

Immoral Acts and their Resultant Effect among the Muslim Society: An Islamic Exposition

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Abstract:

High moral standard is said to be a core pillar which ensures prosperity of individuals and the society generally. Man therefore, is born with a moral sense which clearly enables him to differentiate between right and wrong, good and bad. That is why it is not out of place to say a society, shrouded in immoral acts is certain to breed wayward and unscrupulous elements. In order to actually submit to the good morality, one must speak the truth, keep promises, respect family ties, and help the poor, less privileged and weak ones. This possibly has not been unconnected with the fact that the Muslims took their guidance from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W²). Sadly enough, these moral qualities that ought to be imbibed by all and sundry diminish or were drastically absent among the Muslim society today. In order to get out of the bondage of servitude of one's desire to commit certain immoral acts, everyone in the society desires efficient knowledge and skill, societal norms and values. Having this in mind, it is not contestable that one should not do to others what one does not want to be done to oneself. This perhaps indicates that one must wish others what one wishes for oneself. To contravene the moral principles that guide the affairs of the Muslim society is no doubt a great menace which will not only affect the religious and moral set up of the Muslims but also their economic and social domain. It is not therefore exaggeration to state that many of the problems afflicting the society today could be the result of their undoings either in relation to their Creator or fellow human beings. It is thus in line with this backdrop that this paper intends to discuss immoral acts and their resultant effect among the Muslim society. To achieve the objectives of the research, the paper attempts to answer some basic questions in order to unravel the immoral acts and their resultant effect among the Muslim society generally. What are the causes of immoral acts? What are various forms of immoral acts being perpetrated by Muslims society? What are the effects of these immoral acts? What are the roles of government, teachers and other stakeholders in shaping the behaviour of the Muslims? How the moral standard does ensures prosperity of individuals and the society? What are the factors that help grow the moral faculty of Muslim society in making them religiously inclined to good standard of living? To achieve the objectives of the research, the paper adopts analytical phenomenological methodology.

Key words: Immoral acts, Effect, Muslim, Youth

Introduction:

Character moulding is a collective enterprise that involves many people in the society. These include parents, teachers, well-to-do and religious leaders as well as other members of the public. Each of these groups has critical role in ensuring that members of the society become good citizens so as to be able to contribute to meaningful development in their respective areas. The position of parents on this regard is enormous as they are the ones to serve as role models to their children in social and even religious lives, hence the popular adage that charity begins at home. It is not exaggeration to however state that many of the problems associated with immoral acts afflicting the Muslim society today could be the result of their undoings. These infractions, which are numerous, are being committed by virtually all segments of the society. For instance, some parents do not frankly counsel their children on the desirability for them to embrace good norms and values of the society. They fail to understand that such admonition from time to time helps to grow the moral faculty of their children, thereby making them religiously inclined to good standard of living. This is

because; a human being is composed of both spiritual and physical forms and when the spiritual form is well organized, trained and disciplined the physical form will definitely manifest high moral standards in all ramifications. Muslim society should therefore consider the morality to be their guiding principles and their watchword in all spheres of life. This should be done in order to internalize good norms and values which affect their lives positively. It is therefore the intent of this paper to underscore factors that are responsible for the immoral acts among the Muslim society and proffer possible solutions to it.

Concept of Morality in Islam

The entire Qur'an is full of moral teachings. It tells us the internal and personal mechanism which makes us act or not to act. Islam has recognized the power of morals in all spheres of human life. It is very interesting to note that all of the major world's religions preach morality as an indispensable part of their teachings, but the approach followed in these religions towards morality is what makes the difference. Islam, being the last revealed religion provides the best and most comprehensive moral teachings that are capable of eradicating all forms of social vices in human society. There are no aspects of human actions, psychological conditions, circumstances, rights, excellence and etiquettes which have been left out of the Qur'an moral teachings. Almighty Allah mentions in the Qur'an that:

And there is no creature on [or within] the earth or bird that flies with its wings except [that they are] communities like you. We have not neglected in the Register a thing. Then unto their Lord they will be gathered³.

