

The Islamic Morals

The definition of morals (*Akhlaq*) in the Arabic language:

It is a term derived from the word “*Khuluq*” meaning the character and the nature, therefore a man’s character would be his qualities and his morals.

The definition of morals in the Shari’ah terminology:

The morals are the characteristics which Allah (SWT) has ordered the Muslim to abide by when performing his actions, they are the commands and prohibitions related to the qualities which the Muslim should demonstrate when performing his actions be it acts of worships, transactions and others. Since the Muslim is restricted by the Shari’ah, or rather his actions are restricted, for Allah (SWT) says:

“It is not fitting for a believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger, to have any option about their decision. If anyone disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path” [TMQ 33:36]

And for He (SWT) says:

“But no by the Lord, they shall not be believers, until they make you judge in all disputes between them, and find in their souls no resistance against your decisions, but accept them with the fullest conviction.” [TMQ 4:65]

Therefore Islam has obliged the Muslim to abide by the commands and prohibitions of Allah (SWT) in his actions, sayings and qualities when acting or talking. Furthermore, morals are part of the Islamic legislation for they are part of Allah’s commands and prohibitions; if the Muslim did not adhere to the morals as being commands from Allah (SWT) and as being acts of worship for which he will be rewarded in the day of Judgement, his morals would not be considered as acts of worship and they would not be accepted of him even if they were commendable, for the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Every action not based on our teaching is rejected.”

If for instance someone told the truth because telling the truth is regarded in society as a good deed, his action would not be considered an act of worship, but if he did so in response to the command of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) who said:

“Verily a man would tell the truth and keep on doing so until Allah labels him as truthful”, only then would his truthfulness would be an act of worship. The Islamic moral qualities would be reflected in the Muslim’s actions and sayings, if he traded he would not cheat, for the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “He is not one of us who cheats us”, and if he mixed with people he would like them and be liked for the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “A Muslim would like and be liked”.

Here are brief examples demonstrating that the Islamic moral qualities would be reflected in the Muslim’s actions when he adheres to the standards set by the Shari’ah or when he realises his relationship with Allah (SWT) whilst performing his actions, and when he realises the rule related to the action whether it is obligatory or desirable, or when he realises why he abstains from committing a sin or an undesirable act:

- The Muslim would show humility in prayer, Allah (SWT) says:

“The believers will eventually succeed. Those who humble themselves in their prayers” [TMQ 23:1-2]

- The Muslim would show gentleness when carrying the Da’awa and debating with people, for Allah (SWT) says:

“It is part of the Mercy of Allah that you dealt gently with them. Were you severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you” [TMQ 3:159]

- The Muslim would show patience and perseverance in enduring persecution and oppression while facing the enemy, Allah (SWT) says:

“O you who believe! persevere in patience and constancy; vie in such perseverance; strengthen each other; and fear Allah” [TMQ 3:200]

- The Muslim would show bravery and courage when he holds the tyrant ruler accountable, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “The masters of martyrs are Hamza and a man that stood up to a tyrant ruler, advised him and was killed”.

- The Muslim would show generosity and sacrifice, he would go hungry for others to have enough to eat, Allah (SWT) says:

“And they give them preference over themselves even though they were poor” [TMQ 59:9]

- The Muslim would show the qualities of the just and fair judge between people, Allah (SWT) says:

“And when you judge between people, do judge with justice” [TMQ 4:58]

- The Muslim would show fidelity and would honour his contracts, for Allah (SWT) says:

“Fulfil all obligations” [TMQ 5:1]

and for the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “The Muslims should always fulfil their promises”.

- The Muslim would show the qualities of compassion and friendliness for the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “The believers are but like one body in their love friendliness and compassion to one another, if a member suffered, the rest of the body reacted with sleeplessness and fever”.

He (SAW) also said: “Have mercy on those who are on earth so that Allah may have mercy on you”.

There are other Islamic qualities which Allah (SWT) has ordered the Muslims to adhere to such as: Decency, generosity, modesty, obedience to parents, good conjugal community, tolerance, helpfulness, supporting the believers, frankness, sincerity, keeping promises and safeguarding trusts etc...

There are also some despicable moral qualities which Allah (SWT) has prohibited, such as telling lies, envy, injustice, cheating, insulting, tale carrying, backbiting, hypocrisy, disobeying the parents, laziness, cowardice, meanness etc..

Allah (SWT) says:

“And from the mischief of the envious one as he practises envy” [TMQ 113:5]

And He (SWT) also says:

“Those who want to be seen and refuse to supply neighbourly needs.” [TMQ 107:6-7]

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “O Allah I seek your refuge from weakness, laziness, cowardice and meanness”. He (SAW) also said: “The Muslim would never be a slanderer, an abuser, nor would he be a loud mouth shouting in the markets”.

The characteristics of the Islamic morals:

1 - The Islamic morals cannot be separated from the other types of legislation such as the rituals, the transactions etc., the humility for instance does not manifest itself except in prayer, and the truthfulness and trust do not materialise except in transactions, therefore the morals cannot be separated from the other commands and prohibitions for they are characteristics which appear only when the human is performing the action.

2 - The Islamic morals are not motivated by material gains as is the case with most people in western societies, the Muslim is ordered to adhere to those morals regardless of benefit or loss, he would be truthful before the tyrant ruler and he would be brave when holding him accountable even if he suffered persecution and oppression, he would not compromise his principles, for the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “The master of martyrs is Hamza and a man who stood up to a tyrant ruler to advise him and was killed”.

3 - The Islamic morals, just like the Islamic Aqeeda, conforms with the human nature, for instance, being generous and hospitable to the guest and helping the needy conforms with the instinct of

survival; humility and modesty conform with the spiritual instinct. Mercy, clemency and love conform with the instinct of the gender.

The effects of morals on the individual and society:

1 - Morals, together with the other obligations make of the Muslim a distinctive Islamic personality when dealing with other people, they would trust him and believe what he says.

2 - Islamic morals generate affection and respect between the members of the family in particular and the members of society in general.

3 - Abiding by the Islamic morals will be rewarded by Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgement, just like the other commands and prohibitions, and the Muslim would gain people's trust and respect in this life, those who adhere to high morals will be close to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) in the Hereafter, sharing the grace of Heaven, for Allah (SWT) says:

“All who obey Allah and the Messenger are in the company of those on whom is the grace of Allah, - the prophets, the truthful, and the martyrs and the righteous. What a beautiful fellowship” [TMQ 4:69]

And Bukhari reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: “Verily those I love most and those who will be closest to me are those of you who have the best morals.”. And he (SAW) was asked once about the best assets that would make a Muslim enter Heaven, he said: “The fear of Allah and good morals”.