

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN AS *KHALIFAH*: AN EXPOSITION OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF A JUST ORDER

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ABSTRACT

The question of morality is one of the major themes of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, and a topic of concern for philosophers and psychologists for thousands of years. It is the reason for creating man as *khalifah* (vicegerent) and the descent of divine guidance to mankind. This paper discusses the moral responsibility of man as *khalifah* as enshrined in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and focuses largely upon the requirements of a just order. The paper begins with a brief introduction on the importance of moral responsibility and concludes with a summary of man's moral responsibility in Islam and the foundations of a just order. Using the insights from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* and quotations from some scholarly articles and books, the paper contends that: firstly, moral refinement is one of the objectives of *salat*, *zakat*, *sawm* (fasting) and *hajj* (pilgrimage) and therefore the greatest challenge to every individual Muslim; secondly, moral responsibility is the greatest challenger to modern science and civilization; and thirdly, the decline of moral values is one of the factors that promote the decline and fall of civilizations. Finally, the paper contrasts *al-Tawhid* (the oneness of Allah) to positivism, utilitarianism and libertarianism as foundations of morality. It is hoped that this study will make a valuable contribution to the exploration of issues regarding man's moral responsibility as *khalifah*. It is also hoped that this study will inspire scholars to provide additional contributions to the understanding of a just order.

Key words: just order, *al-Tawhid*, positivism, utilitarianism and libertarianism

Introduction

"The three hardest tasks in the world are neither physical feats nor intellectual achievements, but moral acts: to return love for hate, to include the excluded, and to say, "I was wrong."

— Sydney J. Harris, *Pieces Of Eight*ⁱ

Moral responsibility is one of the responsibilities of every individual human being regardless of gender, race, religion, age or socioeconomic status. All religions aim to cultivate virtues and values, which involves instilling positive character traits in their followers and uprooting negative character traits from them. To achieve this, Islam has obligated its adherents to: (1) acquire knowledge of good and bad; (2) be morally upright individuals; and (3) call people to moral uprightness (see *Qur'an*, 103: 1-3). It categorizes people in respect of their moral conduct into: (1) morally upright – *al-Mun'am alyhim*; (2) morally corrupt – *al-Maghdhubi 'alayhim*; and (3) morally misguided – *al-Dhallin* (see *Qur'an* 1: 1-7). Moral uprightness is the goal that every Muslim is duty-bound to pursue. According to Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Ghazali it is the Path – *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* – leading to (success) in the hereafter life. Al-Ghazali defined ethics as "the science of the path of the hereafter (*'ilm tariq al-Akhirah*), or the path trodden by the prophets and righteous ancestors (*al-salaf al-Salih*)."ⁱⁱ The Prophets were exemplars in moral leadership; they led by moral example and their supreme moral behaviours and excellent human characteristics were the means of leading people to ideal life (see for example *Qur'an* 3:159). Among their manners and characteristics are sincerity, honesty, forgiving, leniency, tolerance, forbearance, politeness, altruism, compassion, generosity, truthfulness, humbleness, courage, cleanliness and justice and fairness. In the coming paragraphs I will shed light on man's moral obligation as *khalifah*. This will be followed by an elucidation of the significance of good moral values as envisioned in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Lastly, I will provide a detailed account on the foundations of a just order; i.e. a moral system or the principles of morality that are intended to be a safeguard against man's actions. Without this system justice cannot be established, there cannot be harmony in people's relationships with others and peace does not prevail on earth.

Man's Moral Obligation As *Khalifah* (Vicegerent)

There is a moral order to the earth for which man is sent down to execute: "And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), in order that ye may not transgress (due) balance."ⁱⁱⁱ (*Qur'an* 55: 7-8). Execution of a moral order is therefore one of the responsibilities of a *khalifah* (vicegerent) and *khilafah* (vicegerency). Man is endowed with intellect in order to behave morally upright. Intellect here refers to innate moral sense that enables man to distinguish the right from wrong, moral from immoral: "By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right."^{iv} (*Qur'an* 91: 7-8) Moreover, Allah revealed guidance to man as the criterion of good and bad or the standard by which actions are considered moral or immoral. All revealed books not only define morality, but also provide the means to actualize it and

sanctions to suspend immorality. For instance, *salat*, *zakat*, *sawm* and *hajj* are means to the attainment of many moral traits such as humility, respect, love, selflessness and patience and restraints of many immoralities such as arrogance, discrimination, greed and selfishness, extravagance, miserliness, ostentation and prejudice.

