



Concept of Morality in Islam And Christianity: A Review

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Abstract

Ethics hold a central place in the teachings of both Islam and Christianity, as these religions emphasize the education and cultivation of moral values among their followers. This paper examines ethics through the perspectives of Christianity and Islam, exploring their shared and distinct approaches to moral behavior. In Christian thought, the human being is viewed as the focal point of moral action, guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ, who is considered both God and savior. Christianity emphasizes the dichotomy between good and evil, with Jesus' teachings providing a clear moral framework for his followers. In contrast, Islam underscores the importance of good manners, personal accountability, and the balance of reward and punishment for one's deeds. Islamic teachings advocate for justice and fairness within society, supported by a structured legal system designed to maintain social order.

This study is particularly significant as it aims to illuminate the moral teachings of these two major world religions, offering insights into their approaches to ethical behavior. By presenting a comparative analysis, the paper seeks to foster a deeper understanding of how Islam and Christianity contribute to the promotion of universal moral values. Ultimately, this research highlights the relevance of ethics in shaping individual conduct and societal harmony, emphasizing its global significance across religious and cultural boundaries.

Keywords:

Concept of Morality, Islam, Christianity, Good and Bad, Human Behaviour.

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Introduction:

In terms of ethics, Christianity asserts that man is the source of morals and character. This is explained not only by the opinions of different thinkers but also by the teachings of the founder of this religion, Hazrat Masih (peace be upon him). In his moral teachings, he taught about charity, self-sacrifice, abandoning the world, self-purification, universal love and godliness. Moreover, he taught people about morality through parables. On the other hand, according to the moral theory of Islam, good morals have been encouraged. Both the rights of Allah and the rights of the servants (humans) have been taken into consideration. The Islamic philosophy of ethics is based on the happiness and goodness of the religion and the world. This is the reason why humility, contentment, generosity, anger, sincerity, humility, asceticism, courage, chastity, justice, self-improvement and covering up defects are moral - all come under ethics. In the belief of Christianity, it is necessary to meet the punishment after the sin, because Hazrat Isa (peace be upon him) climbed the cross for the sake of his people and saved them. That is why Jesus Christ is called the Savior.

On the other hand, the theory of Islam is conceived as goodness, welfare and fulfilling the rights of Allah. According to Islam, man is responsible for his own sins and he has to answer to his creator for his good and bad deeds. In Islam, every sin is forgivable except polytheism. There are two types of sins, one is related to the rights of Allah while the other is related to the rights of the servants (human rights). The rights related to Allah may be forgiven if Allah wills and if He wills, He will not, because He has given the right of forgiveness to the creation, provided that forgiveness is asked with a sincere heart and a clear intention. Since other types of sins are related to the creation (humans), therefore, Allah has given the right to forgive or punish only the creation. As the Almighty says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ ۗ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ بِالْأُنثَىٰ ۗ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أُخِيهِ
شَيْءٌ فَأَتْبَاعُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ فَمَنْ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَعَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ٥

Translation: O believers! The order of retribution has been written on you regarding the slain, free for free, slave for slave, and woman for woman. Qaisas (Demand) should be demanded and the murderer should pay it with good manners. There is a painful punishment for the ones who transgresses even after that. (Al-Kowsar fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Mohsen Najafi, vol. 1, p. 482).

This blessed verse proves that qisas is a civilized and orderly law to ensure justice in the society and not just a spirit of revenge. The Islamic law of qisas is that it respects the blood of the victim and warns the murderer. The seemingly harsh and severe punishments in fact reflect tolerance, mutual love, respect and special favor from Allah to the believers.

"Ethics, according to Professor Rogers, is the science which gives principles by which the true value of the right ends of human character can be determined."

Man's morality and character are the only sources from which the springs of his economic, civilized, and political actions flow. Man's moral life begins when he feels that he must subordinate his individual ends and personal desires to the wider ends and purposes of the community. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines Christianity as: "The religion which attributes its origin to Jesus of Naaserah and considers him to be the chosen Messiah of God."

