

Crisis of moral values in Bangladesh: An evaluation from Islamic perspective

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Abstract

Comprising about 91% of Muslims, Bangladesh is a Muslim majority peoples' country (Dhaka Tribune, 2022). Every Muslim should carry moral values, which include honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, commitment, forgiveness, awareness of others' rights, dutiful, keeping words, patience, etc. But these values are lacking among many Muslims in Bangladesh, which brings unrest and hindrance to the development and peace of the country. A qualitative research methodology utilized the Holy Quran and Hadith as primary sources for the prescription of moral values. The study found the different activities of Muslims in daily life in Bangladesh, where they are gradually losing their moral values. These moral crises are not only common in Bangladesh but also all over the world. Engaging in discourse about the nation's population can raise ethical awareness and improve moral values among citizens. This can contribute to societal peace and sustainable development within the national context, as it enhances moral rectitude and establishes societal peace.

Keywords: *Crises, Moral Values, Islam, Unrest, Hindrance, Development*

1. Introduction

Bangladesh, as a Muslim-majority people's country, demands the people of this country to be morally strong, but the scenario primarily reflects differently. This moral crisis is increasing day by day and making society restless. The young generation is mainly involved in many immoral activities like lying, killing, kidnapping, backbiting, drug addiction, selfishness, harming others, and so on in society. Without moral improvement, a nation cannot reach its destination, and sustainable peace cannot be assured. The word "morality" derives from the Latin word *moralities*, which means "character, manner, and proper behavior," which in Arabic called *Akhlāq* (الأخلاق), which refers to a good code of conduct helps to distinguish right from wrong. Islam is a complete way of life, and morality is the foundation of Islam. Morality is one of the fundamental sources of a nation's strength, just as immorality is one of the foremost causes of a nation's deterioration. In our country, we face moral crises in our everyday lives. All religions emphasize morality, like truthfulness, honesty, and punctuality.

Islam has established some essential universal fundamental rights for all humankind, which are observed in all conditions. Islam has provided lawful protections and an effective moral structure to maintain these rights. Islam made those things lawful, which are welfare for every aspect of life, and those things unlawful, which are harmful to humankind. Some people do not differentiate between good and evil, moral and immoral, because of extreme moral crises. They lack the guidance of the holy Qur'an and Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) in every aspect of life. Islamic moral system not only defines morality but also guides humankind in achieving good moral character at both an individual and a collective level. Islam places excessive importance on improving human character. For these reasons, it inspires followers to practice good moral qualities in every aspect of their lives. In this respect, Muhammad's (Sm.)

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life has been placed as a model and strong instance for all humankind, and from him, they can learn the best moral lessons for every aspect of life. There are many moral values mentioned in the holy Qur'an that a Muslim should practice in his or her daily life. The following verses of the holy Qur'an mention a few of such important moral values as Allah says, "(They are) those who are patient, those who are true, and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah and those who spend (their wealth as Zakāt and alms) and those who pray and beg Allah's Pardon in the last hours of the night" (Qur'an: 3:17).

2. Objective of research

The main objective of this research is to examine the state of moral practices in Bangladesh and to identify the moral teachings prescribed by the Holy Qur'an and Hadith, which are essential for every human being to practice in their lives.

3. Methodology of research

This qualitative research was done mainly by studying secondary sources like journals, books, and reports. It also includes experiences from living and traveling in different multicultural societies in Bangladesh and other countries worldwide. The references from the holy Qur'an have been used as primary sources.

4. Literature review

The different scholars' views have reflected the moral scenario that we have created more conflicts than solved over the years. The Bangeelis, once famously known for their simplistic way of life, have taken a turn for the worse. Society has become considerably devoid of morality and ethics (Chowdhury, 2012). Recently, we have observed a sharp decline in moral and social values in Bangladesh. Daily newspapers published harrowing, horrific stories unheard of a few decades ago. (Karim, 2011). The society of this country is now in the process of gradual breakdown into a fragmented, selfish entity that is greed-oriented. This gradual degradation of values makes our society less humane, and we become poorer regarding social capital (Karim, 2011). We cannot call a nation happy and peaceful when, every day, society experiences horrific murders, dozens of deaths in a series of accidents, violence against women, abuse of children, multiple suicides, and vicious vendettas across the country. We have said that telling lies has become a tradition among us and at all levels of society. Lying and bluffing have reached alarming proportions. (Chowdhury, 2012). At present, day by day, mothers' attention on their children has been lessened by spending an extended period watching television, cell phones, and social media, which causes personality disorders in the long run (Ruwandeepa, 2011).

