

CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

The title of the present research work is “*Morality in Islam-A Study*”. The proposed research work is a study on the concept of morality as found in different fields of Islamic life. Here an attempt is made to bring out the various ideals of life to be followed by human beings from the Quran and the Hadith because Quran and Hadith are the main source of Islamic ethics.

Islamic ethics (*akhlaq*), defined as “good character,” historically took shape gradually from the 7th century and was finally established by the 11th century. It was eventually shaped as a successful amalgamation of the Quranic teachings, the teachings of the Sunnah of Muhammad (*pbuh*), the precedents of Islamic jurists, the pre-Islamic Arabian tradition, and non-Arabic elements (including Persian and Greek ideas) integrated with a generally Islamic structure.

The foundational source in the gradual codification of Islamic ethics is the Muslim understanding and interpretations of the Quran and practices of Muhammad. Its meaning has always been in context of active submission to God. The motive force in Islamic ethics is the notion that every human being is called to “command the good and (Hasan *Ethical 1*) forbid the evil” in all spheres of life (Hasan *Ethical 2*).

The Quran defines and sets the standards of social and moral values for Muslims. S.A. Nigosian, professor of religious studies at the University of Toronto, states that a lengthy passage in the Quran “represents the fullest statement of the code of behaviour

every Muslim must follow". Nigosian and Ghamidi hold that these resemble the Ten Commandments in the Bible (Hasan *Ethical* 3).

Sometimes the roots of Islam are considered as authoritative sources of *Fiqh*, on which legal practice is based. First of all these are the Quran and Sunnah. Sunnah is understood as the traditions (*Hadith*), which contain the expressions, descriptions of solutions, and deeds of Muhammad and his nearest associates, regarding various problems of religion, law, morals, etc. Sunnah as well as Quran, are considered to have a divine character and, theoretically, indisputable authority.

These two sources of the law are usually supplemented by a unanimous opinion (*Ijma*) and analogy (*Qiyas*), which are designated by the term *usul* as well (Kirabaev 138).

The words revealed to Muhammad occasionally in the course of 23 years, according to the time, place and circumstances, were named as 'Quran' by the Divine Command (Al-Quran 2:185). The word 'Quran' springs from the Arabic root, '*Qara*'a meaning 'to pronounce publicly' or 'to recite'. The roots 'to cry' and '*krand*' of English and Sanskrit languages respectively seem to be of the same origin. Thus, the Quran means the volume to be recited, proclaimed and to be read as well (Durrany 74).

1.1 Historical Credibility of the Quran:

In the present time, all manner of things, including religious scriptures, are being subjected to investigation in the spirit of free enquiry (Khan 30). A permanent discipline has been set up for this special study, called historical criticism. Under this general

heading, all great religious scriptures, including the Quran and the Bible, have been subjected to historical inquiry.

The results of these studies are entirely in favour of the Quran. They show that the Quran is the religious scripture which is historically accredited work. It is the Quran which enjoys historical credibility (Samad 17). Even an unfriendly critic as Sir William Muir writes about the Quran: *“There is probably in the world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text”* (Muir *Intro.* xxii-xxiii).

The Quran, being a preserved book, is exceptionally free from such apocryphal additions. There are numerous references to nature in the Quran, but none of these descriptions clashes with facts discovered by science. After making a study of several such statements enshrined in the Quran, Maurice Bucaille concludes: (Khan 31) In view of the level of knowledge in Muhammad’s day, it is inconceivable that many of the statements in the Quran which are connected with science could have been the work of a man. It is, moreover, perfectly legitimate, not only to regard the Quran as the expression of a Revelation, but also to award it a very special place, on account of the guarantee of authenticity it provides and the presence in it of scientific statements which, when studied today, appear as a challenge to explanation in human terms (Khan 32).

What was the need for the Quran? The answer is that the Quran has come to us with a two-fold purpose. The first is that although all religions were based on the genuine message of God, their followers on account of historical reasons had deviated from the original truth and so there was the need to bring them back to it. This was the main task of the Quran (Akbarabadi 113).

The second purpose was that social aptitudes and conditions of life at that time were quite different from those during the time of earlier Prophets. And, then, there was the need of a new Law (*Shariah*) which should have been so adaptable and flexible as to be practised conveniently by people of all climes and times (Akbarabadi 113). God referred to this particular aspect of the Quran when He said:

“This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion” (Al-Quran 5:4).

Sunnah or *Hadith* (the practice and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad) is the second and, undoubtedly, secondary source from which the teachings of Islam are drawn. In its original sense *Sunnah* indicates the doings and *Hadith* the sayings of the Prophet; but in effect both cover the same ground and are applicable to his actions, practices and sayings, *Hadith* being the narration and record of the *Sunnah* but containing, in addition, various prophetic and historical elements. There are three kinds of *Sunnah*. It may be a saying of the Prophet (*Qaul*) which has a bearing on a religious question, an action or a practice of his (*fi 'l*), or his silent approval of the action or practice of another (*taqrir*).