Scope of Islamic Morality

Morality, as an English word denotes the 'principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad behaviors. But for the proper understanding of its concept, the word must be taken back to its origin. The Arabic equivalent of this word is *Khuluq* (pl. *Akhlaq*) which literally means innate disposition, character, behaviors and nature. Technically it means the science of virtues and the way to acquire them, of vices, and how to guard against them⁴. Morality in Islam therefore has five major basic foundations upon which all other Islamic moral values are attached. These include but not limited to:

- (a) Patience, (*Sabr*) It helps a Muslim to bear and conceal anger and all other undesirable attitudes.
- (b) Temperance (*Iffah*) It enables a Muslim to shun immoral behaviors in words and actions and makes him to be modest and prevents him from bad habits.
- (c) Courage (*Shaja'ah*) It helps one to have self-esteem, uphold noble characters and properly controls himself in love and anger.
- (d) Justice ('*Adl*) It places a Muslim on golden mean. This also helps him to be generous- a quality between miserliness and extravagance. It then helps him to acquire forbearance (*hilm*) – a quality between anger and self disrespect.
- (e) Wisdom (*Al-hikmah*) It is the fifth foundation comes from sound faculty of knowledge. It helps a Muslim to have foresight enabling him to distinguish between true and false in statement, right and wrong in belief and between good and evil in actions. It could be understood from the above that Islamic morality is limitless as far as Muslim life on earth is concerned. Morality in Islam is not a mere theory which is documented in scripture, but rather a practical training for which the Noble Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was sent to train the *Ummah*. This is elucidated in the following verse of the Glorious Qur'an:

And indeed you are of a great moral character⁵

'Aishah, (RA), the beloved wife of the Prophet (S.A.W.) was reported to have said that the character of the Prophet (S.A.W.) was the Qur'an⁶. This interestingly reveals that the Prophet has exemplified all the teachings of the Qur'an. Almighty Allah therefore directed all mankind to emulate him when He says:

There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern⁷

Muslim should therefore understand that Islamic moralities are divine in origin, human in nature, universal in approach and comprehensive in scope. This is what makes Islam distinct from other world religions.

Determinants of Islamic Morality

Morality in Islam has many factors that help to initiate, maintain and develop a sense of direction among people in their environment. These determinants are aimed at achieving and fulfillment of Allah's mercy.

Motive: This is also divided into two; extrinsic and intrinsic motive. These are attached with the power that causes a person to act and why an action is done. **Extrinsic** refers to doing certain things for the sake of physical reward he/she hopes to get.

Intrinsic prompts a person to do certain actions in anticipating spiritual benefit. This is in line with the teaching of the following Hadith:

Motive determines the value of all conduct and a person attains that which he desires⁸.

- a. **Faith:** One of the most significant ingredients of good conduct is faith. Faith has a decisive effect on the spiritual and material lot of a person as well as his social behavior, political conduct and financial life. Faith in Almighty Allah is thus the foundation of good morality.

- b. **Fear of Allah:** One's ability to respond to any stimulus in doing good and abstaining from all evil and selfish desires is best achieved and promoted by the fear of Allah one has. Of all the determinants mentioned, fear of Allah is the most significant determinant of morality.

Efficacy of Islamic Morality

Islamic morality is as important as the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an to the Muslims. This is because it (Qur'an) laid down the moral foundation in the teaching of Islam for it contains verses dealing with and encouraging moral development and discouraging moral lowliness. The Glorious Qur'an referred to those who uphold its teachings as 'prosperous' for been attached to moral qualities of keeping away from all acts Islam frowned at but also fulfilling their promises, keeping trust and establishing their prayers at their specified time. The Prophet (S.A.W.) always invoked Allah to better his character, advising his Companions to practice good morality⁹. He taught the believers that morality attracts more rewards than ritual devotions such as *Salat*, *Zakat*, and *Sawm* among others. The Glorious Qur'an described the Prophet (S.A.W.) in the following verses as merciful and charitable, humble and just yet gives to each his/her due. He has compassion and sympathy for the weak, for the orphan, the deprived and the oppressed.

Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves; it grieves him ye should perish: Ardently anxious is he over you; to the believers he is most kind and merciful¹⁰.

It is part of the mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted they would have broken away from about thee: So pass over (their faults) and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them...¹¹

The crux of the matter is that morality is the heaviest deed on the day of requital as it brings a believer closer to the Prophet (S.A.W.) on that day. It is also an integral part of Islam with perfect faith. While immorality destroys good deeds of a Muslim as all Islamic devotional acts are aimed at promoting morality among the Muslims. The aim of Islamic morality is therefore to safeguard the humanity from social, economic, biological and physical mischief and direct them towards the attainment of spiritual uplift. Similarly, the function of moral principles is to foster and protect these values, to prevent their destruction and to encourage their growth and development. For instance, the moral principle which prohibits the killing of human beings is meant to protect the value of human life. The principle which prohibits stealing is meant to protect the right of every person to the ownership of his property. The principle which prohibits telling lies is meant to protect the value of honesty. The principle which prohibits adultery is meant to protect the value of conjugal fidelity among other things¹². Adversely, the violation of any moral principle means the destruction of a value which ought to be protected or safeguarded. This is enough for one to appreciate the value and significance of Islamic morality.

Sources of Good Morals

The Glorious Qur'an mentioned three sources of moral conduct, and all the three are imbedded in human nature.