5. Analysis of the basis of Qur'an and Sunnah

For human beings, Allah the almighty determined some moral qualities that need to be carried on; otherwise, they will be considered an animal or worse than an animal. We are missing many of them among the Bangladeshi people, so we need to improve those qualities among us. The essential moral qualities have been found in the Qur'an and Sunnah are discussed as follows:

5.1. Taqwa

Taqwa is an Arabic word which means Allah Consciousness. We are missing the lowest level of "Taqwa" among the people in their daily life practices in Bangladesh. They remember Allah the almighty occasionally in prayer, *milad mahfil*, and other religious rituals. Still, they do not remember Allah the almighty when they go outside their prayer, like in their business, jobs,

office, market, and other activities. Taqwa demands to remember Allah the almighty always. The holy Qur'an mentions that Taqwa is the highest quality of a Muslim.

Regarding this, Allah the Almighty says, "The most honorable among you in the sight of God is the one who is most God-conscious" (Qur'an: 49:13). There are many moral values mentioned and which are emphasized again and again in the Qur'an truthfulness, modesty, humility, control of passions and desires, patience, integrity, steadfastness, and fulfilling one's promises. It has been the Qur'an that "God loves those who are firm and steadfast." (Qur'an: 3:146) In addition, Almighty Allah says, "Establish regular prayer, enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong; and bear patiently whatever may befall you; for this is true constancy. And do not swell your cheek (with pride) at men, nor walk in insolence on the earth, for God does not love any man proud and boastful. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; for the harshest of sounds, indeed, is the braying of the ass" (Qur'an: 31:18-19). Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) mentioned Taqwa that "Fear Allah wherever you are, do good deeds after doing bad ones, the former will wipe out the latter, and behave decently towards people" (Sunan At-Tirmizī, 1987). So, we should have Allah's Consciousness in all aspects of life to ensure peace and stability in Bangladesh.

5.2. Truthfulness

Truthfulness is one of the great virtues that originated from Taqwa. The Arabic word for truthfulness is *Sidq*, which means exposing and expressing facts in their reality. But with this practice,, we are significantly missing our society in Bangladesh. We rarely find truthful people among us. If we could improve truthfulness among our people, we could remove social crime from our country and develop our country in the shortest time. This practice needs to be started early, especially at the family level. He who speaks the truth is trusted and loved by all. From childhood, our great Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) was loved by everybody for his truthfulness. Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) says, "Truthfulness gives emancipation, and falsehood brings destruction." He also says, "Be truthful, because truthfulness leads to the path of virtues and virtues leads to the path of heaven." (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 2607). If we can bring this great virtue to society, crime will be significantly reduced in our country. The opposite of truth is a lie. From the lower level to the higher lever people, it has become a prevalent practice to speak lies, which is an awful sign for society. Lie is called the mother of all great sin. Allah the Almighty says in the holy Qur'an, "Only they forge the lie who do not believe in Allah's communications, and these are the liars (Qur'an: 27:105). He also says, "Surely Allah does not guide him aright who is a liar, ungrateful" (Qur'an: 39:3). To get the blessings and guidance of Allah, we should avoid speaking lies in our everyday lives.

5.3. Patience

In our beloved country, people are mostly impatient, which brings suffering in the long run. We find impatience in their work, behaviors, offices, education, etc. At present, the young generation is becoming impatient and involving violence as well as destructive activities. As a Muslim, it is their most important duty to be patient in every activity in their life. Almighty Allah says in the holy Qur'an, "Be sure we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil), but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere" (Qur'an: 2:155).

5.4. Sincere and obedient in the prayer of Allah

Five times, prayer is mandatory for every adult Muslim male and female. A large number of Muslims are not praying regularly in Bangladesh, and those who are praying are not sincere and obedient to Allah. Many cannot recite the holy Qur'an correctly and do not understand what they are reciting in the prayer. Allah the Almighty says in the holy Quran that "When those that believe are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he (that is, the Messenger) may judge their disputes among them, nothing becomes them but to say: "We hear and we obey." Such shall attain true success. Those who obey Allah and His Messenger and fear Him and avoid disobeying Him: such, indeed, shall triumph" (Qur'an: 24:51-52). The verses emphasize praying to Allah with sincerity and obedience to be successful in our lives. Without sincerity and proper obedience to the prayer, prayer will not rectify them and will not improve their morality.

5.5. Spending wealth in the right path

Zakāh is an Arabic word and Islamic term which means purification, increase and giving charity, etc. Zakāt is obligatory charity, particularly for wealthy Muslims; however, everyone can provide other voluntary charity or alms. Islamic Zakāt system is the primary financial means for establishing social justice and leading Muslim society to prosperity, security, and peace. Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) said, "There is no envy except in two: a person whom Allah has given wealth, and he spends it in the right way, and a person whom Allah has given wisdom (i.e., religious knowledge) and he gives his decisions accordingly and teaches it to the others" (Saḥīḥ Bukhārī, 490). Many people in Bangladesh are not paying Zakāt and other charities, and many are paying for their fame and name, which do not help them improve their moral development. All kinds of charity and alms should be for the satisfaction of Allah the Almighty. All the almighty ordered in several verses of the holy Qur'an to perform Salah and pay Zakāt. Allah says, "And establish prayer and give Zakāt and bow with those who bow [in worship]" (Qur'an: 2:43).

