

أهمية الأخلاق في الإسلام  
THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF  
'GOOD MORAL CHARACTER' IN ISLAM

Of those things which indicate that Islam is first and foremost an **ethical and moral message**, is Allah's **prompting** His servants, the believers, in His Noble Book (al-Qur'aan) to **purification** of their **souls** and **refinement** of their **morals** and **manners**.

In this light Allah, the Most High, has mentioned after swearing with **the longest oath in the Qur'aan** - which came in the beginning of the chapter entitled ash-Shams (the Sun) (Chapter 91, verses 1 - 10):

*"Indeed he **succeeds** who **purifies his ownself** (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allah ordered, by following the true faith of Islamic Monotheism and by doing righteous good deeds). (verse 9).*

*"And indeed he **fails** who **corrupts his ownself** (i.e. disobeys what Allah has ordered by rejecting the true faith of Islamic Monotheism or by following polytheism, etc. or by doing every kind of evil and wicked deed)." (verse 10).*

Imam Ahmad has reported on the authority of Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said:

*"The most **perfect** of the believers in **faith** is the **best** of them in **character**."* [as-Saheehah, no. 284]

It is also reported on the authority of Abu ad-Dardaa' (Radiyah 'anhu) from the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) that he said:

*"The **weightiest thing** that is placed on the **scales** of a believing servant, on the Day of Judgment, is **good moral character and manners**."* [Reported by at-Tirmidhee, who said that it is 'Hasan Saheeh'; see: as-Saheehah, no. 876]

For this reason, we see the great importance attached to **good moral character** in the **Message of Islam**, which is **summarized** in the statement of the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam):

*"Indeed, the very **purpose** for which I have been **missioned** is to establish and perfect **high moral standards and noble manners**."* [Reported by al-Bukhaaree in 'al-adab al-Mufrad'; see: as-Saheehah, no. 45, Saheeh al-Jaami', no. 2349]

If you were to reflect upon the **objective** of the **four (4) forms of worship** which constitute the **Pillars of Islaam** after the testimony of faith (*ash-Shahaadatain*), you would find them (all) related to **developing character and morals**.

As for **AS-SALAAH** (prayer), our Lord, the One Perfectly Free of All Defects, has said concerning it:

*"...And perform the prayers. Verily, the prayers **prevent** one from (al-fahshaa) **great sins** of every kind and (al-munkar) every kind of **evil wicked deed**..." (29:45).*

As for **AZ-ZAKAAH** (charity/alms), He, the Most High, said:

*"Take alms from their wealth in order to **purify** them (from evil deeds and despicable character) and **increase** them with it (in good deeds and upright character, i.e. through giving charity)..." (9:103).*

And so it is with **AS-SIYAAM** (fasting), about which Allaah, the Most High, said:

*"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, **in order that you may attain Taqwa** (piety and righteous behaviour)." (2:183)*

And the Prophet (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said:

“Whoever doesn’t leave off **deceitful speech/falsehood** and **acting upon it**, as well as **ignorance** - Allah has no need of him abstaining from his food and drink.” [Reported by al-Bukhaaree]

The same can be said about **AL-HAJJ** (pilgrimage), concerning which Allah, the Most High, has said:

“The pilgrimage is in the well-known (lunar year) months [i.e. the 10th month, the 11th month and the first ten days of the 12th month of the Islamic calendar]. So, whoever intends to perform the pilgrimage therein (by assuming Ihram), then he should not have sexual relations (with his wife), nor **commit sin**, nor **dispute unjustly** during the pilgrimage...” (2:197).

Hence, the **objective of worship** is to attain **conscious of Allaah** and **good moral character**. Allaah, Most High, said:

“O mankind! **Worship** your Lord, Who created you and those before you, *in order than you may attain Taqwa* (piety and righteous behaviour).” (2:21).

And so it is with the **Islamic Sciences** -- its *knowledge* does not *benefit* the one who has learned it except if it causes him to achieve the characteristic of **Khashya** (a consciousness Allaah which entails **hope** for His reward and **fear** of His punishment).

In this light, Allah, the Most High, said:

“...It is only those who have **knowledge**, among His slaves, that **fear Allaah...**” (35:28).

It is due to these irrefutable facts, that the **bad moral character** of a person is considered a **clear proof** of the **weakness of his faith**, no matter how much he displays the **outward ‘appearance’** which is in accord with the Islamic Laws [fasting, performing the prayers and pilgrimage, and wearing the ‘Islamic dress’].

In this light, **Imaam Muslim** narrated from Abu Hurairah (RadiyahAllaahu 'anhu), that the Messenger of Allah (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) said:

“There are three characteristics which whoever is characterized by them would be considered a **hypocrite**: (1) Whenever he speaks, he **lies**, (2) Whenever he promises, he **breaks his promise**, (3) Whenever he is entrusted (with something), he **violates (the trust)**.”

In another narration Imaam Muslim has: “even if he **fasted, prayed, and claimed** that he is a **Muslim**.”

From the above we know that **acts of worship** are of little benefit to those who perform them if - or as long as - he has *not* benefited from it in terms of **improvement and refinement** which affects his **character**.

**From this we can understand** the importance of a Muslim making a **critical examination** of his **character** and **trying to better it** - to whatever extent that might be possible.

And why not? **Since our Prophet used to supplicate His Lord**, the Mighty the Majestic, with these words:

“O Allah, Guide me to the most **excellent manners** and **moral standards**. None guides to it except You! And turn away from me the **vile** and **evil manners**. None can turn from me the vile and evil manners except You!” [Reported by Imaam Muslim]

And it was he (SallAllaahu Alaihi wa Sallam) whose **moral character** has been **praised** by **Allah**, when He, the Most High, said:

“And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an **exalted standard of character**.” (68:4).