1. The commanding self (*Nafs al-Ammaara*) is the self, which incites the human being towards evil. Allah (S.W.T.) says in the Glorious Qur'an:

Yet I do not hold myself to be free from weakness, for the commanding self (-the animal self) is surely prone to enjoin evil, except on whom my Lord has mercy¹³.

The Glorious Qur'an states that the state arising out of the human beings animal self, *Nafs al- Ammaara* (the commanding self) is the first source of morality. The reasoning faculty in the human being is sufficiently well developed to analyze his behavior critically and to perceive the immediate and remote consequences of his actions. The foundation of good morals lies in our natural emotions and instincts, and good morals are nothing more than appropriate and controlled exercise of these naturally endowed powers and instincts. Hunger and sexuality are the basic commanding needs of humans and animals. Now if these basic commanding forces are brought under control through fasting and marriage, they become virtues.

2. The self-accusing spirit (*Nafs al- -Lawwaama*). The second source of morality judges the excellence of morals. It is the voice of the conscience which becomes loud when an act of indecency is being done. Every human being is endowed with this voice. Almighty Allah says:

And I swear by (and bring to witness) the Self-accusing Soul (*Nafs al-Lawwaama* - the innate self reproaching spirit, at the doing of an evil deed as an evidence)¹⁴.

Nafs al-Lawwaama is what we call the living perception of one's psychological condition or the call of the inner voice. One aspect of getting a ruling from the voice of the conscience and from one's heart is that when we are about to commit any action we should first imagine to apply such an action to ourselves. If we are not adversely affected by this action and if it proves to be good and

effective for us, such an action would also be beneficial and good for others. And if we cannot accept it for ourselves, then it must be assumed that it is neither appropriate for others. We should note however that those who act unfairly towards others should put their own persons in place of others and see how they would like such an act to be perpetrated against them. The Noble Prophet (S.A.W.) advised Muslims in the following words:

When wanting to decide whether something is good or bad, ask your heart and innersoles, and take it that the deed, the commission of which gives you a feeling of satisfaction to the heart and innersoles, is a virtuous deed and the deed which rankles in the heart and produces perturbation and hesitancy in the mind is a sinful deed, even though the people may tell you that it is a lawful deed¹⁵.

The question that arises at this juncture is that if *Nafs al- Lawwaamah*, the self accusing spirit is present in every person, and every person is endowed with a voice of the conscience, why is it that a lot of persons still commit immoral acts? The answer to this is simple. Though our conscience does raise its voice of protest and the commission of such an act people mostly does not pay heed to it. More often, immorality is a poison and that repeated doses of this poison blunts or destroys the conscience.

3. Love and Faith in the All-Mighty is the third and the ultimate source of morals. Once a Muslim scholar was asked, how can we free ourselves from unlawful prohibited things and from afflictions and find peace and tranquility? He replied, through a firm faith in Allah, for one gets free of all weaknesses and calamities through such a faith. It is through this channel the human soul finds its ultimate peace and tranquility which is called in the Glorious Qur'an *Nafs al- Mutma'innah* - the Soul at Peace.

(As for the person who has been blessed with a contented and peaceful mind He will say to him,) 'O you soul at peace! Come back to your Lord well-pleased with Him and He well-pleased with you. Enter the fold of My chosen servants, and enter the Garden made by Me¹⁶.'

It is wrong to say that a disbelief in Allah does not produce any defect on one's morals, and confirmation of His existence does not strengthen one's moral powers. Among the principles proposed by the Qur'an for faith in Allah is the principle of Retribution and Recompense for one's deeds and this is an important principle in the laws of nature. Almighty Allah states in the Qur'an:

Verily, those who say, "Allah is our Lord," and then remain steadfast (and follow the straight path), the angels will descend upon them (saying), "Have no fear nor grieve rather rejoice at the glad tidings of receiving the Gardens (of Paradise) which you have been promised¹⁷."

The existence of moral forces within the human personality emanates from and is subservient to the inborn faculties of a human being and there exists a natural impulse towards morality in the human makeup. The human faculties which are inherent in human nature in its inner aspect as opposed to the outer and physical aspect are denoted by the word *Khulq*. *Khulq* is the term which describes that habitual and firm disposition in a human by virtue from which moral actions flow spontaneously and effortlessly. It is understood that all the moral principles that exist are nothing else but a manifestation of natural human emotions and nature is the source of them all. A person becomes laudable only when his natural faculties and personal disposition take on a moral hue through training. If such actions are good and laudable when judged by common sense and the Law, such a disposition is called a virtuous disposition, and if such actions are bad and condemnable, such a disposition is called an evil disposition. The source of all morals therefore is within the nature of a human being - his disposition and his various natural states. The evil in the human beings is something which evolves later as a consequence of their training. Similarly, the Noble Prophet (S.A.W.) was reported to have confirmed that:

No infant is born except with an inborn sense of natural goodness, and then his parents make him into a Jew, Christian or a Muslim¹⁸.