From the above brief discussion regarding the authenticity of the Quran it may be concluded that the Quran and the *Hadith* are the chief document of Islamic morality. That is the reason for taking the Quran and the *Hadith* as guide and resource for this humble research work. Without this primary source any research on Islamic topic would be incomplete and meaningless.

To run the research work on this topic in the present day society, the entire work is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter II: Religious Duties in Islam

Chapter III: Economic Morality in Islam

Chapter IV: Social Morality in Islam

Chapter V: Conclusion

The introductory chapter attempts to give a brief account of the concept of morality and religion. It also tries to find out the mutual relationship between morality and religion. In this respect the views and comments of different thinkers will be discussed. Before going into the main question-let it be tried to know what moral philosophy is.

1.2 Moral Philosophy:

Moral philosophy is philosophical inquiry about norms or values, about ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, what should and what should not be done. Philosophy, in fact has a number of branches, but all these can be grouped into two main divisions, the philosophy of knowledge and the philosophy of practice. The philosophy of knowledge is concerned with the critique of assumptions about matters of fact and also with the critique of argument. It includes epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophy of science, philosophical psychology and philosophical logic. The philosophy of practice is concerned with the critique of assumptions about norms or values, which are mostly used to guide practice. It includes ethics, social and political philosophy, and the philosophy of law (Raphael 08).

Some people use the term ‘moral philosophy’ as synonymous with ‘ethics’, the philosophical discussion of assumptions about right and wrong, good and bad, considered as general ideas and as applied in the private life of individuals. In the history of the subject the term has been used more widely, to cover also the discussion of normative ideas in organized social life as well as in private relationships; in particular it has included political and legal philosophy (Raphael 09). According to James Rachels, “Moral philosophy is the attempt to achieve a systematic understanding of the nature of morality and what it requires of us-in Socrates’s words, of “*how we ought to live,*” *and why*” (Rachels 01).

Moral philosophy also makes definite progress in its secondary aim of clarifying concepts, and this often helps individuals to make their own decisions on the more practical questions.

But one should not expect too much from it. Students sometimes come to moral philosophy with the hope that it will solve their practical problems. The hope is forlorn. All philosophical theories are subject to criticism. People cannot absolutely prove any positive conclusion in moral philosophy, or in philosophy generally (Raphael 10).

Ethics is a philosophical study of morality; philosophy in the narrow sense is epistemology, ontology and axiology; but in the wider sense it includes semiotics, logic and axiomatic, aesthetics and of course ethics. So, the following definitions may be stated as corollaries to the main definition:

- 1) ‘Ethics is a semiotic study of morality’: in other words, ‘ethics is the study of moral language’.

- 2) 'Ethics is a logical study of morality': in other words, ethics is the study of moral reasoning.
- 3) 'Ethics is a meta-logical study of morality': in other words, 'ethics is the study of moral axioms'.
- 4) 'Ethics is an epistemological study of morality': in other words, 'ethics is the study of moral knowing'.
- 5) 'Ethics is an ontological study of morality': in other words, 'ethics is the study of moral reality (or situations)'.
- 6) 'Ethics is an axiological study of morality': in other words, 'ethics is the study of moral value'.
- 7) 'Ethics is an aesthetic study of morality': in other words, 'ethics is the study of moral beauty'.

All these questions being answered is clarification of the meaning of the word 'moral' (Sanyal 68).

Before the attempt to proceed with the concept and role of morality in Islamic order, let it be explained what morality is and how is it generally conceived.

1.3 Concept of Morality:

Morality or ethics deals with conduct, in so far as this is considered as right or wrong, good or bad. According to Dewey, the term 'ethics' and 'ethical', are derived from Greek word '*ethos*' which originally meant custom, usages, especially those belonging to some group as distinguished from another, and later came to mean disposition, character. They are thus like the Latin word 'moral', from *mores* (Muslehuddin 01).

It was in custom, says Dewey, that the moral or ethical made its appearance, for customs were not merely habitual ways of acting; they were ways approved by the group or society. To act contrary to the customs of the group brought severe disapproval. Therefore, customs were strictly observed which gave birth to customary morality.

It was mainly due to their expediency that customs had the force of law and were considered as good. Being the approved standards of morality, their violation brought the censure of the whole society. But there are periods in history when a whole community finds itself dissatisfied with its old customs, for they fail to adequately meet the new issues and problems of life, and this is the starting point of reflective morality (Muslehuddin 02).

