent deeds, whether openly or in secret; and do not kill the life which God has made sacred, save by right. That is what He has enjoined upon you, so that you may understand.”

Al-An ‘am 6:151

There are many wrongs that are so lewd in nature that no special knowledge is required to understand their evil, and man’s nature and his conscience are enough to indicate that it is not proper for such acts to be perpetrated upon anyone. Under these circumstances, if someone indulges in acts of shamelessness, he proves, as it were, that he is devoid of even the most rudimentary humanity.

What is morality? It is to live among one’s fellow men according to the moral teachings of Islam. The essence of Islamic morality is thus set forth and given in a *hadith*: “Behave with others as you would like them to behave towards you” (*al-Bukhari*). By nature, everyone knows what sort of conduct he approves of and of what sort he

disapproves. So, following this generally accepted moral criterion in relation to others is essentially Islamic morality.

Islam differentiates between social manners and social character. Social manners are based on the principle 'Do as they do.' But Islamic morality is based on the formula of unilateral and unconditional positive conduct. 'Do good to others, even if they are not doing good to you.' (*al-Tabarani*)

The Qur'an portrays Muslims as individuals who "repel evil with good." (28:54)

Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, advised a Muslim to "do good to those who harm you" (*al-Tirmirdhi*). The Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, was the true embodiment of the finest moral character. Addressing the Prophet, the Qur'an declares: "Surely you have a sublime character." (68:4)

So great an importance has been attached in Islam to moral character that it has been set up as a criterion by which to judge all other Islamic virtues. If one is good in relation to other human beings, that will serve as evidence that one also is good in relation to God.

The Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, puts it thus: "One who is not grateful to man cannot be grateful to God either." (*Al-Bayhaqi*)

*“The best deeds are those done regularly
even if they are small.”*

-Prophet Muhammad

God, who brought humanity into existence and placed them on this earth, has gifted each person with inherent knowledge and values. These innate qualities shape a natural sense of morality, enabling individuals to discern what is right and beautiful.

The Virtues of Islam booklet serves as a guide, offering a clear path to achieving ethical success.

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