In the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, in the article Christianity, Garvey writes: "Christianity may be defined as a moral, historical, universal, monotheistic, and atoning religion, grounded in the person and character of Jesus Christ."

Garvey gives a complete explanation of the religion of Christianity. He further says: "By moral religion, he means a religion in which no worldly purpose is taught through worship and sacrifice, but its whole purpose is to attain spiritual perfection and the pleasure of God."

"By universal, he means that this religion is not for any particular race or color, but that its call is universal." By historical religion, he means that the center of thought and action of this religion is a historical figure."

He calls Christianity a monotheist because, despite recognizing three persons in this religion, God is called one. The last characteristic of Christianity is that it believes in atonement. Christianity came into existence in the first century AD. Jesus Christ, whom the Islamic world calls Jesus (peace be upon him), is called a part of the Trinity, that is, the Messiah. However, many sects do not believe in Christ as God; they consider him a prophet or an ordinary man. However, the belief in three gods, which is also called the Trinity, is very common in Christianity, but in Christianity, God, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one—those who believe in this call themselves monotheists and call it Tawhid fi al-Trinilith. Christianity is a Semitic religion and, according to research, it has about two billion followers all over the world. The Bible is the holy book of Christians. The Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Concept of Morality in Christianity:

Christianity places great emphasis on morality. The foundation of Christian morality is based on various references to commands, prohibitions, duties and virtues, the main source of which is the Bible, which is considered authoritative in Christianity. Like Islam, it also pays special attention to good morals. There are two key concepts: one is love for all mankind, and the second is the concept of *Kaffara* (atonement). In other words, the birth of man is the result of sin, and thus his entire life is sin, which was atoned for by Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) by sacrificing his life.

Moral teachings of Hazrat Jesus (peace be upon him):

Dr. Zaheer Ahmed Siddiqui, about the moral teachings of Hazrat Jesus (peace be upon him) says that the Prophet did not give any formal code of conduct and he did not have any writings of his own, his moral sayings, and theories were written later. The teachings of Hazrat Jesus (peace be upon him) emphasized charity, self-sacrifice, renunciation of the world, purification of the soul, universal love and faith in God. Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) preached Islam in Galilee and expanded his preaching to Samaria and Jerusalem. He said: "The kingdom belongs to God.

A special element of the teachings of Jesus Christ is the use of allegorical stories, which relate to all human characters and events. Many religions of the world refer to parables in their teachings. From which moral conclusions are drawn. Jesus Christ, in response to a question, said that a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes and beat him and left him half dead. By chance, a priest was going down that road and when he saw him, he passed by. Similarly, Eli Levi came to the place and when he saw him, he also passed by. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. When he saw him, he bandaged his wounds, poured oil on them, and set his beast on his own, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two Denar, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back."

This story teaches a moral lesson that everyone should help at the right time, regardless of race or religion. The essence of the moral teachings of Jesus Christ is his Sermon on the Mount. The main points of which are as follows:

- Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
- Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
- Blessed are those who are crucified for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- Blessed are you when people persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you because of me.
- Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for they killed the prophets who came before you.

In the teachings of Jesus Christ, great emphasis is placed on brotherly relations between servants. In this regard, the qualities that the Prophet has given special importance to include equality, forgiveness, avoidance of fault finding, humility, and benevolence even towards one's enemies and ill-wishers.

Philosophy of Morality in Islam:

The religion of nature Islam is the last religion of God, for the completion of which the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was sent. The religion of Islam is universal and has been revealed for the guidance of people all over the world. It contains such golden principles of morality based on which this religion has dominated the entire world in a short period of time. It has its unique concept of the universe, the standard of good and evil, the force of enforcement and the driving force. All these together give its philosophy of morality the form of a complete practical system. The importance of good morality has been greatly emphasized in the Holy Quran. The Almighty Allah says:

قد افلح من زكها وقد خاب من دسها-

Translation: *The one who purifies himself has succeeded, and the one who corrupts himself with sins has failed.*