The Development of Morality:

The development of moral life depends upon the development of the conduct. The conduct undergoes a process of development like other aspects of human life. Human life is full of activities. Men are not mere spectators of what goes around them. They are dynamic by nature. Of course, it is true that a child is guided more by his instincts than by his intelligence; but with the gradual development of intelligence and reflection, his activities also undergo a change. He also imitates the customs, manners, religion and language common to members of his group. Similarly, he sees others passing judgements of value on the conduct of his friends, companions and contemporaries. He learns to distinguish between good and bad in differing situations and circumstances. He also acquires the understanding of what “conduct” leads to social goodness. This is called group morality. From this he passes on to personal morality with a growing

power of reflective outlook. Thus, human conduct undergoes different levels of development. These different levels are mainly as follows: 1) the level of instinctive conduct; 2) the level of customs and manners; and 3) the level of conscience or reflection.

Instinctive Conduct:

The psychological researches have proved that living beings are born with certain innate dispositions which are technically called “instincts”. There is one most important characteristic of instincts and that is a propelling force in them. Instinct of anger, for example, is the most propelling force which one can successively resist if it is aroused by circumstances appropriate to it (Dutta 103). Similarly, there are other instincts like sex instinct, combat instinct, food seeking instinct and gregarious instinct, etc. These instincts sometimes overpower man’s reason and make him blind in his behaviour. But we know that these instincts should be controlled by the stronghold of reason. In order to have a strong moral character, we must bring them under the yoke of reason. Thus the instinctive morality is that morality in which instincts predominate. In the words of Balbir Singh Gochhwal, “*A life guided by such instincts, without a control of reason, will represent the stage of instinct; and the moral behaviour that will result thereby will represent the stage of instinctive morality*” (Dutta 104).

Customary Morality:

In the process of the development of morality, the next level is that of customs. At this level of morality only those actions of man are considered to be right which are in accordance (Dutta 105) with the manners and customary modes of the society; and those wrong which are not in accordance with the manners and customs of society.

Custom alone is regarded as the standard of morality. Dewey and Tufts vary aptly described the customary modes of behaviour on these lines. *“There are approved ways of acting, common to a group and handed down from generation to generation. Such approved ways of doing and acting are customs. They are habits but they are more. They imply the judgement of the group that they are to be followed. The welfare of the group is regarded as in some sense imbedded in them”* (Dutta 106).

This sort of morality has been handed down to us from time immemorial. The elderly people, priests, various institutions connected with moral and religious teachings and the chiefs of different associations are the custodians of this morality. The customary morality is common to all men of the group. In Indian philosophy also, we find this type of morality described by Manu, and in the *Mahabharata* and other scriptures. Manu regarded traditional customary morality as the moral standard. The traditionally good conduct in a community constitutes customary morality. One who observes customary morality is regarded as good and who infringes it is regarded as bad. But Manu took this customary morality in harmony with the Divine Law as moral standard. The Vedas enjoined the divine law as moral standard. Manu did not accept this sort of morality against the scriptures of the Vedas. In other words, he accepted customary morality in so far as it is in harmony or agreement with the Divine Law (Dutta 106).

Conscience or Reflection:

At this stage of morality, reason predominates. Morality develops from within and not imposed from without. Actions are performed under one’s own free will and rational choice. Here the agent does not get any fixed standard of group morality. He himself

develops the conception of good. His conscience is the ultimate moral authority. Every action is done in accordance with conscience. He performs only that action which his conscience recognizes as best and in the interest of the individual.

At the level of customary morality, the moral authority lies outside the individual; it is the authority prescribed by the group. In short, it comes from without. But at the level of conscience, the moral authority is within the individual and that authority is the authority of conscience within him. Again, customary morality has been described as very much unreflective and uncritical. It is unreflective because reason does not play a very important role in it, and it is uncritical because the individual is forced to obey the morality of the group. There is no place for argument in it. On the contrary, the personal morality or the morality of conscience is reflective. It is the result of reflection. At this level of morality, the individual emphasizes the importance of conscience and leads the moral life in accordance with it. It regards moral life as a matter of personal concern. Here, the moral behaviour of an individual is governed by moral principles dictated by his conscience (Dutta 107).

Sometimes there may arise moral conflicts. If some conflicts arise in respect of morality then the Quran may play a big role to resolve these conflicts. In this regard, Islam emphasizes first the role of the Quran. Secondly, it emphasizes the deeds of Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Thirdly, the role of well educated persons is recognized. All the three sources may not be successful to resolve the conflicts of morality. So, Islam, fourthly, recognizes the role of conscience. It is the dictates of conscience that can resolve the conflicts of moral life. Therefore, Islam repeatedly emphasizes the role of reflective morality which is guided by reason.