Significance Of Good Moral Values As Envisioned In The Qur'an And Sunnah

The twin foundations of Islam, the Qur'an and Sunnah, have emphatically stressed the crucial importance of moral virtues in all spheres of life and in all man's relationships with his Creator, his own self, his fellow human beings and his environment. The purpose of this section is to discuss the following with aim of showing the Islamic *weltanschauung* of value:

1. Good Moral Values as Purifier of the Heart
2. Immorality as the Major Cause of the Decline and Death of the Past Nations
3. Refinement of Morality as one of the Primary Duties of Prophets and Messengers (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon them)
4. Moral Example for the World as a Distinctive Characteristic of the Muslim *Ummah* (Community)

Good Moral Values As Purifier Of The Heart

"...Truly in the body there is a morsel of flesh, which, if it be whole, all the body is whole, and which, if it is diseased, all of [the body] is diseased. Truly, it is the heart."

—Prophetic Tradition^{iv}

Heart is the most important place in the human body. It is touchstone of one's actions. It is the place for happiness, sadness, regret, anger and lust. It is also where the mind or intellect is located; the place where decisions are made: "We showed him the Way: whether he be grateful or ungrateful (rests on his will)" (Qur'an 76: 3).

Similar to the body, the heart is inflicted with diseases such as arrogance, self-conceit, greed and envy. Such diseases have far-reaching impact on one's actions, health and well-being. Unlike physical illnesses that end with one's death, the sicknesses of the heart have an everlasting impact on individual and society; they lead to eternal punishment in the hereafter life, hence, depriving a person of eternal happiness. They also lead to *fasad* (corruption) on earth. It is therefore incumbent upon every human being to know the diseases of the heart, their impacts, causes and remedies. Failure to acquire knowledge of the diseases of the heart and their remedies is resultant into vice and corruption. It follows that acquisition of this kind of knowledge is a *fard 'ayn* (religious duty commanded by Allah).

One of the objectives of the Qur'an is to bring man out of *zulmat* (inner and outer darkness) into light: "Alif Lam Ra. A Book which We have revealed unto thee, in order that thou mightest lead mankind out of the depths of darkness into light - by the leave of their Lord - to the Way of (Him) the Exalted in power, worthy of all praise!" (Qur'an 14:1). Inner darkness denotes evil character traits such as *hasad* (envy), *hirs* (greed) and *kibr* (arrogance). It is from this darkness that outer darkness proceeds; i.e. immoral actions and injustice. In contrast to inner darkness is inner light which denotes good character traits. It is these traits that lead to good actions. 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas wrote: "Good deeds make the face light, give light to the heart, and bring about ample provision, physical strength and love in people's hearts. Bad deeds make the face dark, give darkness to the heart, and bring about physical weakness, a lack of provision and hatred in people's hearts."^v

Good traits preserve one's dignity. Man is the most superior creature of Allah: "We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation." (Qur'an 17: 70). Man's superiority is based on his ability to distinguish the right from the wrong, among others. He is the only moral being.

Islam is founded on five pillars each leading to moral refinement and purity of heart. For example, *shahadah*, the testimony that Allah is the only God worthy of worship and that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a Prophet and Messenger of Allah, purifies the heart of all thoughts and influences other than that of Allah. It instills *taqwa*, fear of Allah or God consciousness, in one's heart and dispels heedlessness; i.e. a state of the heart that disables it from distinguishing the right from wrong. *Taqwa* is the garment of the heart. It keeps it in constant remembrance of Allah. Consequently, it shields it from internal immoral practices. On the contrary, heedlessness hardens and kills the heart. It is the worst disease of the heart as it leads to loss of the very purpose of one's existence. *Salat*, *zakat*, *sawm* and *hajj* are means to purification of the heart and refinement of moral conduct: (Qur'an 29: 45, 9: 103, 2: 183 and 2: 197).

