

What is there beyond *Akhlaaq* (أخلاق Morals)?

For too many years, religious address, particularly official address that is approved and allowed in the media, is solely restricted to Dawah in the area of Morals alone and connecting it to all matters. The problem of the Muslims in light of this aspect is identified as the decline in the morals of Muslims. It is claimed that calling for Morals, making it their focal point, will inevitably change their situation. On this basis, several, successive conferences were convened and many books were compiled and distributed for free. All these were done to restore the Islamic Morality and to make it as the basis upon which the Muslim acts. They brought texts and literature calling for the ethics in arts and sciences and even specified it as a course in the universities. They worked to separate morals into religious and worldly. They called for the comparison of moral thoughts in all the other religions, claiming that morals is of the most important shared values of all religions and messages. They utilized every platform for speech regarding the morality and quality of RasulAllah (saaw), asserting that he (saaw) is a man of good morals and tolerant, whilst his Message was solely for the purpose of perfecting the morals that were already present in the days of Jahiliyah and that Islam came just to give an impetus and divine blessings.

It is to be noted that the call for Morals is being exploited in an exaggerated manner by many regimes, with many platforms being opened for it, whether officially or privately. However, in contrast, it has become mandatory for us to take another look at this approach with critical and comprehensive awareness, particularly when we hear and see many shattering incidents that reveal the continuing, fast decline in the Morals of the Ummah. Our economic problems have worsened, our poverty has increased, our lands are occupied, ignorance and corruption are wide spread in all the aspects, whether morally, administratively, politically or familial. Many of the values have collapsed, Islam has become strange in its homelands and foolish ones (Ruwaibidah) speak on our behalf. All of this is so despite the efforts of those who advocate this moral approach, whether with sincere intention or not. In order to discuss this approach and explain its pros and cons, it is necessary for us to address it in various aspects to remove the obscurity in the mind and correct the conceptions regarding it.

Fairoz al Abadi defined 'Khulq' (خُلُق Moral) as disposition, innate nature, manhood and religion. The linguists differentiate the word Khulq from Khalq. Allama Raagib Asfahaani says, *والخُلُق والخُلُق في الأصل واحد كالشَّرب والشُّرب، والصَّرم والصُّرم، لكن خُصَّ الخُلُق بالهَيْئَات والأَشْكَال والصور* "Khalq and Khulq are similar to the words 'sharb' and 'shurb' (drinking) and 'sarm' and 'surm' (abscission). However the word 'Khalq' refers to the bodies, shapes and pictures that are perceived by the physical sight, whereas the word 'Khulq' refers to the power and disposition that are perceived by insight." As for the Shariah definition, Khulq is used in the Quran, conventionally which does not contradict much with its linguistic meaning. Khulq comes two times in the Quran. The first verse is **﴿إِنَّ هَٰذَا إِلَّا خُلُقُ الْأَوَّلِينَ﴾** "This is not but the Khulq of the former peoples" [Ash-Shu'ra:137]. Ibn Abbas, in his Tafsir, refers to Khulq as their religion, customs, morals and school of thoughts. The second verse refers to RasulAllah (saaw) in which it says, **﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ﴾** "Indeed, You are in a great Khulq" [Qalam:4]. Imam Tabari, in his tafsir of this ayah, says, *يقول - تعالى - "وإنك يا محمد، لعلی أدب عظیم، وذلك أدب القرآن الذي أدبه به، وهو الإسلام وشرائعه، وبنحو الذي قلنا في ذلك ذكره - لنبيّه محمد وإنك لعلی أدب عظیم، وذلك أدب القرآن الذي أدبه به، وهو الإسلام وشرائعه، وبنحو الذي قلنا في ذلك ذكره - لنبيّه محمد"* "Allah (swt) reminds here to His Prophet Muhammed (saw) 'oh Muhammed, indeed you are in a great manner', that is the manner of Quran that was imposed by Allah upon him i.e. Islam and its Shariah. This is what we and the scholars of Tafsir say." It is

transferred from Ibn Abbas, Mujahid, Ibn Zaid and Dhuhaak in their Tafsir that the verse ﴿خُلِقَ عَظِيمٌ﴾ I.e. great Deen.