Morality is a thoroughly totalitarian ideal. It constitutes a unitary, homogeneous point of view from which all conflicts of duties of all agents, regardless of their specific circumstances, are supposed to have a solution. Thus, morality is not only universal in that it applies to all persons. It is also pervasive in that every moment of a person's life is sanctioned by morality: either morality provides a solution to the conflicts that beset the agent, or morality provides room and boundaries for the agent's free choice (Castaneda 186).

Morality is not primarily concerned with amounts of happiness, but with the happiness of each one. For morality each agent is not just a unit, to be counted and added or subtracted, but, in Kant's term, an individual dignity, i.e. an unsubstitutable entity to be fully respected. No sum of other's happiness can morally override a man's right to his own happiness (Castaneda 187).

There are three Dimensions of Morality:

- i) The Ethical Dimension, in which the conflicts between non-moral requirements are given an ethical solution; it is the dimension in which moral codes are found;
- ii) The Meta-Ethical Dimension, in which the conflicts between a moral code and the ideal of morality are solved, and moral revision or revolutions are sometimes recommended (Castaneda 189).
- iii) The Euergetical Dimension, in which morality furnishes guidelines for the solution of the personal conflicts that fall entirely outside the agents' own requirements, whether these are grounded in their basic motivational nature

or in the institutions they belong to or in the agreements they have entered (Castaneda 190).

The concept of morality implies different points of views. In the opinion of James Seth, it is the “*Universal and characteristic element in human activity, its human element par excellence, as distinguished from its particular, technical and accidental elements*” (Singh 51). *The moral sense, James Mackenzie observes “natural feeling which leads us to approve something and disapprove all others”* (Singh 52).

Morality appeals to human conscience and enables us to make the distinction between the right and wrong. It provides rules of human conduct and behaviour. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson have declared that the moral sense comes in when the cultivated moral taste brings in that which is beneficial to society as a whole, leading to “the greatest happiness of the greatest number” (Singh 52).

In its true nature it is an internal force rather than an external sanction. The internal sanction lies in the pleasure/happiness coming from a good action and of suffering that should result from a bad action. It is this conscience that pricks him and makes him realise the evil character of his act.

There are four external sanctions-physical, political, social, and religious. These sanctions operate through the laws of pleasure and pain- hope of reward and fear of punishment. Truly speaking these laws are not the sanctions of the highest moral law but of positive or popular morality.

Positive morality is the general conscience. It is, what society creates or dictates. In many cases positive morality has behind it as its substratum of the rules of natural law,

religious principles, and principles relating to good and right. Nonetheless rules of positive morality are based on convolutions, likes and dislikes, ideas, ideologies of a particular (Singh 56) time and place. The method of positive morality is through social sanctions. On the other hand, principles of true morality are those emanating from the natural conscience (Singh 57).

Moral Rules are meant for everybody:

The concept of morality is characterised by greater universality. It must be thought of as a standpoint from which principles are considered as being acted on by everyone. Moral principles are not merely principles on which a person must always act without making exceptions, but they are principles meant for everybody.

It follows from this that the teaching of morality must be completely universal and open. Morality is meant to be taught to all members of the group in such a way that everyone can and ought always to act in accordance with these rules. It is not the preserve of an oppressed or privileged class or individual. People are neglecting their duties if they do not teach the moral rules to their children. Children are removed from the homes of criminals because they are not likely to be taught the moral rules there. Furthermore, moral rules must be taught quite openly and to everybody without discrimination. An esoteric code, a set of precepts known only to the initiated and perhaps jealously concealed from outsiders, can at best be a religion, not a morality (Baier 195).

Gandhi also gave a practical concept of morality and emphatically said, True morality consists not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it. According to him, it should not also consist in

the responsibility imposed by the community. One should not act under the influence of other persons. Virtue or morality consists in the right or the good behaviour of men. Gandhi did not find any conflict between the conscientious behaviour of a person and the welfare of mankind. He rather advocated flexibility between the behaviour of an individual and that of mankind as a whole. In the end, he prescribed one norm of morality by which all actions should be judged. That norm is to test the actions of the people. If their actions are conducive to the welfare of mankind, they should be done. Gandhi said, "*In judging the actions of men, we should always apply the test, whether it conduces to the welfare of the world or not*" (Gandhi 63).

It is also abundantly clear that Gandhi's approach to morality is pragmatic. He always gave importance to the performance and usefulness of a moral act. His main concern was with the applicability of moral acts.

Gandhi's idea of morality is governed by two principles. One is the idea of the superiority in respect of quality, and the other is internal sanction. Gandhi did not lay stress on the first. He said, "*If I collected a million false coins they would be a worthless burden to me. One true coin would be worth its value*" (Ray 48). He was of the opinion that moral actions which are prompted by a sense of prestige or honour are like the false coins. They are as worthless as the false coins (Dutta 111).