Immorality As The Major Cause Of The Decline And Death Of The Past Nations

"innama al-unam al-akhlaq ma baqiyat fa'in hum zahabat akhlaquhum zahabu – Nations are equal to their morals. If their morals disappear, then they also disappear."

—The Egyptian poet Ahmad Shawqi (1868 – 1932 A.D)

Three factors have been identified as leading to the fall of civilizations namely; assimilation, conquest and degeneration of moral values:

“Great nations cease to exist in one of three ways: (1) they may be slowly absorbed and assimilated into another, more thriving civilization. (2) They may be forcefully conquered by another nation. (3) They may slowly, but methodically, degenerate into a collapsed state.”^{vi}

Degeneration of nations into collapsed states has been primarily due to immorality. Part of the Qur’an is a description of how immorality led to the destruction of the first and the middle generations (*al-Qurun al-’Ula* and *al-Qurun al-Wusta*).

“Generations before you We destroyed when they did wrong: their apostles came to them with clear-signs, but they would not believe! thus do We requite those who sin! Then We made you heirs in the land after them, to see how ye would behave!” (Qur’an 10:13-14. See also 21: 11, 50: 36, 15: 73-76).

The first generations were the nation of Nuh (Qur’an 50:12 – they were idol-worshippers and evil doers), the nation of ‘Ad (Qur’an 41:15 – they were idol-worshippers and arrogant because of their physical strength), the nation of Thamud (they involved in mischief) and *ashab al-Rass* (the dwellers of Rass (Qur’an 25:38)), the nation of Lut (Qur’an 11:77-82 – they involved in sodomy) and the nation of Shu‘ayb (the People of Madyan (Qur’an 11:84 – 94), they were dishonest). The middle generations were the nations from Fir‘aun (Pharaoh) to the advent of Islam. They include *ashab al-Sabt* (The Saturday People), they lived in the village of Aylah by the Red Sea and they committed major sins (Qur’an 7:163, 2:65 and 5:60), *ashab al-Qarya* (People of the Village) (Qur’an 36:13-18), they are believed to have lived in Antioch, *ashab al-Aykah* and Tubba‘ (the dwellers of the Wood and people of Tubba‘) (Qur’an 50:14) and the nation of Saba’ who lived in Yemen (Qur’an 27: 20-44). The destruction of these nations and many others unmentioned in the Qur’an is a lesson for the last generations to ponder and reflect upon; i.e. nations from the advent of Islam until the destruction of the world^{vii}: “Does it not teach them a lesson, how many generations We destroyed before them, in whose dwellings they (now) go to and fro? Verily in that are Signs: Do they not then listen?” (Qur’an 32: 26. See also 2:66; 14:52; 21:11; 6:6). In the following some quotes are presented showing the significance of drawing lessons from history:

“Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it.” – George Santayana.^{viii}

“The value of history is, indeed, not scientific but moral: by liberalizing the mind, by deepening the sympathies, by fortifying the will, it enables us to control, not society, but ourselves – a much more important thing; it prepares us to live more humanely in the present and to meet rather than to foretell the future.” – Carl Becker, 1873-1945, U.S. historian^{ix}

It is therefore necessary that lessons from the destruction of the past nations are drawn and reflected upon deeply to avoid repeating the same mistake. All the above Qur’an verses clearly indicate that morality declined to an intolerable level before the death of the ancient nations.