This is a testimony from the Prophet (S.A.W.) that a human being is born innocent and unblemished in his nature and does not enter this world carrying a load of original sin; a belief upheld by the adherents of other faith. Anyone who thinks that a human being is sinful by birth has indeed erred. That is why in the Glorious Qur'an there is no mention of "original sin", "atonement" or "transmigration of soul" as this is the product of human fantasy with no evidence at all for their backing.

Causes of Immoral Acts

Vices and all other immoral acts come out of four pillars put together.

(a) Ignorance (*Jahl*) which reflects bad as good and reflects perfection as imperfection and vice-versa. The current economic recession and financial status of majority among the Muslim society has adversely affected their educational development. This perhaps made them unable to take the educational burdens of their children, who at long run become ignorant of their religion as well as other aspects of the mundane. It is not out of place to say that lack of knowledge is the cause of evil. That is why a great emphasis is laid by the Qur'an and Noble Prophet on the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom. Almighty says in the Qur'an:

Verily, Allah undertakes to accept the repentance of only those who do evil through lack of knowledge, then repent soon after. Such are the person towards whom Allah turns with mercy. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise¹⁹.

(b) Injustice (*Dhulm*) which makes one to place things not in their appropriate positions. This no doubt, makes one to blame when he/she is supposed to praise, disagrees when supposed to agree. This can well be understood considering the current political dispensation in which a political aspirant, though incompetent to occupy any political seat, will be imposed on the electorate by his political Godfathers. For Muslim society to prosper, a drastic measure should be taken in order to curtail this negative trend on our political system. Muslim society should therefore vote a person of proven integrity and who is capable to lead his people diligently.

(c) Desire (*Shahwa*) leads one to greediness, humiliation and all sorts of imperfection. The desire of every Muslims should be controlled so that it may not lull him to commit an immoral; which has an effect on him and the society he lives in. When Muslim society lacks discipline and moral values it has already taken a path of destruction and ruin. One's moral impulse therefore should always be the driving force for Muslim society not to engage in any immoral act. To strengthen the above point, Almighty Allah mentions that:

And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful²⁰.

(d) Anger (*Ghadab*) leads one to pride, rancor, envy, transgression among others. We should always, as Muslim society, not allow ourselves to entertain anger or transgress the limit set by Allah in dealing with our fellow human beings. The Prophet (S.A.W.) advised us to be sad for it actually leads to rancor and pride thereby commanding us to do things that are not permissible or which the *Shari'ah* frowned at. These and many other external factors lead to immoral acts and improper behavior. Lack of proper utilization of our human faculties is said to be the igniting force to immoral acts. Imam Al- Ghazali is of the view that it is against the human nature and disposition to be attracted towards evil and blamable actions. The fact is that all the faculties found in a human personality, if utilized properly, are good morals in themselves. If at any time we see a defect in these or a slip is noticed, it is due to our misuse of these faculties. The capability of good morals has been endowed in our nature and this capability can safeguard against slip-ups through will, power and training.

Closely related to the aforementioned is the fact that everything in this universe exerts an influence on its environment and also accepts influence from its environment. A popular saying has it that every action is followed by a reaction. We know how a person's health is influenced by changes in weather, by his food, his dress, and his home. This influence affects even the morals of a person. The influence of peer group has also been identified as one of the causes of immoral acts. Muslim parents should therefore keep their eyes and monitor their children closely to see who their friends are. There are a number of incidents where a person of low moral standards establishes a friendship with a righteous person, who possessed sterling qualities, but only to be influenced by his untruthful friend and finally engulfed in many immoral acts. That is why Muslims were exhorted by Allah in the following verse to be with the truthful:

O You who believe! Keep your duty to Allah and be with the truthful²¹

This companionship with the truthful as elucidated in the above verse can be seen in many ways. This include but not limited to developing friendship with the pious, attending gatherings of such persons, studying the writings of the pious and reading their biographies. Not only that, the use of unclean and lawful food such as pork and alcohol by the society has an effect on one's moral condition. The laws about food, dress, the principles of government and the economic order are not only meant to keep the physical, social and economical side in order, but also to uplift the moral conditions. For instant the use of wisdom underlying the prohibition of certain foods in the Qur'an by Allah is that by using them, one is deprived of certain high moral qualities. Parents, as partners of progress therefore should always insist on lawful means to feed themselves and their families as not doing so will inadvertently affect their moral set up. Commenting on the effect of food on morals, Imam Al-Ghazali opined that:

The child's wet-nurse should be very religious, pious and eating lawful things, for a milk that comes out of unlawful food would not have any good or blessing in it²².