1.4 Concept of Religion:

Throughout the history religion has been abused and misunderstood. Some people use it as a means of exploitation and suppression, as a pretext for prejudice and persecution. Some other people use it as a source of power and domination over the elite and the masses alike. In the name of religion unjustifiable wars have been launched,

freedom of thought and conscience has been oppressed, science has been persecuted, the right of the individual to maturity has been denied, and man's dignity and honour have been flagrantly debased. And in the name of religion an injustice has been inflicted upon humanity with the result that religion itself has suffered many losses.

These are historical facts that no one can deny. But is this the proper function of religion or the right approach to religion? The answer will be definitely 'no'. There are many religions in this world, which claim to be the one and only true religion. Each religion is supposed to have come from God for the right guidance of man. But these claims contradict each other and have caused dissensions among people and vehement reactions to religion (Usman 65).

Religion may be divided into three related categories:

i) The revelatory aspect of religion which is contained in the compilation of revelations received by the Prophet or institutional sayings of its founder; ii) theology developed on the basis of these revelations, sayings of the Prophet, and the immediate circumstances in which those observations were made and iii) popular practices, customs and traditions among the followers of that religion.

Thus most fundamental to a religion should be its revelatory aspect which lays down the principles and guidelines for its followers. However, often this part of religion is sidelined and theologies developed by eminent theologians of the faith and traditions and popular practices become more widely accepted (Engineer *Islam Challenges* 233).

The real problem in accepting the validity of other religion is mainly posed by theological rather than revelational aspects. Theology is more of a human construct than

divine injunction though it is based on revelation. However, theological formulations are primarily based on human understanding of the revelatory text and this understanding is influenced by human circumstances. If the religion concerned becomes dominant one or is embraced by the rulers its theology often reflects this dominant, majoritarian attitude (there cannot be contradictions in divine revelations) (Engineer *Islam Challenges* 234).

Religion is as natural to man as social intercourse. The aim common to the religions of the world is that they undertake to bestow upon mankind the highest blessings. They seek to accomplish this by establishing friendly relations with a power which is stronger than the ordinary course of nature (Samad *Intro.* iii).

The innate religious urge in man has led him to invent many different beliefs and practice. But as the normal human faculties are inadequate to the task, the man-made religions invariably fail to find true answers to the fundamental religious questions. They are not able to bestow upon their votaries the highest blessings, and fall very much short of the highest good. The blessings looked for in man-made religions are very often of a worldly kind (Samad *Intro.* iii).

The religion of Jesus bears the name of Christianity, derived from his designation of Christ; that of Moses and of Buddha are known by the respective names of their teachers. The religion of Muhammad alone has a distinctive appellation. It is Islam.

In order to form a just appreciation of the religion of Muhammad it is necessary to understand aright the true significance of the word Islam. Salam (*Salama*), in its primary sense, means, to be tranquil, at rest, to have done one's duty, to have paid up, to be at perfect peace; in the secondary sense, (Ali *The Spirit* 137) to surrender oneself to

Him with whom peace is made. The noun derived from it means peace, greeting, safety, salvation. The word does not imply, as in commonly supposed, absolute submission to God's will, but means, on the contrary, striving after righteousness (Ali *The Spirit* 138).

In actual practice, religion consists of beliefs, dogmas, traditions, practices and rituals. A believer born in a religious tradition inherits all this. He takes everything for granted and believes in everything he has inherited as an essential and integral part of religion. For him, rituals are as important and integral as the values. However, while rituals are performed regularly, values are either violated, neglected or practised more symbolically (Engineer *On Developing* 177).

A truly religious person is more conscious of these fundamental values rather than of rituals. It is also to be noted that rituals can be performed without hurting one's selfish interests, but values demand great sacrifice from us. No wonder then that people stress rituals more than the values. It is also interesting to note that while priests stress rituals, the *Sufi* and *Bhakti saints* or mystics stress these values. While Priests thrive on these rituals, the *Sufi* and *Bhakti saints* live a starkly simple life and do everything possible to control their desires. In any case, one has to keep one's selfish desires under control if one wishes to practise these values (Engineer *On Developing* 184).

Professor Whitehead defined religion: "*Religion is a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held, and vividly apprehended*" (Hasan *History* 5).

Islam is the most powerful and potent instrument for transforming the character of the believers and as such it is religion par excellence. The equivalent of "religion" under Islam is *Din*. According to the Dictionary of Technical terms "*Din*" is defined as: "*A*

divine institution which guides rational beings, by their choosing it, to salvation here and Hereafter and which covers both articles of belief and action” (Hasan History 6).

Bearing this in mind, the Islamic concept maintains that religion is not only a spiritual and intellectual necessity but also social and universal need. It is not to bewilder man but to guide him. It is not to debase him but to elevate his moral nature. It is not to deprive him of anything useful, or to burden him, or to oppress his qualities but to open for him inexhaustible treasures of sound thinking and right action. In short, true religion is to acquaint man with God as well as with himself and the rest of the universe.