انما بعثت لاتمم مكارم الاخلاق-

Translation: *I have been sent by Him to perfect good morals.*

In this sense, Islam places the greatest emphasis on good morals. Good morals include all those actions through which a person tries to benefit his fellow human beings, create peace and security in society, and develop society on the correct lines. Morals have been described in the Quran and Hadith with such frequency that the entire religion stands on the pillars of theology and morality. Moral aspects have been taken into account in both the rights of Allah and the rights of the people. And no Islamic action is beyond morality. From the individual to the collective level, the philosophy of Islamic ethics is present with a strong and healthy tradition in all intellectual levels of man. According to the Holy Quran, God Almighty established a series of messengers and prophets to help and guide man in the trials of good and evil in worldly life. Through their teachings, they encouraged the divine element inherent in mankind and presented clear principles and laws for distinguishing between good and evil. Thus, it has always been possible for a man to respond to the call of the righteous element of his nature, accept the spiritual and moral principles laid down by God Almighty, and consider them as a beacon of guidance in his religious life.

The foundation of Islamic philosophy of ethics is based on the goodness, happiness and virtue of religion and the world, and therefore, humility, contentment, generosity, control of anger, sincerity, fearlessness, patience, asceticism, courage, chastity, justice, correction of the mind, concealment of faults, etc. come under the category of moral virtues. All Muslim thinkers have adhered to the established principles of the Quran and Hadith in forming the ethics of Islam with the Islamic spirit. And they have tried to find the Islamic spirit in the teachings of Greek philosophers. However, the real source of Islamic teachings, laws and ethics is the Quran and Hadith, and all sciences emerge from it.

The concept of good and evil in Christianity

The concept of Kafarah (Atonement) is one of the most important beliefs of Christianity. The literal meaning of atonement is to cover or hide. In this context, it means that Jesus Christ has covered the sins of the Son of Man by dying on the cross becoming a source of salvation for them. According to Christians, every human being is a born sinner. The sins committed by Adam and Eve are inherited like every person, due to which every person is a sinner. According to Christians, deeds cannot be the reason for salvation. But if God Almighty forgives the servant's sins through repentance and forgiveness, then this mercy is against His justice. God is Merciful and wants His mercy so that man is spared from punishment. Then he is also just. The requirement of justice is that punishment must be given. Mercy and justice

cannot be combined in one place. It is not necessary for the salvation of the servant. In order to save the servants, it was decided that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who is free from all sins and innocent, took all the sins of the people upon himself and sacrificed his life and became the source of salvation for all the people.

According to them, the atonement is the sacrifice of Jesus by which a sinful man becomes close to oneness. There are two assumptions behind this belief. One is that because of Adam's sin, man was separated from God's mercy. The second is that God's (Son) came into the human body to bring mankind closer to God's mercy.

The Concept of Virtue in Christianity

Christianity is based on the practice of good works as Jesus Christ says in the Holy Gospel:

‘On the other hand, goodness or good deeds exist in man himself in an inner way that according to Christian teaching was made in the image of God. You will love God, you will not take God's name in vain, you will sanctify the festivals in God's name, you will honour your father and your mother, you will not kill anyone, and you will not do unclean things. You will not steal anything from anyone. Your false witness or lies will not be forgotten.

The concept of evil in Christianity

In the same way, in the Holy Bible, Hazrat Isa (A.S.) while clarifying the concept of evil, says:

- Sin is universal; all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; there is no righteous man on earth who does good and does not sin.
- Sin is a serious reality because it creates separation between man and God.
- A sinful man cannot solve the problem of sin by himself, sin is such a serious problem that the Holy One of God had to shed his blood to give forgiveness to sinners, man cannot hide his sins, he cannot cleanse himself from sin. He cannot atone for his sins with his good deeds, he cannot atone for his brother's misfortune with his wealth.
- If a person relies on his good deeds, he will never be able to get salvation. This is the reason why the Holy Bible declares only the atonement that is from God.
- By Christianity, sin is an inherited thing. Because of Adam's sin, all human beings are born sinful. It is written in The Epistle to the Romans: ‘Because of one man, sin came into the world. And because of sin, death came, and thus death spread to all men, so they all became evil, no one does good, not even one.’
- According to Christianity, the wage of sin is death. As God the prophet Ezekiel said: ‘The soul that commits sin will die.’