In the Sunnah, Khulq appears conventionally in various narrations, such that its meaning cannot be restricted. For example, Ayesha (ra) described the Khulq of RasoolAllah (saaw) as, «كَانَ خُلُقُهُ الْقُرْآنَ» **“His Khulq is Quran”** as was narrated by Ahmad. It was narrated by Muslim that RasoolAllah (saaw) said, «الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ» **“Righteousness is good Khulq.”**

Istalaahan (اصطلاحًا conventionally), Tahir bin Aashur defined Morals as a sound disposition of the soul, stimulating the action that is appropriate to Good and Evil. It is said that Moral is Husan (حسن Good) and other than it is vile. Sheikh Taqiuddin An-Nabahani defined Morals as one of the constituents of the individual. Morals are amongst the Ahkaam (أحكام Legal Rulings) that regulate the relationship of man within himself, which also include rulings for food and clothing. Since the Shariah elaborates many Legal Rulings and stipulates adherence to them, the Legal Rulings related to Morals are regarded as commands and prohibitions of Allah (swt), without distinguishing any Ahkaam over others. Consequently, the Fuqahaa (فقهاء Jurists) did not make separate chapters in their books regarding Morals, because they considered them as part of Shariah and a part of the commands that are abidance to is obliged. Thus, the realization of Morals in society practically mandates the founding of Islamic emotions and systems.

Islamic society is a human entity that practices distinct lifestyle comprising of thoughts, emotions and systems. The spiritual aspect within the Islamic society is connected to the Islamic Aqeedah in all of its aspects. Islam treated every part of the life of individuals and the Islamic community in order to ensure righteousness in security. For example, Islam treated the issue of poverty by applying all the Ahkam Sharia that regulate wealth in the society. This includes the equal distribution of wealth through Zakah, endowments, prevention of hoarding, linkage of currency with two precious metals and so on. It is the application of these Ahkaam will lead us to a society that is free from poverty and poor people. So, in this case the role of Morals is secondary. Similarly, the issue of oppression is treated with the presence of Shar'i judges who judge according to Islam and clarify the issue. Accordingly, RasoolAllah (saaw) did not command the begging man to be with good morals. He (saaw) just asked him, «هَلْ فِي بَيْتِكَ شَيْءٌ؟» **“Is there anything in your home?”** He replied ‘I have a piece of cloth and a bowl.’ RasoolAllah (saaw) said, «اِئْتِنِي بِهِمَا» **“Bring them to me.”** The man brought these articles to him and RasoolAllah (saaw) took them and said, «مَنْ يَشْتَرِي هَٰذَا؟» **“Who will buy these?”** One of the Sahaba (ra) said, “I will O Messenger of Allah.” The Prophet (saw) asked, «بِكَمْ؟» **“Who will offer more (than one dirham)?”** Another of them said, «بِدَرَاهِمَيْنِ» **“I will buy them for two dirham.”** RasoolAllah (saaw) sold them for two dirham and said to the begging man, «خُذْ هَٰذَيْنِ الدَّرَاهِمَيْنِ، وَاشْتَرِ بِأَحَدِهِمَا طَعَامًا لِأَهْلِكَ وَبِالْآخَرِ فَاسًّا» **“Take this two dirham, Buy food with one for your family. Buy an axe with the other.”** The man went and did what RasoolAllah (saaw) ordered. The man brought an axe to him. RasoolAllah (saaw) fixed a handle on it with his own hands and he (saaw) said, «اِذْهَبْ بِهَٰذَا الْفَأْسَ وَاحْتَطَبْ بِهِ، وَلَا تَأْتِ إِلَيْنَا إِلَّا بَعْدَ خَمْسَةِ عَشَرَ يَوْمًا» **“Go gather firewood with this axe and sell it, and do not come to us for fifteen days.”** The man went away and gathered firewood and sold it. After fifteen days he brought ten dirham as his earnings.

When a person came to RasoolAllah (saaw) complaining about another, he (saaw) judged in favour of oppressed after hearing them both. When the Jews betrayed the Muslims by assaulting them, he (saaw) did not ask the Muslims to make Duaa, rather he (saw) mobilized an army, for Islam is submission to Allah (swt) and not to His enemies. When RasoolAllah (saaw) was about to die, he ordered the dispatch of the army of Osama... All these show that

the best of all in humankind in Morals did deal with matters according to the Revelation and treated each issue with respect to what was obligated of Ahkaam for it. So, where do the people who propose that the Morals are the only solution, stand?! In no circumstances can calling people to Morals solve any of the problems of poverty, oppression or occupation. It is only crooked logic and deficient understanding of Islam, its concepts and its Shariah. Moreover, it is a desperate attempt to restrict Islam and lower it to the same level as the rest of the religions. It is this worldly view of Islam that is actually similar to the secular concept about religion and the role of religion in the life. If such were the case, the Quran would have been limited to single verse and the object of sending RasulAllah (saaw) would have been just to make the nations as moral nations. This is contrary to the fundamental objective of Islam, which is to rescue people from worshiping the creation to worshiping the Creator of the creation.

