

Morals Don't Make You Great!

It is surprising to see the call for morals being taken up today as a means for changing society, i.e., if we all become 'good muslims' everything else will just fall into place. This is one of the biggest corruption of Islam in the sense that it not only misses the point but also diverts people's attention away from the real problem. When this argument is extended further to solving the problems of the ummah at large it becomes incredulous, since having good morals is not going to help the muslims in Bosnia, Kashmire, Palestine,...

Crime and corruption. These are but two of the multitude of problems that muslims face today world wide, especially in the muslim countries. The deceit, ineptitude and backwardness in these countries is due in large to the society of these countries being unstable and weak.

In order to understand the problem further a definition of society is required. Society, in general, is made up of the inhabitant individuals, their thoughts and emotions along with the system applied. Son in the West the thoughts and emotions of the people are shaped by the concept of 'freedom', where people are allowed, in principle, to do what they like. Hence the high crime rates. An example of which is rape, where certain men cannot control their sexual desires and because they feel they are free, aim to satisfy this desire in any which way they can. The system does not help either since it promotes the concept of 'freedom' along with the concept of 'benefit'. If you can gain any personal benefit from an action, then you should do it.

Looking at the muslim countries, the people, their thoughts and emotions are (arguably) more or less in accordance with Islam. What is missing is the implementation of the Islamic system comprehensively as a deen (ideology). Moreover it is the system which shapes peoples values, their actions and their attitudes to life. So it is the non-implementation of Islam that is at the root of all of our problems.

It is surprising, therefore, to see the call for morals being taken up today as a means for changing society, i.e., if we all become 'good muslims' everything else will just fall into place. This is one of the biggest corruption of Islam in the sense that it not only misses the point but also diverts people's attention away from the real problem. When this argument is extended further to solving the problems of the ummah at large it becomes incredulous, since having good morals is not going to help the Bosnians. It is not going to stop the rape of our sisters in Kashmir, the killing of our brothers in Palestine or the annihilation and extermination of muslims in Bosnia.

So let us look at morals. Morals are simple the control over individual behavior. They merely define the actions one should do as an individual and the qualities that one should acquire. Honestly, modesty, rescuing people from death (!), these are all values that are universally regarded as ideal. Similarly lying, cheating and envy are universally regarded as immoral.

So you may find people who have a nice character, who are tactful, honest and reliable, and who do not lie or cheat. These are the characteristics which we all seek to acquire. But what distinguishes you from everyone else is not your morals or your personality but your belief. A kafir (disbeliever) can have good morals, but at the end of the day he/she is still a kafir. This shows that even the call for morals itself as a method for solving societal problems does not come from Islam.

There is no doubting that certain actions do have moral values.

“And measure in fairness and do not weigh unfairly.”

(Quran : surah 55, ayah 9)

“Prayer forbids lewdness and abomination.”

(Quran : surah 28, ayah 45)

Allah (swt) orders us to attain certain qualities in order to shape our Islamic personality, such as being honest, modest, cheerful, obeying and honoring your parents, etc. He (swt) forbids us from actions such as cheating, envy, backbiting and slandering.

“Heed not the despicable man - ready with oaths, a slanderer gong about habitually hindering (all) good, transgressing beyond bounds, deep in sin, violent (and cruel) with all that, base-born.”

(Quran : surah 68, ayah 10-13)

Islam defines the actions that we as individuals should carry out. This is because every action that we do as muslims must be in accordance with what Islam lays down, i.e. Hokm Shari (divine law).

“Then shall anyone who has done an atoms weight of good see it, and anyone who has done an atoms weight of evil shall see it (on the day of judgment).”

(Quran : surah 94, ayah 7-8)

Every action is considered a worship if we carry out that action according to Hokm Shari. Whether an action is moral or not does not even come into it, since every action is done in accordance with Islam. There is no special section on morals in Islamic fiqh (jurisprudence) nor any books of fiqh that concentrate on this one subject.

To call for morals and to say that Islam is moral is a misunderstanding of Islam itself. For example, although we are ordered to be honest, there are situations in which we can lie, such as to our wife concerning her cooking, or as intermediaries in a dispute between two people. There are also situations in which we are commanded to lie, such as when we meet the kafir on the battlefield regarding things like troop movements etc.

But the call for morals as a solution for society is also more than a misunderstanding. Islam, as you will have gathered, is a complete system of life, covering all aspects of life. These can be grouped into three areas : man's relationship with Allah, with himself and with society. To concentrate on just one of these areas and disregard the other two, especially the third relationship, is tantamount to being secular since it divorces Islam from life and reality. It separates individual action from society and hence is a secularization of Islam. Morals will not change anything. They have no impact on any sphere of life apart from yourself. From Islam this is erroneous since it is completely individualistic.

Not only is it close to being secular but it is also dangerous to the muslims. An example of amoral action that muslims have carried recently is regarding Bosnia. Having seen the plight of the muslims in Bosnia, the mass murders and killings, muslims reacted in a very emotional manner. Money, blankets and food were collected and sent to Bosnia. Allhumdulilla, these actions were and are absolutely necessary and there is no denying that these actions are allowed from Islam. But what has resulted is that people have become quite content with what they have done. They feel they have done their bit and helped the muslims in Bosnia. The evidence is to the contrary. The real solution to the Bosnian problem is Jihad. They need arms, weaponry, tanks and aircraft to defend themselves. They also need military help from the muslims and the muslim armies. Quite frankly, by just sending them food and blankets all that has been achieved is like the fattening of the cow for the slaughter. Muslims are still being killed.

This is the big danger. By concentrating yourself on individual characteristics and qualities people become content with individual action. It keeps them away from the reality of life and the situation around them. They don't feel the problem of muslims around the world. And more importantly, it obscures the real solution to the problem of the muslims, i.e., the implementation of Islam as a complete way of life. If everyone were to pray and everyone was to attain the moral values, all it takes is for a few individuals to rule the country byufr.

The only solution to the problems of muslim ummah is to work to try and bring back Islam as a way of life, comprehensively. All we ask you to do is to think. What is the root cause of all our problems and what is the solution. After all it is not you morals that make you great, but Islam!

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