5.6. Forgiveness

Forgiving is one of the essential moral qualities that a Muslim must possess. Allah the almighty likes him and forgives others, and Allah Himself is a great and merciful forgiver. Nowadays, Bangladesh's people are becoming much more revengeful instead of merciful. They do not want to forgive others and become more violent in many cases. Our Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) was tortured by many Arabs, especially young people of *Tayef*, but he forgave everyone after the victory of Makkah. He could take revenge but showed mercy and kindness to the violent people. Allah the Almighty says, "Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not love for Allah to forgive you? Allah is Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an: 24:22).

5.7. Praying Tahajjud

Praying Tahajjud is an additional prayer to Almighty Allah in the late night hours, which is very important to improve moral character. It helps to make good relations and to be closer to Allah. A short survey found that among the young generation, few people prayed this prayer once or twice in their lives. This moral value is something that a Muslim should adopt because, firstly, this prayer is an additional prayer, showing the additional loyalty of a Muslim to Allah. Secondly, this prayer is performed in solitude in the last part of the night, which removes all kinds of showiness or arrogance. Allah the Almighty will give them special honor who will perform the Tahajjud prayer. Allah says in the holy Qur'an, "And rise from sleep during the night

as well- this is an additional Prayer for you. Possibly your Lord will raise you to an honored position" (Qur'an: 17: 79).

5.8. Control Rage or Anger

Nowadays, in Bangladesh's city life, people have become angrier and have failed to control their anger. The young generation is involved in different violent activities because of their uncontrolled anger. Rage or anger is something that destroys in all aspects. Muslims need to control their anger in all situations because anger is one of the great crimes that make people sometimes blind clouds and remove from them the judgmental capacity to differentiate between right and wrong. Therefore, a Muslim must control his temper, including sorrow and joy. The Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) said: "If any of you becomes angry and he is standing, let him sit down, so his anger will go away. If it does not go away, let him lie down" (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 4782). He also said: Anger is a burning coal. Don't you see your eyebrows wide and eyes reddish? So, when one of you feels angry, let him sit down if standing and lie down if sitting. If still anger does not stop, make ablution with cold water or take a bath, as fire cannot be extinguished without water" (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 4766).

5.9. Repentance upon Sins

Nowadays, people are involved in sinful activities in Bangladesh, but many do not realize they are engaged in immoral activities and repent their sins. Sometimes, they feel proud of their wicked activities, encouraging others to be involved in the crime or sinful activities. If anyone commits sins, they should instantly apologize to Allah the Almighty for their sins. A Muslim must ensure repentance of sins in his character because Allah likes it. In the holy Qur'an, He says, "Seek the forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him in repentance, that He may grant you good enjoyment, for a term appointed, and bestow His abounding Grace to every owner of grace. But if you turn away, then I fear for you the torment of a Great Day (i.e., the Day of Resurrection)" (Qur'an: 11: 3). Our Prophet Mohammad (Sm.) repentance many times every day some scholar says more than seventy times. He encourages his followers to repentance every day as much as they can. He (Sm.) said, "Every son of Adam does sin, and the best of those who sin are those who repent" (Al-Tirmidhī, 2499).

5.10. Piety and Modesty

Piety and modesty are the most fundamental characteristics of every Muslim man and woman. A Muslim must be loyal to Allah in all aspects and modest and pious to all the people. Many people are homeless, sleeping on the street, not having meals regularly, and do not get proper healthcare facilities in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2023). As per Islamic values, wealthy people should come forward to stand beside them but rarely do people show their piety and humanity to them. Allah the Almighty says, "And turn not your face away from people (with pride), nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, God does not like each arrogant boaster. Be moderate (or show no insolence) while walking, and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the voice (braying) of the ass" (Qur'an: 31:18-19).