In order to get further clarity, let us consider some more examples: it is known that some of the advanced western countries seem to be devoid of poor, despite their evil Morals which none would deny like sexual deviation, incest, alcohol and racism. Despite the presence of all these evil acts, we find an absence of poverty. On the other hand, we find poverty a dominant feature in the Muslim countries, even where the people have good Morals, like Sudan and Mauritania. Hence, Morals can never be the factor in establishing the society in terms of its rise or decline. But what is actually influencing the society is general custom. When one of the British travellers visited Jeddah of the Hejaz during the Ottoman period, he was able to learn all the religious matters within a week. This was because the ruler and the people in that region used to deal in their worldly affairs through taking Islam as the sole basis. In contrast, we find the regimes in our lands trying hard to establish a society that is neither purely Islamic nor secular, instead it is a homogeneous mixture of society. They strive hard to disseminate misconceptions with all the means that are available to them. And so the caller to morals is confronted with a tremendous number of people whose thoughts and behaviours have been clouded. When they attempt to address them with a preachy sermons, its effect does not last much after the end of the act of preachy injection. The issue here is so great that it cannot be reduced to Morals alone. It is too great to be restricted to one part of Islam. Yet, it is the issue that must be considered as the crucial issue that determines our objective as an Ummah that carries the Risaalah (رسالة Message) of Islam. This objective cannot be realized without the society whose intellectual leadership is the Islamic Aqeeda in its thoughts, emotions and its system. Accordingly, it is necessary to understand the reality clearly in all of its manifestations, particularly its political aspect. The media and abundant material campaign for this approach proceeds in a path that does not confront falsehood clearly. On the contrary, this approach legitimatizes the falsehood and is silent about it. Using this approach, they blame the people and ignore the regimes that have been imposing upon people oppression and corruption, which is the consequence of applying kufr laws upon them. Indeed, requesting the people to return to Islam and its Aqeeda must be comprehensive. The evidence for this are the many hadiths that link the authority and Istikhlaaf (استخلاف Succession in Authority), with the adherence to the Ahkaam of Allah. RasulAllah (saaw) said, «تركتم فيكم أمرين لن تضلوا ما تمسكتم بهما: كتاب الله وسنة نبيه» **I left you two things, if you hold onto them, you will never be misguided: the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet**” He (saaw) also said, «عليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين، عضوا عليها» **Hold fast to my Sunnah and the examples of the Rightly- Guided Caliphs who will come after me. Adhere to them and hold to them fast.**” These Legal Rulings were entirely absent and became a legacy of history, according to some. Doubts started to arise about the ability of Islam with respect to the march of time and some consider it as an outdated matter that needs to be replaced. This and other concepts were promoted and found a suitable atmosphere. They were put forward by the people of the Moral approach,

who did not make Islam clear and did not give it its right. They restricted Islam to a narrow vision. The secularists and enemies of Islam used this opportunity to spread their poisonous thoughts, upon the basis of the struggle between Truth and Falsehood. Indeed, the continuity in this address is a commitment to mislead the Ummah and spread among within her frustration, particularly in the presence and intensification of horrific corruption.

There is no doubt that any reformist thought that adopts a reformation project and seeks to move the people from one condition to another with this reformation, cannot have impact among the people until this thought is adopted by a party that believes in this thought and carries it to the people, in order to persuade them to carry its thought and work with it. This is one of the sunnah (norms) of the life. The nature of the Ummah as a political entity leads us to say that the political nature of the society makes political action mandatory for change. This is because only the political vision carries a comprehensive project and apolitical parties cannot carry such a project. Such a political party seeks to shape the society with a specific system, with all of its legislations and laws. And it is inevitable that those who carry this ideological reformist thought will collide with the ruling class, because the goal is to change the society which is ruled by the regime whose legislation and thoughts are not from the ideology. So, whoever proposes an alternative to this system will inevitably clash with the regime. Thus the political action for radical change is not acceptable within the people, even though they know that it is correct. This is the reason why political parties are the most oppressed by the ruling class. These parties propose an alternative political project with all the laws and affairs that completely threaten the existence of the current regimes. This is contrast to the rest of the groups who work in diverse frameworks, such as the civil society and Morals groups. This is why the regimes in the Muslim countries allow the ones who adopt the Morals approach, support them and open the arena for them. This provides the regimes credibility of the Muslims, especially when the Muslims see the rulers receiving the Ulema and holding meetings with them. This is their misguidance. Indeed, Islam is comprehensive and bears fruit when it is implemented comprehensively in the Islamic society. Thus the individual is shaped with the general customs that are founded by the systems, thoughts and emotions which the ruler is obliged to apply and spread in the society. □

In conclusion, the deviation from the Islamic Ideology in thought and Tareeqah (طريقة Methodology) is the only reason for the weakness and humiliation. It is the Sunnah of Allah (swt) that He will not grant the authority to the Muslims in the way He allows authority to the Kuffar. The Muslims will be given authority only when they establish the Islamic Method. It is true that Islam is both a spiritual and a political Aqeedah (عقيدة Creed) i.e. Islam is the intellectual system that regulates the relationships of the society in terms of ruling economy, education and foreign policy, whose source is solely the Islamic Creed. It is this that inevitably leads to the specific, determined model of life that is truly a correct revival.

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