Simply deduced here is that since she is involved in the upbringing of the child from the very beginning, this wholesome milk would permeate the child's every fiber and in the long run he would be naturally inclined towards the unlawful and unclean things. Apart from these causes, mental and physical illness was also identified as the cause of certain immoral deeds. Islam has drawn our attention to many aspects of physical and mental hygiene as shown in this verse:

And purify your clothes (and the thoughts). And idol-worship, (spare no pains to) exterminate it and shun all uncleanness²³.

The pollution of environment can be another source of evil. To rectify this kind of uncleanness, Almighty Allah warned us in this verse:

And guard against an affliction which surely will afflict not only those of you in particular who have acted unjustly (but it will involve others also who are inclined towards them); and know that Allah is Severe in requiting²⁴.

Though the warning is against internal discord in the civil wars of early Islam, Ali suggested that it was never necessary than it is now for it affects the innocent and guilty alike²⁵. Muslim society should therefore remain faithful in all their dealings and be discouraged from anything that is inimical to their moral development and that of the society generally.

Character Building: A Responsibility for All

Despite the involvement of a cross section of Muslims today in some wrong doings perpetrated they pretend to be innocent whereas they constitute greater percentage of culprits. This is because, some of them engage in slander and sabotage while at work place, unjustifiably accusing their bosses of maladministration and mismanagement of public resources. These are few out of many immoral and anti-social acts, in the society these days. Unless all members of the Muslim society come together to correct the anomaly, then the much needed prosperity and stability cannot be achieved. From the Islamic standpoint, all disasters and calamities in a society could be the handiwork of members of that particular environment. All and sundry particularly Muslims should therefore come in prayers for solution to the myriads of social problems plaguing the society.

Time is now ripe, when we should collectively and individually search our conscience to see whether our behaviours are compatible with the established values of the society. Individual Muslim should contribute meaningfully towards building good moral for a peaceful and a decent society. The extent to which good morals are held not only by the individual Muslims but also some tertiary institutions can simply be noticed. When a student of a particular institution graduates and honor is conferred on him, the university proclaims that the student has been found worthy of learning and character. This is an indication that learning and good character make a good citizen and a good graduate. As was said previously, character moulding is a collective enterprise that involves many people in the society. As parents, the children should have learnt from them all the good ways of living. These include proper way of interaction with neighbors, way of dressing, learning to respect their elders and guarding against unwanted utterances among others. All these are major responsibilities which parents should take into consideration, if only to mould the character of their children, for the good of the society generally.

However, it is sad to note that some parents do not at all motivate their children to internalize good norms and values which affect their lives positively. Certainly, this lackadaisical attitude has the effect to engender many social ills in the society, including area boyism, political thuggery and consumption of intoxicants among others. Looking at the role of teachers in character moulding in the society, there is no any magical difference with that of parents. This is because like parents, teachers should act as good counselors to the children in school. This is by way of making use of subjects, especially in religions, civic education and social studies to achieve the aims of behaviour change in the society. Where teachers fail to discharge this crucial method and responsibility, the dream of having a refined society with good character will no doubt be impossible. Religious leaders who occupy an esteem position in the society have greater role towards character rejuvenation. They, as learned, are expected to always engage in exhortation religiously on the need for Muslim society to strive to live within the confines of the law in all aspects of their lives.

Reasons for Living a Decent Life

Every Muslim society possesses certain qualities that enable him acquire a lot of experiences that distinguish him from children. According to Omeregbe, a number of reasons as to why we must live a moral life were identified as follows:

1. We must live a moral life because Almighty Allah has commanded us to do so
2. We must live a moral life because we are social beings and also members of society
3. We must live a moral life because we are rational beings
4. We must live a moral life because it is the path to happiness
5. We must live a moral life because of the fear of the law of nemesis
6. We must live a moral life because it is the way of nature²⁶.

On ethical reflection, it is a common knowledge that we all came into this world with nothing, and we shall leave it with nothing, no matter how rich we are. Thus, it is better to be poor and morally upright than to be rich and morally filthy. This is so because moral integrity is a higher value than money and material wealth. Those who throw away morality as soon as they see money and sell their moral integrity in exchange for money, are also short-sighted and un-minded people. It is therefore out of foolishness for anyone to enjoy today only to suffer for it tomorrow. Money is not everything. It can only buy pleasure, but it cannot buy happiness. You could be very rich and still be unhappy, especially if you got your wealth through immoral means. Happiness comes from moral integrity, clear conscience, peace of mind, selfless service, and contentment.

The practice of any religion without commitment to moral way of life is an abomination before Allah.