Concept of Kafarah (Atonement) in Christianity:

The Alexandrian moderns write, ‘Atonement means to cover up. In Christianity, it is an expression of the work of Christ, who, thanks to his perfect obedience, managed to save men from the punishment which the curse of the law had prescribed, and he shed his blood on the cross.’ He created the unity and closeness between Almighty God and the servants (humans) that existed in the Garden of Eden.

Alexandria Modern writes, ‘Actually, the atonement given by Christ has the effect that the sins and mistakes of man are expunged. Through the sacrifice of Christ, the mercy of God covers all the sins. The reason for the retribution is that the self-sinners the reward that was to be received by Christ has been paid by His sacrifice.’

Similarly, John said, ‘Love is not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son (Christ) to pay for our sins.’ Similarly, Peter said, ‘Christ also, the righteous, suffered for the sins of the unrighteous, to bring us to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.’

Paul said, 'And all things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and committed the ministry of reconciliation to us. It means that God reconciled the world to himself in Christ and forgave their trespasses. He did not put them in charge and he has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation, so we are the messengers of Christ. It is as if God is begging through us. We pray on behalf of Christ that you be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.'

Alexandria writes in modern, 'In the modern era, this atonement is represented by the redemption that was accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross so that the requirements and purposes of God's law would be fulfilled and the sinner and disobedient man would be saved. And the requirements of the retribution that is due for the mistakes should also be fulfilled and the requirements of divine justice should also be fulfilled.'

In short, according to the belief of Christianity, God sent his son Christ in a sinful body to sacrifice the sins of man. As the Romans wrote, 'Because what the law could not do because of the weakness of the flesh, God did, that is, He (God) sent His Son (Christ) in the form of a sinful body and as a sacrifice for sin, the punishment of sin in the body. commanded so that the requirements of the Shariat may be fulfilled in us who walk not according to the flesh but according to the spirit.'

The concept of salvation in Christianity:

Salvation in the teaching of Jesus Christ means to be freed from sin by entering into a new divine life. According to the Pharisees of the time of Jesus Christ, salvation was the reward of living according to the law. But according to Christianity, salvation is by believing in the incarnate son of God, because God loved the world so much that he gave his only son so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. He who believes is not ordered to be punished; he who does not believe in him is ordered to be punished because he did not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The New Testament emphasizes that this salvation is due to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. In fact, now the believers have received the blessing of Salvation, it is the first step of the salvation that will be theirs in the coming age after the second coming of Christ. Even with current power. It includes all the saving blessings that are available in Christ. Especially the change of life, new birth, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification. Believers have died to sin by joining Christ. They have crucified the body, i.e. the corrupted human nature, and have become new creatures. Therefore, according to Christian beliefs, they are no longer under the law. Now salvation will be obtained only by repentance, accepting Christ as your Savior and Lord with all your heart.

Concept of good and evil in Islam:

In verse 177 of Surah Baqarah of the Holy Qur'an, the Almighty says:

لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ²

Translation: 'Goodness is not that you turn your face to the east and west, but goodness is that whoever believes in Allah, the Day of Resurrection, the angels, the book and the prophets, and spends his favorite wealth on his close relatives, orphans, the poor, and the wayfarer. And to spend on those in need and on the release of slaves, and to establish prayer and to pay Zakat, and when they make a contract, to fulfill it, and to be patient in times of hardship and distress and

² القرآن، البقرة: 177

on the battlefield. These are the people who are truthful and these are the pious people. (Al-Kowsar fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Sheikh Mohsin Najafi, Vol. 1, p. 477)'.