When the purpose of true religion is carefully examined, it will be found that religion satisfies the spiritual and moderate material needs of man. It unites his psychological knots and complexes, sublimates his instincts and aspirations, and disciplines his desires and the whole course of life. It improves his knowledge of God—the Highest Truth in the universe, and of his own self. It teaches him about the secrets of life and the nature of man and how to treat them, about good and evil, about right and wrong. It purifies the soul from evil, clears the mind from doubts, strengthens the character and corrects the thinking and convictions of man. All this can be achieved only when man faithfully observes the spiritual duties and physical regulations introduced by religion (Usman 67).

True religion educates man and trains him in hope and patience, in truthfulness and honesty, in love for the right and good, in courage and endurance, all of which are required for the mastery of the great art of living. Moreover, true religion insures man against fears and spiritual losses, and assures him of God’s aid and unbreakable alliance. It provides man with peace and security and makes his life meaningful.

That is what true religion can do for humanity, and that is the concept of religion in Islam. Any religion which fails to bear these fruits is not Islam or rather, is not religion at all, and any man who fails to draw these benefits from religion is not religious or God minded (Usman 68).

The way of life (*deen*) preached by the Prophets contains a dual system of worshipping God as well as performing one's social responsibilities. To become absorbed in mere rituals while not fulfilling one's social obligations, is a totally false concept, and is an adroit creation of man-made religious thought. The sooner people get out of the whirlpool of this false conception the greater will be the speed with which people will be able to tread the straight and accurate path (*sirat al-mustaqim*) made known to us by the Islamic faith (Ansari 130).

1.5 Relation of Morality to Religion:

Philosophy of religion means the theology which discusses the Natural Religion. Religion means man's belief in a Supreme Being or beings "mightier than himself and inaccessible to his senses but not indifferent to his sentiments and actions", the highest form of religion is supposed to be Monotheism wherein the belief in One Supreme Perfect God is involved.

While explaining the relation of ethics to philosophy of religion, always a question is raised in this connection-how morality is related to religion? Is morality prior to religion or vice-versa? Or Are they supplementary to each other?

According to Kant, morality is prior to religion. It is our strong conviction that virtue will triumph at last (Jalil 10). That virtue will lead us to happiness and vice to

pain. But our actual experience show that the happiness is not connected with virtue nor it arises from it as its natural consequence. Virtue does not of itself produce happiness nor vice of pain. Thus people find that a belief is thrust on mind that there must be a Supreme Personal Being who will combine virtue with happiness and vice with pain, and will reward the virtuous and punish the vicious. Thus, morality, to mean its basic entity requires religion. Martineau holds that morality leads to religion.

According to Descartes and Locke, religion is prior to morality. Commands of God are moral laws. Whatever He commands is right and whatever He forbids is wrong. Morality is an outcome of God's will. But this view is also not tolerable because it makes ethics not only dependent on theology but also a by-product of it (Jalil 11).

Actually, morality and religion are supplementary and interdependent on each other. Religion is the ideal basis of morality and morality is the true external expression of religion. Morality manifests the relation of the individual to society, and religion manifests the relation of the individual to God. Both are essential for human existence (Jalil 12).

A question raised again-Is morality an autonomous body of duties and rights, or is it so because of the commands of God? Islam accepts that God reveals all that is moral or immoral. Hence, for a Muslim an action is good or bad, as God wills it. In other words, morality depends on the will of God, and His declaration. A thing is good because God wills it and bad if He disapproves of it. As a matter of fact the Lila-doctrine in Hinduism comes very near this Islamic view.

Imam Ghazali's (1058-1111) great work '*Ahya-ul-Uloom*' which is flooded with Quranic injunctions possesses five specialities. Among this fourth aspect is that the

entire mansion of ethics and morality is built over the foundation of religion. Religion is the contact of man on one side and God on the other. Religion makes man a partner of God. Religion is higher knowledge that leads to communion with God. Thus, religion is the vital link between man and God and Ghazali desired to make this link strong, deep and enduring (*Ali Imam* 24).

The Role of Religion in the Moral Life:

Philosophers through the centuries have been strongly divided over whether religion is a positive or a negative influence in the moral life (i.e. whether it enhances or diminishes morality). Let's begin with those who argue that religion is a threat to the moral life.

Since the 1840s, the west has witnessed a number of critiques of religion. The claim has been made that religion undermines human dignity and robs people of the autonomy necessary for making moral decisions. In this regard the arguments of Marx and Nietzsche are discussed-

More than a century ago, Marx claimed that religion is the "*opiate of the people*". Like opium, religion- in Marx's eyes- dulls the senses, lulls people into a false sense of security, and undermines their motivation to bring about effective social change to remedy conditions of injustice. When virtues such as humility and meekness are extolled, when people are told that injustices will be righted in the afterlife, and when suffering in this world is praised as preparation for salvation, few people will be motivated to challenge the existing social, political, and economic order.