Effects of Immoral acts among Muslim society

An immoral act among Muslim society is so alarming this day. They engaged in all sorts of immoral behaviours including theft, drug addiction, cultism, smoking and other undoing. Failure to take drastic measures to curtail these vices is said to be one of the causes of immoral acts among the Muslim society. This is largely due to the inability of some parents in giving proper training their children require to become useful members of the society. This adversely affects the youth subjecting them to various nefarious activities in their effort to make ends meet. Moral values give us a sense of understanding issues and enable us to choose between what is right and what is wrong. A man without moral values is like a lost ball in the high weeds. Muslim society are however encouraged to show sense of maturity in all their dealings for this will give them chance to encourage and promote humanity among themselves thereby saving them from becoming criminal, perpetrator/felon etc. Disobedience to parents is another immoral act prevalent among the Muslim. To curtail this bad trend, Islam urges everyone, irrespective of his tribe, location or language to be dutiful to his parents, extending kindest treatment where and when possible. Failing to treat them kindly makes one guilty of disobedience to them and to Allah the Almighty. Disobedience to parents or mistreating them is the second major sin after *Shirk*²⁷. The Prophet (S.A.W) was asked about the greatest sins in which he replied:

To join partners in worship with Allah; to kill a soul which Allah has forbidden to kill; and to be undutiful or unkind to one's parents...²⁸

He also mentions in another Hadith:

The pleasure of Allah is in the pleasure of one's parents and the wrath of Allah is in the wrath of one's parents²⁹.

A simple analysis of these *Ahadith* reveals that respect for the parents and their treatment kindly occupied high position in Islam. All the Prophets were commanded to worship Allah and immediately after the command come the issue of being dutiful to parents. Almighty Allah states in the following verse:

Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life say not to them a word of contempt nor repel them but address them in terms of honour³⁰.

Kindness to one's parents has been stressed in this verse to show their position as only next to worship of Allah. This clearly indicated that the idea of worshipping Allah is connected to the idea of honoring and respecting one's parents when He commanded good treatment of them. It is however incumbent upon every Muslim society to deal with his parent gently, kindly, politely, as well as respect and appreciation. Giving due respect to one's parents alive or after death earns one admission into Paradise. The Prophet (S.A.W.) once said:

Jibril (A.S.) came to me and said, "O Muhammad, he is doomed who hears you mentioned and does not say peace be upon you." He said, "Say Amin," so I said Amin. Then he said, He is doomed who sees the month of Ramadan come and go, and he has not been forgiven." He said, "Say Amin," so I said Amin. Then he said, "He is doomed who grows up and either his parents or one of them are still alive, and they do not cause him to enter Paradise." He said, "Say Amin," so I said Amin.³¹

Asad, in his commentary, maintained that Almighty Allah is the ultimate cause of man's coming to life and that his parents stood the position of his outward cause which also shows that the worship of Allah is followed by the injunction to honor and cherish one's parents³². In an Islamic society, parents are respected for their wisdom and experience. It is a Muslim honored duty to lovingly care for his or her parents in their old age and provide them with all they need on the basis of his/her financial position. The media houses on the other angle would not be spared for most of the time they ignite the fuel of immoral acts among the Muslim society. This is considering serious effects some information being aired has to the public and which have not, most of the times, been censored. Anyone who comes across this information such as war films, pornographic scenes, drug addiction and trafficking scenes, area boyism, political thuggery and consumption of intoxicants among other things usually try to practice them directly or indirectly. It is therefore hoped that media houses should scrutinize, sift and deliver sound information that can only be useful for the moral uplift of the Muslim society. All hands must be on deck to fight against immoral acts among the Muslim society and at the same time drawing their attention on the need to imbibe self discipline. To unveil the status and or position of moral character we must imbibe the idea that 'if wealth is lost nothing is lost, if health is lost something is lost and if character is lost everything is lost'. We therefore understand that the best of all things is good character. Remember also the Chinese proverb which says 'if there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in character, if there is beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home, when there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation, when there is order in the nation there will be peace in the world.

Solutions to Immoral Acts among the Muslim society

The menace of Immoral acts has eaten deep into the fabrics of our society; however, with effective counselling the problem can be tackled through the effort of parents, society, individuals and the government by engaging Muslims and advising them on how best to withdraw from such nefarious acts that are uncalled for. The family as the nucleus of the social organization should give their children appropriate education on danger and effect of immoral acts. They should be encouraged by particularly Muslim scholars to imbibe good morals that will help them become good members of the society. Not only that they should also desist from engaging in all forms of immoral acts which are detrimental to them and the society in general. The fact that some of the immoral acts are normally emanating from a lower social and economic home; where youth are ill prepared to meet the demand of moral values, should not be the reason because it can be remedied through improvement of their environment and the family set up. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) is the best role model for every Muslim. This is because his teachings illuminate the lives of the people with the right virtue and good manners, creates in them brightness of character and fills their laps with the pearls of good conduct.