According to the religion of Islam, goodness is not just the name of a few rituals, but it has some other requirements. In other words, according to the Qur'an, it is necessary to fulfill the religious, practical and moral aspects of goodness:

- Believing in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book of Allah and all the Prophets.
- The practical aspect is that the believer should be a generous and active member in the society, helping relatives, slaves, deserving and needy persons and also paying Salat and Zakat.
- Be a person who abides by the covenant in the moral aspect, has patience and perseverance in hardship and suffering and is a brave person. (Al-Kowsar fi Tafsir al-Qur'an, Sheikh Mohsin Najafi, Vol. 1, p. 477)

However, it can be said that according to Islam, goodness does not mean the observance of customs and traditions, but rather faith based on facts, worship of God Almighty and an attitude based on justice and fairness towards God's servants.

Definition of Sin in Islam:

Sin refers to an act that is disliked in the Shari'ah, for the commission of which there is mention of a limit, promise, curse or anger. In Islam, sin is divided into major and minor. Big and small sins. A major sin is an act whose sanctity is agreed upon by all Shariats, it is called a major sin, and the act whose sanctity is included in a single Shariat is called a minor sin. And the sin which the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) forbade. It is called Saghira. A major sin can be comprehensively defined as a sin for which there is a limit, a strict promise, a curse or anger, so that people do not dare to commit minors.

He further writes, in the light of Qur'an and Hadith, seventy major sins have been mentioned. Ibn Jarir al-Tabari has written about the major sin, 'Every sin is a major sin that leads to hell, damnation, wrath of God or punishment'. The Prophet (peace be upon him) declared seven sins as destructive and advised to avoid them, 'Avoid the seven fatal sins. The Companions asked, O Messenger of Allah, what are those sins? He said: Associating someone with Allah, practicing magic, taking someone's life unjustly, that which Allah has declared forbidden. Taking usury, eating orphan's property, running away from battle, slandering women of pure faith.'

Similarly, another narration shows that there are seventeen major sins:

Shirk, persistence in sin, despondency, not fearing Allah's secret plan, slandering, bearing false witness, sorcery, swearing falsely, eating orphans, taking usury, drinking intoxicants, fornication, adultery, murder, theft, , running away from Jihad and disobedience to parents.

Concept of Falah (salvation) in Islam:

In the Qur'an, the term welfare is used instead of salvation. In the Arabic language, the meanings of welfare are described as follows, 'Prosperity refers to blessings, good things, success, salvation and permanence. Imam al-Zuhri says: The people of Paradise have been called blessed because they are blessed with eternal life. That is, the meaning of such blessings, mercies, blessings and success and rule is found in the word Falah which is permanent. Who never falls. And which never ends'.

According to the doctrine of Islam, every human being is responsible for his actions. And he is accountable to Allah. As the Almighty says, 'And whoever commits a sin, then he is responsible for it, and no one will bear the burden of another'. According to Islam, every sin except shirk is forgivable. According to Islam, there are two types of sins: One, those sins that are related between the Lord and the servant are forgiven by repentance. If Allah wants, He can forgive with His grace. The second type is those related to the affairs of servants. Only a

person can forgive that sin. Allah Ta'ala does not forgive such sins which are related to the rights of the servants because Allah Ta'ala has appointed the Day of Judgment to give justice.

In the same way, the punishment for some sins is prescribed in the Holy Quran, but their execution has been left to the prisoners themselves. There is no order to interfere with any external power such as a ruler or a judge. Shariat has named this kind of punishment as atonement. For example: breaking an oath, taking a false oath, breaking the Sharia fast in Ramadan without an excuse, murder, etc.

In the same way, piety and good deeds such as prayer, fasting, Hajj, Zakat, etc., are the cause of atonement for sins and elevation of ranks. And above all is the grace of Allah. He punishes the sins of whom He wills and forgives whom He wills. He is the Most Merciful of all the Merciful. Likewise, some sins are unforgivable in Islam such as: polytheism, premeditated murder and apostasy etc.

Conclusion:

It can be said that Christianity and Islam have over-emphasized the education and promotion of creative values and highlighted the concepts of goodness, some of which are related to beliefs and some of them are related to practical duties, and in the same way, they have rejected the concepts of evil which Some of them are related to limits and retribution and some are related to abandoning worship. In Christianity, punishment is certain in the case of sin, while in Islam, there is room for forgiveness for all other sins except polytheism.

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