Nietzsche, the other major nineteenth century voice against religion, also criticised Christianity for its effects on people. According to Nietzsche, Christianity is founded on resentment, the desire of the weak to gain control over the strong without themselves developing strengths. It is an example of what Nietzsche called the “*herd morality*” or “*slave morality*”. The Christian virtue of humility provides a perfect example of this in his eyes. According to Nietzsche, humility is a sign of weakness, of lack of power. Christianity takes this weakness, pretends it is strength, and then criticizes those with genuine strength- in this case, those with pride- as bad. Thus, Christianity inverts the moral world, making the weak strong and the strong weak (Hinman 5th Ed. 83).

When Nietzsche proclaimed that “*God is dead*”, he was also making a statement about morality. In the traditional Christian worldview, moral values had an ultimate guarantee in God. This had at least two important implications for ethics. *First*, because God is good, goodness is not just a human creation. It has objectivity independent of human choice. *Second*, God’s goodness guarantees that justice will ultimately prevail; the wicked will be punished and the good will be rewarded. When Nietzsche said that God is dead, he meant that morality has lost any transcendent foundation for its values and any guarantee that the scales of justice will be righted in a later life. In Nietzsche’s view, morality must cease to be otherworldly. It must become purely a morality of this world- a morality of strength and self-affirmation that does not depend on a God or an after world (Hinman 5th ed. 84).

The common message in many of these criticisms is that religion is harmful to morality, that it encourages a false morality and undermines human autonomy.

Does Morality Need Religion?

One of the most vexing difficulties for moral philosophers is that morality demands on some occasions that people set personal advantage aside and act for the sake of some larger good. Morality may require, for example, that people behave honestly, even when those around us accept bribes and never get caught. Why should people have morally when people lose by doing so? Divine Command theorists have an answer to this question that is not available to others. They claim that ultimately God will balance the scales. The just will be rewarded, and the (Hinman 5th ed. 85) unjust punished. If this is true, it certainly provides followers of divine command theories with a motivation to be moral that is not present for others. All of this presumes, of course, that God is just.

In considering the relation between religion and ethics, it is seen that there are really two distinct issues, one relating to the content of morality and the other pertaining to its motivation. The discussion has focused primarily on whether the content of morality derives from divine commandments or from reason. Yet even philosophers like Kant, who concluded that reason is the source of morality, were troubled by whether reason alone could provide a sufficient motivation to be moral. Kant himself vacillated on this issue. On the one hand, Kant argued that reason does provide a sufficient motivation in the feeling of respect for the law that it creates. On the other hand, he felt that from a practical point of view, it is necessary to postulate the existence of God and the immortality of the soul to make sense of morality. There are several senses in which religion is able to provide that motivation. *First*, the thought that the just will be rewarded may often be a sustaining motivating thought for people in morally difficult times, guaranteeing that their virtue will be rewarded. *Second*, the other side of this same motivational coin is the threat of punishment and damnation, which also can be a powerful motivating force. Both of these factors presuppose a religion containing

beliefs about personal immortality and some divinely administered system of rewards and sections. *Third*, the last factor is that religion provides practices and structures that support its value.

Critics of religion such as Marx and Nietzsche saw religion as a profound source of social conformity, as a means of maintaining the status quo and keeping people confined to their existing social and economic positions. Yet there is another face of religion that was perhaps less visible in the nineteenth century, which suggests that religion may be a profoundly liberating force in individual's lives and an important force for social change.

The service of religion to ethics can be analysed in the following way-

In the *first* place, religion has always given support to the moral standards and the moral ideals that have been recognized by the group. A true religion tries to establish an ideal society. The attempt to establish a world-wide society in which justice and brotherhood shall prevail has given valuable aid to the development of morality.

In the *second* place, morality gains in warmth and vigour when associated with religion. Associated with religion, morality tends to become more personal. Few causes in history have been successful until they have crystallized around some personality. Thus Jesus, by making himself the moral (Titus 3rd ed. 536) and spiritual leader of men, started a new historic movement, significant both religiously and ethically.

In the *third* place, religion tends to give meaning to life and so to strengthen morale. The conviction which grows out of religious faith that there is some meaning in the world and in human life appears necessary for morale, if not for morals.

Finally, religion appears able to tap and to release new levels of energy with which men are able to meet the crisis of life. Many men, both in their private devotions and in their public worship, have had transforming experiences out of which have come new insights, greater power of self-control, and more completely integrated selves. Such experiences have altered their attitudes both toward one another and toward life in general, and have given them a new sense of power (Titus 3rd ed. 537).