The value of morality in Islam is very high. In fact, the Prophet (S.A.W.) has once said: 'On the Day of Judgment there will be nothing weightier in their balance than their good moral character'. Take a look, however, at the period of the pre-Islamic days of the Arabs in which they were proud of their ignorance and wickedness. But when Islam was introduced, it removed the intensity of feelings and introduced the practice of pardon and forgiveness in society. In Islam, the better way and the best training of moral values should be explained and clarified in such a way that the heart may be convinced and that people can adopt them for attaining good and righteous qualities.

The most excellent guide for the Muslim's conduct in all spheres of his life is the Glorious Qur'an and the Prophet's example or practice. What is most lacking today among the Muslim society in respect of morality are; charity, chastity, modesty and purity, truthfulness, reliability and honesty, generosity and hospitality, respectfulness, kindness, patience, and perseverance, fear of Allah, self-control and self-discipline, upholding sanctity, obedience and respect, politeness, sincerity and repentance among others. Instead

of imbibing these worthy qualities they engaged themselves in manners forbidden by Islam such as stealing and theft, adultery, fornication and prostitution, dishonesty, cheating and hypocrisy, greediness and miserliness, abuse and misbehavior, suspicion, jealousy and anger, violence, tyranny and oppressions, false oath, consumption of alcohol, gambling, murder, dishonor and harshness toward parents and other members of the society.

These forces of evil and oppression must be fought without any fear or favor so that peace, harmony, tranquility and all other moral conducts can adequately be maintained. Muslim society should be advised and admonished on the need to reform and change their behavior for the better. This can be done via purification of mind as well as the awakening of the conscience of the Muslim society in all spheres of life. They should also return to the vigorous study of the life of the Noble Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) in all its different phases with a view to emulating him in all ideal examples embedded in his *Sunnah*. It is not limited to this only, they should equally stand to their feet and see that injustice, corruption, oppression and all sorts of immorality are eradicated from the earth. All hands must be on deck in order to get rid of all acts that usually cause mischief on earth. Righteousness should be developed and maintained among the Muslim society through inculcating good morals in all their dealings. They should also know that Islam has provided a mechanism via which they can check the menace of Immoral acts in order to reform the society for a better cause. This is elucidated in the Glorious Qur'an and the tradition of the Prophet (S.A.W.). In the Glorious Qur'an Allah says:

Let there become of you a community that shall call for righteousness, enjoin justice and forbid evil such men shall surely triumph³³

While in the Prophetic *Sunnah*, the Prophet (S.A.W.) said:

He who sees an abomination should remove it with his hand, if he is unable to do so, let him use his tongue, if he is unable to do so, let him do it in his heart. This is the weakest form of faith³⁴.

Muslim society should therefore strive hard in ensuring that a social order, based on peace, harmony and justice in which everybody is equal before the law is established. Relatively, a human being is composed of both spiritual and physical forms and when the spiritual form is well organized, trained and disciplined the physical form will automatically manifest high moral standards; in all ramifications. On the same vein, they should consider the morality to be their guiding principles and their watchword in all spheres of life. The love of the material world, wanton greed and the desire to amerce wealth should be repudiated seeking the spiritual nearness to Allah as well as other righteous deeds. They should also be steadfast in prayer for it fends away indecency, lewdness and all form of abominations. Almighty Allah mentions in the Qur'an that:

...Indeed, *Salat* fends away indecency, lewdness and other forms of evils...³⁵

It also purifies the body and the soul from all evil and then establishes a decent, disciplined and virtuous society free from all evil practice. Since that is the case, we should then check the way and manner we observe our daily obligatory prayers. The Prophet (S.A.W.) was reported to have said that:

He whose *Salat* does not keep him away from indecency and evil has no (reward of) *Salat*'.