Refinement Of Morality As One Of The Primary Duties Of Prophets And Messengers (Peace Be Upon Them)

“Don’t change your morality for the people around you, change the people around you with your morality.”
— Donald L. Hicks, *Look into the stillness*^s

One of the duties of the Prophets and Messengers was to improve morality. To achieve this, Allah chose persons with high standard of manners as prophets so that they become a model for their nations to follow: “And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character.” [Qur’an 68: 4] The Prophet’s servant Anas reported that, “Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) had the sublimest character among mankind...”^{xi} The Prophet (peace be upon him) not only had exemplary morals, but he also molded the character of his *sahabah* (companions) to become the shining example to the rest of Muslims and founded a state on ethical and moral principles of *al-Tawhid* (Oneness of Allah), *al-Mu’akhat* (brotherhood), *al-’Adl* (justice), *al-Musawat* (equality) and *al-Wasatiyyah* (Islamic moderation). The Medina state formed the basis of an exemplary state. The Charter of Medina, also known as known as the Constitution of Medina, which is believed to be the first written constitution, outlined the moral obligation of every Medina citizen.

Moral Example For The World As A Distinctive Characteristic Of The Muslim Ummah (Community)

“Ye are the best of peoples, evolved for mankind, enjoying what is right, forbidding what is wrong, and believing in Allah. If only the People of the Book had faith, it was best for them: among them are some who have faith, but most of them are perverted transgressors.” (Qur’an 3: 110).

In the verse above Muslims are described as ‘The Best community’ due to the following reasons:

- a) Enjoining right
- b) Forbidding wrong
- c) *Iman* (Faith) in Allah.

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is an integral part of all cultures and religions. Hence the Qur’an uses the terms *ma’ruf* and *munkar* to describe what is well-known and approved, and unknown and disapproved respectively. By nature man is conscious of good and evil (Qur’an 91:8) yet he is rebellious. Therefore, enjoining right and forbidding evil has been made a religious duty and obligation. In Islam, one does not attain *iman* without fulfilling this obligation: “Whoever sees wrong being committed let him rectify it with his hand. If he is unable to, then with his tongue. And if he is unable, then with his heart, and this is the weakest of faith – or in another version, beyond this there is not a single mustard seed’s weight of faith (*iman*).”^{xii}

Enjoining right and forbidding wrong is required at two levels; internally within the Muslim *ummah* and externally for mankind as a whole. Muslims' obligations in respect of right and wrong are fourfold:

- a) To acquire knowledge of al Qur'an and hadith to distinguish right from wrong
- b) To do right and avoid wrong
- c) To be an example to others to do right
- d) To establish a legitimate authority to see that right and justice prevail over wrong and injustice.

Without fulfillment of these obligations *da'wah* (the call to Islam) can never be a success. In twenty three years the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) "changed the history of Arabia and laid the foundation for a permanent change in world history.^{xiii} Various factor contributed to his success including patience, perseverance, hard work, dedication and being the example of the moral values he taught for people to emulate. Today, however, Muslims dream to change the world but without being the example of what they preach; i.e. without changing themselves!

"Do ye enjoin right conduct on the people, and forget (to practise it) yourselves, and yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand?" (Qur'an 2: 44).

When I was a young man, I wanted to change the world.
I found it was difficult to change the world, so I tried to change my nation.
When I found I couldn't change the nation, I began to focus on my town.
I couldn't change the town, so I tried to change my family.
Now, as an old man, I know the only thing I can change is myself.
And suddenly I realize that if long ago I had changed myself, I could have made an impact on my family.
My family and I could have made an impact on our town.
Their impact could have changed the nation and I could indeed have changed the world.

Unknown monk from 1100 A.D.

On the basis of *Surah al-Fatihah*, people can be categorized into three in respect of right and wrong: First, *al-Mun'am 'alaihim* (the blessed ones). They are the ones who do right, abstain from wrong and become an example to others to do right. These are the *khairun ummatun* (the best or exemplary *ummah*). Second, *al-Maghdhubi 'alaihim* (the ones Allah is angry with). They are the ones who know what is right but they do wrong instead or they do right but they do not invite others to do it. Third, *al-Dhalin* (those who go astray). They are the ones who are ignorant of the right and wrong.

The Foundations Of A Just Order

Execution of man's moral obligation is a necessary condition for the establishment of a just order which is the reason for creating man as *khalifah*:

"Generations before you We destroyed when they did wrong: their apostles came to them with clear-signs, but they would not believe! Thus do We requite those who sin! Then We made you heirs in the land after them, to see how ye would behave!" (Qur'an 10: 13-14).