5.11. Family Life and Offspring (Al-Nasab)

Family is the basis of Islamic Society, which originates from the beginning of the creation of man and woman, Adam and Eve. So, it is an institution founded by Allah's will. Family life is under threat in Bangladesh and turning to the Western life where marriage and offspring are

becoming disliked by the young generation. In the age of globalization, party life, open sex, extramarital relationships, and an alarming rate of divorce are destroying the family system there, which is influencing our society in different ways. Rape, killing women, torturing married women, abortion, and divorce rates is increasing in society. Various types of violence against women are going on in Bangladesh, which include dowry-related violence, domestic violence, acid violence, death, rape, rape followed by death, forced or induced abortion, sexual harassment, forced prostitution, trafficking, and violence at the workplace. In addition, recently, 'eve-teasing' has gained tremendously as an alarming violent phenomenon in the society of Bangladesh (Hossain and Suman, 2013). If failed to uphold family life and offspring in the guidance of Almighty Allah, all of our development will be valueless, and we will be failed to ensure peace in the society of Bangladesh.

5.12. Social Responsibilities

Social responsibilities in Islam are based on kindness, sympathy, and favorable consideration to others. Many people in Bangladesh are becoming self-centered, selfish, and materialistic. They are busy with only themselves and rarely do their duty to society. As the vicegerent of Allah of this earth, human beings have given social responsibilities to society for harmonious relationship among the people and to ensure peace and development in the globe. These responsibilities start from the family level, including parents, spouses, and children, then to the other relatives, neighbors, friends, orphans, widows, the poor and needy, our Muslim brothers and sisters, and all humankind. In addition, some responsibilities to nature, animals, and the environment must be made peaceful and sustainable. To emphasize social responsibilities, Almighty Says, "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards the East and the West, but righteous is the one who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels and the Book and the prophets and gives away wealth out of love for Him (Allah) to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and to those who ask and sets slaves free" (Qur'an: 2:177).

5.13. Behavior with Parents and Children

Parents and children are blessings of Allah for each other. Parents' contributions to their children, from their mother's wombs to growing up as adults, are unparalleled. Still, at present days, many parents are humiliated, tortured, and even killed by their children in Bangladesh. Side by side, children are missing proper care at home in the country. A statement from UNICEF in Bangladesh found that an alarming 9 out of 10 children aged 1-14 years face violent discipline each month by caregivers, affecting more than 45 million children (UNICEF, 2024). Islamic teaching has given special care to children at an early age and respect and care for parents in their old ages. Almighty Allah says, "For your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And honor your parents. If one or both of them reach old age in your care, never tell them 'even' 'ugh,' nor yell at them. Rather, address them respectfully. And be humble with them out of mercy, and pray, "My Lord! Be merciful to them as they raised me when I was young." (Qur'an: 17:23-24)

5.14. Good Relationship Relatives

Relationships with relatives are losing day by day in our country. Sometimes, we cut off relations with close relatives because of self-interest. Having good relationships with relatives is essential, but at present, we observe that relationships among relatives are lacking, negatively impacting our country. Allah the Almighty says, "And renders to the relatives their due rights, as

(also) to those in need, and to the traveler; and do not squander your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift." (Qur'an: 17:26)

5.15. Relationship with Neighbors

Neighborhood relationships have been reduced to a great extent in Bangladesh. A neighbor can stand beside each other in a crisis moment earlier than anyone. Islamic laws emphasize maintaining good relations with neighbors, warning against serving kinship ties. 'A'isha ® reported Allah's Messenger says, "Gabriel impressed upon me (kind treatment) towards the neighbor (so much) that I thought as if he would confer upon him the (right) of inheritance" (Saḥīḥ Muslim, 2624).

6. Findings

Firstly, moral values are lost in our country daily, which is alarming for society.

Secondly, it is clear to us that in Islam, moral values, which include Taqwa, truthfulness, patience, forgiveness, piety, and humility, are highly recommended, which are decreasing daily in our society.

Thirdly, the Qur'an and Sunnah discussed different related to the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Finally, moral teachings are not taught in every stage of human life, even in early life, which is very important.

7. Recommendations

A few things can be recommended based on the findings of this research as follows:

Firstly, everyone should be taught moral values in their childhood by their parents, especially their family members. It can be improved through teachings of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith and practicing regular prayer from an early age.

Secondly, Islamic teachings should be taught in all levels of educational institutions, from primary to university.

Finally, moral values should be taught as per the instruction of religions, religious scriptures, and Muslims based on the holy Qu'an and Hadith.

8. Conclusion

Crises of Islamic values are found in different levels of Bangladesh, which is alarming. Be a Muslim's majority people's country to ensure success in this life and life hereafter. Islamic values are essential to practice in all aspects of life. Islamic moral qualities are divine and originate from the holy Quran and Sunnah. These moral qualities address every aspect of life, from greetings to international relations. To ensure peace and development in personal life, family life, social life, political elements, state affairs, and international relations, Islamic moral values can help remarkably. Muslims are expected not only to be virtuous but also to practice virtue in their lives. They must refrain from crimes and immorality and actively encourage others to avoid immoral activities and crimes. In addition, they should always strive to improve the moral health of society as a whole through their best efforts.

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