Religion has close association with morality as pictured by Kant, Bergson, Mahatma Gandhi, etc. Religion is responsible for subordinating barbaric anarchy to reverence and obedience. It is shaping economic, social and political institutions through virtue, social service founding of charitable institutions like hospitals, social services, temples, ashrams, etc. which are associated with the teaching of art, literature and culture. The scriptures suggest solutions to human problems and promote peace and international understanding (Singh 421).

Benoy Gopal Ray also held morality and religion as complimentary to each other. According to him, one fulfils the other. Gandhi also emphasizes almost the same idea when treated religion and morality on the same level. He advocated that religion and morality would pervade the whole of human life. He did not perceive religion as something more than morality. In the words of Gandhi, *“As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion overriding morality”* (Dutta 113).

Morality and religion have been closely connected in the history of the race. Both have emphasized human personality in its relationships and have been concerned with conduct. Morality has been especially concerned with the field of human values, or with

the right, the good, and the desirable in respect of conduct. It has emphasized the right of every person to the fullest development through the sharing of values in a community person.

Religion, on the other hand, has been concerned not only with the ordinary values of human life but with the superhuman values. Religion is the conviction that “what is highest in spirit is also deepest in nature.” It attempts to relate man to that which is highest in spirit and in this way to gain support from the cosmic environment. It represents belief in the reality of spiritual values.

While there appears to be a logical as well as practical connection between morality and religion, the two have been separated occasionally in the thoughts and conduct of men. There are men who (Titus 3rd ed. 503) are moral, in the popular sense of the term, yet who scoff at religion. On the other hand, there are some persons who are religious in the sense that they are intellectually and emotionally devoted to certain religious organizations but who is not moral- that is, they offend the modern moral consciousness. Apparently the moral and religious capacities of men are not equally sensitive in all persons or even in the same men. In the long run, however, if the two are separated there is damage both to morals and to religion. Morality without religion lacks drive and is cold, while religion divorced from ethical considerations tends to become immoral and to lose much of its significance.

There are three reasons why people consider the ethical ideals of the world religions. In the *first* place, these world religions give us actual examples of the age-long appeal to cosmic support or to God in the attainment of life’s ideals and goals. Man becomes conscious of God as a “commanding presence” within him. Sensitive persons in all ages

have arrived at the conviction that a moral power beyond themselves was prompting them to some activities and restraining them from others.

In the *second* place, the theories of philosophical ethics are known and consciously followed by a comparatively small proportion of the human race, while the world religions number their followers by the tens and hundreds of millions.

In the *third* place, there is an increasing emphasis on the need of building a world community and a world government. At the very least, a greater degree of understanding and of co-operation among the nations of the world is essential to avoid further conflict. If global thinking and co-operative living are to be encouraged, it is necessary to know the ideals of peoples living under various cultural and religious systems (Titus 3rd ed. 04).

1.6 Conclusion:

The introductory chapter is concluded with the assertion that religion and morality are closely related, but cannot be regarded to be identical. Nietzsche, for example, never subscribed to any religion. He projected his ideas as opposed to Christianity. But he had his own version of morality. Sartre rejected the idea of God but had firmly subscribed to the thesis that through our free choice we can create our own moral values. All these show that religion cannot simply be equated with morality. Religion has many dimensions. Some of them are-the ritual dimension, the mythological dimension, the doctrinal dimension, the moral dimension, the social dimension and the experiential dimension. So, the moral dimension is not the whole of religion. But it is undeniable that all the major religions of the world, including Islam, have a strong moral dimension. But while in philosophy the critical spirit is ever present, in a religion the

emphasis is on faith and the acceptance of the received moral values and practices. In spite of the close contact between philosophy and religion, we will not be far from truth when we assert that, religion, because of its strong mooring in faith, cannot wholly accept the critical spirit of philosophy. In almost every religion, including Islam, the critical element is operative only within limits.

Regarding the relationship between religion and morality one may ask: is religion the source of morality? Historical evidences go to show that religion can be said to come first and morality later. But once the moral sense is developed in the mind of people, morality and religion would go together. Neither morality precedes religion nor does religion precede morality. They are intertwined and interdependent on each other.

Notes:

1. Akhlaq in Arabic means innate disposition. This refers to ethics. Speculation about moral behaviour in Islam has, for the most part, been within the confines of proper religious behaviour, but the introduction of Hellenized notions of ethics caused many to treat this subject as separate from the religious codes of behaviour (P-01).
2. Pbuh- It is used by English speaking Muslims after writing the name of the Prophet, indicating "peace be upon him," meant as the equivalent of the Arabic "alayhi-s-salam" (P-01).
3. As-sirat al-mustaqim (Arabic: straight path) This is mentioned in the Quran (1:6) as leading over Hell to Heaven. It is used also to mean the strict adherence to the principles of Islam (P-20).

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