One of the fundamental questions of morality is the question of the foundations of a just order. The views of philosophers regarding this question vary widely. Hence, the objective of this section is to not to delve into them, but, rather to contrast *al-Tawhid* (the oneness of Allah) to positivism, utilitarianism and libertarianism as foundations of morality. Its aim is to expound the foundations of a just order as envisioned in the following verse:

"We sent aforetime our apostles with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice; and We sent down Iron, in which is (material for) mighty war, as well as many benefits for mankind, that Allah may test who it is that will help, Unseen, Him and His apostles: For Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might (and able to enforce His Will)." (Qur'an 57: 25).

It is crystal clear in the above verse that establishment of a just order is dependent upon three things namely, the Book, the Balance and Iron. Each of these requires interpretation.

THE BOOK

The Book is the Divine guidance revealed to man through Prophets and Messengers. According to the Qur'an no nation has been left unguided (Qur'an 10: 47; 16: 36 and 40: 78). One of the aims of Divine revelation is to give "permanence and stability to the moral standards" and to provide "a sanction to morality in the love and fear of God, which will impel man to obey the moral law even without any external pressure. Through belief in God and the Day of Judgment it furnishes a force which enables a person to adopt the moral conduct with earnestness and sincerity, with all the devotion of heart and soul."^{xiv} The final divine guidance to man is the Qur'an. It was revealed at a time when many moral values were either distorted or discarded. That time is described *jahiliyyah* – the time when man was ignorant of divine guidance: "It is a Revelation sent down by (Him), the Exalted in Might, Most Merciful. In order that thou mayest admonish a people, whose fathers had received no admonition, and who therefore remain heedless (of the Signs of Allah)." (Qur'an 36: 5-6). The Qur'an is described as *al-Furqan*, the Criterion (of right and

wrong) (Qur'an 25: 1), *al-Nur*, the Light-deliverer of man from darkness, barbarism and primitivism (Qur'an 4: 174), *huda*, Light (Qur'an 10:57/31:32), *al-Sirat a-Mustaqim*, Straight Path (Qur'an 6:153), *mubin*, that which makes plain (Qur'an 12: 1), *'adl*, Justice (Qur'an 6:115), *sidq*, the Truth (Qur'an 39:33), *al-Hadi*, Guide (Qur'an 17:9) and *fasl*, that which distinguishes good from evil (Qur'an 86: 13), among others.

The Balance

"We have changed our moral code to fit our behavior instead of changing our behavior to harmonize with God's moral code."
— Billy Graham, *Billy Graham in Quotes*^{xv}

Balance is the criterion of good and wrong, the standard upon which actions are deemed moral or immoral. It is also called the 'moral code,' 'code of conduct' and 'conscience;' the inner voice of God within every human being. It is absolute (permanent and stable), comprehensive, universal, authoritative (the moral truths to which man must adhere in all situations and at all time), inherent in man's nature and regulative; it protects man against extremes. It is the basis of morality for individual (personal morality) and society (social morality), i.e. the principles or standards by which a person or society judges a conduct or moral action as either right or wrong; the basis upon which decisions are made and the principles upon which ethical theories are formulated. Examples of moral code are: truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, kindness, devotion, dedication, steadfastness, humility, integrity, modesty, patience, fulfillment of one's promise, sympathy, loyalty, determination, courage and moderation. These are the basis of human relations and the anchor of civilizations and healthy living. The key to these is the establishment of 'strong relation with Allah' -*habl min Allah*.

One of the greatest contributions of revelation to ethics and morality is *al-Tawhid*, the oneness of Allah and condemnation of *al-Shirk*, polytheism or assigning of partners to Allah:

"Say: the things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge." (Qur'an 7: 33).

