

Moral System of Islam (part 2 of 2): Moral Exhortations

Description: Some practical examples of moral commandments in the Quran dealing with various aspects of social and individual relations.

By iiii.net

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God-Consciousness

The Quran mentions this as the highest quality of a Muslim:

oeThe most honorable among you in the sight of God is the one who is most God-conscious.” (Quran 49:13)

Humility, modesty, control of passions and desires, truthfulness, integrity, patience, steadfastness, and fulfilling one’s promises are moral values that are emphasized again and again in the Quran:

oeAnd God loves those who are firm and steadfast.” (3:146)

oeAnd vie with one another to attain to your Sustainer’s forgiveness and to a Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, which awaits the God-conscious, who spend for charity in time of plenty and in times of hardship, and restrain their anger, and pardon their fellow men, for God loves those who do good.” (Quran 3:133-134)

oeEstablish 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.” (31:17-19)

In a way which summarizes the moral behavior of a Muslim, the Prophet, may God’s mercy and blessings be upon him, said:

oeMy Sustainer has given me nine commands: to remain conscious of God, whether in private or public; to speak justly, whether angry or pleased; to show moderation both when poor and when rich; to reunite friendship with those who have broken off with me; to give to him who refuses me; that my silence should be occupied with thought; that my looking should be an admonition; and that I should command what is right.”

Social Responsibility

The teachings of Islam concerning social responsibilities are based on kindness and

consideration of others. Since a broad injunction to be kind is likely to be ignored in specific situations, Islam lays emphasis on specific acts of kindness and defines the responsibilities and rights within various relationships. In a widening circle of relationships, then, our first obligation is to our immediate family " parents, spouse, and children " and then to other relatives, neighbors, friends and acquaintances, orphans and widows, the needy of the community, our fellow Muslims, all fellow human beings, and animals.

Parents

Respect and care for parents is very much stressed in the Islamic teaching and is a very important part of a Muslim's expression of faith.

oeYour Sustainer has decreed that you worship none but Him, and that you be kind to your parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in your life time, do not say to them a word of contempt nor repel them, but address them in terms of honor. And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility and say: My Sustainer! Bestow on them Your mercy, even as they cherished me in childhood." (Quran 17:23-24)

Other Relatives

oeAnd render 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." (Quran 17:26)

Neighbors

The Prophet has said:

oeHe is not a believer who eats his fill when his neighbor beside him is hungry." (*Al-Mundhiri*)

oeHe does not believe whose neighbors are not safe from his injurious conduct." (*Saheeh al-Bukhari*)

Actually, according to the Quran and Sunnah, a Muslim has to discharge his moral responsibility not only to his parents, relatives and neighbors, but to the entire mankind, animals and trees and plants. For example, hunting of birds and animals for the sake of game is not permitted. Similarly, cutting down trees and plants which yield fruit is forbidden unless there is a pressing need for it.

Thus, on the basic moral characteristics, Islam builds a higher system of morality by virtue of which mankind can realize its greatest potential. Islam purifies the soul from self-seeking egotism, tyranny, wantonness and indiscipline. It creates God-conscious men, devoted to their ideals, possessed of piety, abstinence, discipline and uncompromising with falsehood. It induces feelings of moral responsibility and fosters the capacity for self-control. Islam generates kindness, generosity, mercy, sympathy, peace, disinterested

goodwill, scrupulous fairness and truthfulness towards all creation in all situations. It nourishes noble qualities from which only good may be expected.

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