Conclusion

Immoral acts are said to be the problems that cause serious concern to individuals, society and government in almost everywhere in the world. The problem is prevalent among youth who in most cases are ignorant about the dangers inherent in moral decadence. Many of them engaged in immoral acts out of frustration, poverty, lack of parental supervision, peer influence and pleasure³⁶. A person who is merely adhering to a moral code only uses his own person or the society at his personal discretion, and by doing so he thinks that he is becoming better civilized and serving the society. He has no motivation of getting any reward. But when the Qur'an motivates us towards higher morals, it simultaneously tells us that by adopting higher morals we not only improve and reform society, but we are also making our next life better. Muslim society should in their part understand that moral values are the essential building blocks of their character and they are the very basis of distinction between a human being and other creatures. A Muslim society must have a religious or moral framework that promotes unity and provides a model for cooperation and social cohesion. The religion of Islam always serves as the anchor for the society's moral guidelines. The position of Islam in this respect has further been corroborated by Will Durant. He emphasized that "There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion³⁷. History has shown that when a society becomes morally corrupt, civility is destroyed, the society becomes unstable, and inevitably the nation moves towards collapse. Religion delineates the line between rights and wrong, drawing the line in an indelible ink that cannot be altered as the society matures and grows. We, on the final note, hope that everybody would play his roles proportionately with a view to ensuring a society filled with people whose characters are worthy of note. Man is composed of a material and spiritual components. Unfortunately, Muslims emphasize the material at the expense of the spiritual, the reason Muslims are plagued with a myriad of moral crises. The phenomenon of moral decadence among Muslim society could be effectively tackled by drawing lessons from the Glorious Qur'an, the life of the Sahaba (R.A.) as well as personal experiences pious men. The moral decadence among the Muslim society and the lackadaisical attitudes are social vices that have so far defied all human solutions³⁸. Parents should discourage their children, brothers and other Muslims around them from associating with "unknown" gangs or suspicious neighbourhood peer groups. This is aimed at attaining a high moral position worthy of being emulated. Immoral acts are problems that cause serious concern to individuals, society and government all over the world. The problem is prevalent among the younger Muslims who in most cases are ignorant about the dangers inherent in that. Many of them engaged in immoral acts out of frustration, poverty, lack of parental guidance, peer influence and pleasure. However, with effective counselling, the problems can adequately be tackled.

Notes and References

- ¹ Mainiyo is a Lecturer I in the Department of Islamic Studies, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto
- ² S.A.W. means *Sallallahu Alaihi wa Sallam*. Wherever it appears in this work it carries same meaning
- ³ Qur'an 6:38
- ⁴ Reference is needed
- ⁵ Qur'an...
- ⁶ Hadith....
- ⁷ Qur'an ...
- ⁸ Hadith....
- ⁹ Hadith.. (Allahumma kama ahsanta khalqiy fa ahsin khuluqiy)
- ¹⁰ Qur'an 9:128
- ¹¹ Qur'an 3:159
- ¹² Abbas Mahmud, Philosophy of Adult Education, a Postgraduate Seminar Paper, presented to the Department of Adult Education and Community Services, Bayero University, Kano, P. 6
- ¹³ Qur'an 12:53
- ¹⁴ Qur'an 75:2
- ¹⁵ Hadith ...
- ¹⁶ Qur'an 89-27-30
- ¹⁷ Qur'an 41:30
- ¹⁸ Hadith ...
- ¹⁹ Qur'an 4:17
- ²⁰ Qur'an 12:53
- ²¹ Qur'an 9:119
- ²² Reference is needed
- ²³ Qur'an 74:4-5
- ²⁴ Qur'an 8:25
- ²⁵ A.Y. Ali, The Holy Qur'an, Translation and Commentary, 1999, IPCI, Islamic Vision, England, P. 465, footnote 1198 under Chapter 8:25.
- ²⁶ Omoregbe, I.J. *Ethics: A systematic and Historical Study*, Lagos, 1998, Joja Press.
- ²⁷ Associating other beings with Allah in worship and other religious obligations
- ²⁸ Al-Imam al-Hafiz Abi Abd Allah Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari, Sahih Bukhari, Vol. 13, Hadith No. 4117, P. 394 in Maktabat al-Shamelah Software.
- ²⁹ Abil Fadl Muhammad bin 'Ali bin Hajr al-Athqalani, Bulug al-Maram min adil lat al-Ahkam, P.519, Hadith No. 1499, Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1998.
- ³⁰ Qur'an 17:23
- ³¹ It was quoted in Tafsir Ibn Kathir, under Chapter 17:23. All efforts to get the text of the Hadith in books of Hadith were proved abortive.
- ³² M. Asad, meaning and translation of the Glorious Qur'an, under Chapter 17:23 retrieved in Alim Software.
- ³³ Qur'an 3:104
- ³⁴ Reference is needed
- ³⁵ Qur'an
- ³⁶ Fareo, D.O., *Drug Abuse Among Nigerian Adolescents Strategies for Counseling*, in Journal of International Social Research, Vol. 5, Issue 20, 2012, Pp. 1-6
- ³⁷ <http://bibleblender.com/2012/biblical-lessons/modern-day-lessons/how-declining-morals-cause-civilizations-to-die>. Retrieved on 14th December, 2017
- ³⁸ M.A. Bidmos, *Religious Education VS Moral Instruction: A Critical Assessment*, University of Lagos Press and Bookshop Ltd, 2017, P7