Al-Tawhid is a principle governing morality and it implies truthfulness, honesty, sincerity, devotion, dedication, humility, modesty, loyalty, moderation and fulfillment of one's promise (to the creator), among others. On the contrary, falsehood, dishonesty, negligence, apathy or unfaithfulness, arrogance, excessiveness and breaking of one's promise (to Allah), among others, are the implications of *al-Shirk*. Belief in *al-Tawhid* implies the belief that moral standards come from divine authority; they are revealed by Allah. Opposed to the principle of *al-Tawhid* are positivism, utilitarianism and libertarianism. Positivism is a theory that holds that there are no objective foundations of morality, i.e. there is no moral code or revealed book upon which actions are judged. Utilitarianism is a normative ethical theory developed by Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) holding that "actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness."^{xvi} By happiness Mill meant "pleasure, and the absence of pain."^{xvii} This means, it is the consequences of the action that determines its moral judgement. If the action results into pleasure which is the absence of pain then it is good and fair, wrong and unfair if it doesn't. Utilitarianism is also known as "the Greatest Happiness Principle."^{xviii} This means the happiness or pleasure referred to here is that of the majority and not that of a few individuals. In other words, it is the overall good that determines the moral judgement of an action. The problem with this principle is that it leads to the justification of an immoral act for the benefit of the majority if it leads to the greatest good of the greatest number and also the violation of the rights of the minority for the benefit of the majority. Libertarianism is a theory according to which an action that minimizes the role of the government to the protection of individual's rights is right and fair. According to libertarians, life, liberty and property are the rights that every person possesses naturally before the formation of the governments.^{xix} Thus the only action that should be allowed by the government is that which leads to the protection of these natural rights. Government's actions such as "censorship, the draft, price controls, confiscation of property, and regulation of our personal and economic lives" are strongly condemned by the libertarians.^{xx} The objective of libertarianism is to limit the power of the government and increase liberty. Liberty in its modern usage refers to "the right to make choices and to pursue projects of one's own choosing."^{xxi} A government with limited power is the one that confines its roles to the protection of individual's rights and it is known as the 'minimal state.' Libertarians are strong supporters of capitalism and opponents of socialism, communism and welfare state. Now the fundamental question is how to harmonize one's freedom with that of others. To make it blunt, how much freedom should one be allowed? Boaz responds to this question as follows:

Libertarianism is not libertinism or hedonism. It is not a claim that "people can do anything they want to, and nobody else can say anything." Rather, libertarianism proposes a society of liberty under law, in which individuals are free to pursue their own lives so long as they respect the equal rights of others.^{xxii}

Implied in the above quotation is "one person's liberty/freedom ends where another person's liberty/freedom begins" or "the right to swing my fist ends where the other man's nose begins." This means that the rights of others put limitations on one's liberty.

It is evident from the foregoing that separation of morality from religion is the common ground between the above described theories. This implies the separation of church and state, law and morals and supremacy of reason over faith or revelation. Positivism, utilitarianism and libertarianism are some of the theories that form the foundation of modern civilization.

The Iron

There are two ways to establish a just order: voluntarily, to lead one's life in accordance with divine guidance, and coercively, to use the iron to punish wrongdoers. The latter requires establishment of authority; i.e. government or state. Many scholars have imagined how life would be like without a state, government or police to maintain order. According to Thomas Hobbes, life without authority is 'solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short'^{xxiii} because of covetousness or man's insatiable desires (for material possessions). Accordingly, it is imperative to have an authority as the 'moral code' or moral consciousness without the iron is inadequate for the world to be peaceful.

In Islam, establishment and compliance to an authority is a duty of the entire *ummah* (Muslim community). Negligence to perform this duty is one of the great sins leading to punishment.

"O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you. If ye differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if ye do believe in Allah and the Last Day: That is best, and most suitable for final determination." (Qur'an 4: 59).

It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Umar that the Holy Prophet (may peace be upon him) said: "It is obligatory upon a Muslim that he should listen (to the ruler appointed over him) and obey him whether he likes it or not, except that he is ordered to do a sinful thing. If he is ordered to do a sinful act, a Muslim should neither listen to him nor should he obey his orders."^{xxiv}

It is evident from this hadith that the *ummah* is duty-bound to obey the ruler, provided that he does not command them to commit sins. Very often people blame the leaders though they are to blame, for a community that is morally upright produces just leaders while the opposite is believed to be true. It is narrated in *Adab Hasan al-Basri* of Ibn al-Jawzi that he (Hassan al-Basri) said:

Know - may Allah pardon you - that the tyranny of the kings is a retribution (*niqmah*) from among the retributions of Allah the Most High, and Allah's retributions are not to be faced with the sword, but they are to be faced with *taqwa* (God fearing) and are repelled with supplication and repentance, remorse (*inabah*) and abstention from sins. Verily, when the punishments of Allah are met with the sword, are more severe. And Malik bin Dinar narrated to me that al-Hajjaj (Ibn Yusuf) used to say, "Know that every time you commit a sin Allah will bring about a punishment from the direction of your ruler (*sultan*)". And I have also been told that a person said to al-Hajjaj, "Do you do such and such with the *Ummah* of Muhammad (peace be upon him)?" So he replied, "For the reason that I am the punishment of Allah upon the people of Iraq, when they innovated into their religion whatever they innovated, and when they abandoned the commands of their Prophet (peace be upon him) whatever they abandoned."^{xxv}

Most of immoral acts if not all are the result of disobedience to authority. The state as an authority is duty-bound to preserve morality by performing the following duties: First, to execute punishment for moral violation. Note that punishment is an exclusive right of the state and essential as it might help to deter or reduce moral offence. In Islam, punishment is classified into three types, i.e. *hudud* (sing. *Hadd*), *ta'zir* and *qisas*. *Hudud*, which literally means restrictions or limits, are the punishments fixed by the Qur'an and Sunnah for the six crimes, namely, theft (amputation of the hand), illicit sexual intercourse (death by stoning or one hundred lashes), making false accusations of illicit sex (eighty lashes), taking intoxicants (eighty lashes), apostasy (death or banishment), and highway robbery (death). *Qisas* which means retaliation or revenge is: "Life for life, eye for eye, nose or nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and wounds equal for equal" (Qur'an 5: 45). *Ta'zir* are the punishments at the discretion of the *Qadi* (judge) or ruler such as engagement in community service, imprisonment or payment of monetary sanctions.

Second, to organize moral education awareness programs across the state as part of *al-Amr bi al-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy 'an al-Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding wrong). The aim of such programs is to help children and youths explore the importance of morality and enhance ethical and moral practices among citizens and residents of the nation.

To sum up, the above verse implies that one of the objectives of divine guidance is to preserve morality. Morality is a subject of concern due to the numerous benefits it brings to the individual and society. The succeeding section elucidates some of the significance of moral virtues.

Conclusion

To conclude, man is a moral creature placed in the just world as *khalifah* and condemned to a finite existence with no other purpose than performing *'ibadah* (acts of devotion to Allah), the creator of everything and the only God worthy of worship. *'Ibadah* is an Islamic term for worship. It is composed of *zullu* and *inkisar* (humbleness), *khudhu'* (submissiveness) and *iftiqar* (the feeling of being in need of Allah for guidance, sustenance, protection, etc.) and it relates to the actions of the heart, the tongue and limbs. Morality is an essential composite of *'ibadah* and is embedded in all man's actions of the heart, tongue and limbs and it relates to the following relationships: (1) man to the Creator, Allah (2) man to fellow human beings, and (3) man to nature or everything around man. The world we live in is full of immorality due to impiety, heedlessness (God unconsciousness) and misguidance. An example of misguidance is the teaching that there are 'no universal values shared by all human society'; or more accurately, the contention that 'moral beliefs and practices vary from culture to culture' and that there is no absolute authority. This teaching is termed as 'moral relativism' or 'moral pluralism' and it is one of the worldviews that form the foundation of the modern civilization. The study has expounded the foundations of a just order; namely, the Book, the Balance and the Iron. To establish a just order all these have to be present. Iron (force) without the Book brings about injustice and the Book without Iron leads to abuse of justice. Balance without the Book is insufficient for justice to form a good society. The study has also contrasted *al-Tawhid* (the oneness of Allah) to positivism, utilitarianism and libertarianism as foundations of morality.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that establishment of a just order has many challenges that require thorough investigation. Also the means to its establishment are vary from time to time and from place to place. Hence more studies on this topic are needed.

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