

Practical Strategies for Islamic Character Building in Contemporary Society: An Analytical Study in the Light of the Quran and Sunnah

الاستراتيجيات العملية لبناء الشخصية الإسلامية في المجتمع المعاصر: دراسة تحليلية في ضوء القرآن والسنة

Authors Details

1 .Ms. Fakhra Ghani

MPhil, Islamic Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

2 .Dr. Hafsa Ayaz (Corresponding Author)

Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Hafsa_ayyaz@fjwu.edu.pk

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☆ Ms. Fakhra Ghani ☆ Dr. Hafsah Ayaz

Abstract

Character development is a vital element for the growth and stability of any society, deeply emphasized in the Quran and Sunnah. This study explores practical strategies for building Islamic character by focusing on key virtues such as honesty, moderation, humility, and generosity. These virtues are essential not only for personal development but also for fostering social harmony and cohesion. The research highlights how adherence to obligatory acts and sincere implementation of religious teachings nurture righteousness, sincerity, and devotion among Muslims. Furthermore, the study examines the role of fear of Allah (taqwā) and patience (ṣabr) as foundational qualities that strengthen resilience, self-control, and perseverance in overcoming life's challenges. The duty to enjoin good and forbid evil (al-amr bil ma'rūf wa-nahī 'an al-munkar) is analyzed as a mechanism for promoting accountability and maintaining moral standards within the community, ultimately enhancing collective welfare. However, the study also cautions that neglecting Quranic guidance and prophetic teachings may result in moral decline and social misunderstandings. By providing a comprehensive framework rooted in Islamic principles, this research underscores character building as a timeless and universal approach that enables individuals to develop virtuous traits, resolve ethical dilemmas, and contribute positively to societal progress and human betterment.

Keywords: Islam, Character Building, Morality, Social Harmony, Quran and Sunnah.

Introduction

Islamic teachings revolve around the character building of man without any race, sex, or color. Islamic teachings figure personality traits in such a way that enhances man as the supreme creation of Allah Almighty on earth. Being the true religion, Islam has guided man to reform himself whenever required, such as compelling him against any unwanted desire and being preventive towards moral values. Good traits in one's personality cannot develop until a Muslim man and woman bind themselves to obligatory acts. This leads to the moral values for one's character to be reconstructed as an individual.¹

☆ MPhil, Islamic Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

☆ Lecturer, Department of Islamic Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

¹ Mainiyo, Attahir Shehu. "Role of Qur'an and Hadith in Character Building towards Re-evolving Prototypical Muslim Society." *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 6, no. 7 (July 2021): 220–228.

The character traits of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) are inspiration for the entire humanity as his personality is praised because of his good deeds.²

*"And indeed, you are in the highest standard of character."*³

Meaning of Character (Akhlāq)

The Arabic word "akhlāq" is used to denote "character" which refers to a person's personality, character, and disposition. The word "akhlāq" denotes the study of Islamic moral philosophy and ethics, concentrating on the qualities and virtues that influence a person's conduct based on Islamic principles. It highlights the importance of developing virtuous character traits through the guidance provided by the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W).⁴ The soul's condition, known as *khuluq*, or character, has been described as what drives people's behavior. Through practice and training, one can develop such character.⁵

Islamic World View about Character Building

Islamic moral system, known as personality trait based on the belief that Allah Almighty is the only Lord of the world. Human beings are His creatures and vicegerent. To worship Allah is the main trait of one's character. Furthermore, all Muslims take their inspiration of having good character from the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). Allah asked Muslims to have good character to live respectfully in society.⁶ Allah says;

"لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ تُولُوهَا وَجُوهَكُمْ قَبْلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَآمَنَ بِرِ
ةِ الْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَ
فِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ
ءَ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ"

*"It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the east and the West, but it is righteousness that you believe in Allah, and the final Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your wealth, out of love for Him, for your relatives, for orphans, for the needy, for the traveler, for those who ask, and for the redemption of slaves; to be persistent in prayer, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain and hardship, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the Allah-fearing."*⁷

Close contact with Allah is the foundation of righteousness and piety. When these attributes are developed, they manifest in behavior; the person behaves as though they are always in the presence of Allah, aware that He knows the innermost thoughts of his heart and the motives behind his deeds. The fundamental principle of Islam is the need to uphold moral conduct under all conditions, based on the understanding that Allah is all-knowing. Moral perfection

² See; Muhammad ibn Isa al-Tirmidhi, Jami' at-Tirmidhi, trans. Abu Khaliyl, Chapters on Righteousness And Maintaining Good Relations With Relatives, Hadith 2003(Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007)

³ Al-Qalam:4

⁴ *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, s.v. "Akhlāq."

⁵ Nasir Mohd. Omar, *Christian and Muslim Ethics* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2003), 4.

⁶ S. Isma'il, *Character Education Based on Religious Values: An Islamic Perspective* (Indonesia: Raden Fatah, 2016).

⁷ Al-Baqarah: 177

can be attained by keeping a continuous state of consciousness and reverence for Allah and by looking forward to accountability on the Day of Judgment. Sincerity, which springs from true devotion and reverence, is essential for developing good character.⁸

An individual with strong moral standards can change the whole society. Allah emphasizes in the Quran:

"وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ"⁹

"And that there might grow out of you a community [of people] who invite unto all that is good, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong: and it is they, they who shall attain to a happy state."

Muslims are the best Ummah in Allah's sight, leading people along the right road of morality. Prophets and their heirs have always exhibited this quality, leading others to immensity after reaching their spiritual enlightenment. As stated by the Prophet (S.A.W): *"Nothing is heavier on the scale than having an amazing person"*¹⁰

Islam places a high value on morality and behaviors for a powerful nation. Morals and noble practices. All the Prophets have stressed, fostered, and refined ethical qualities. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Indeed I have been sent in order to perfect good character."¹¹

The All-Powerful Allah praises him in the Quran for possessing extraordinary moral standards. The practices of the Prophet (S.A.W.) also highlight the importance of positive thinking and deeds in human character, setting them apart from apathy and negative deeds.

Idealism and constructive social activities can lead to character development. People ought to support those in need, participate in public events, and encourage support at home. The people collectively share kindness, empathy, and compassion, much like one body.

3. Personality Traits and Character Building

Shariah places a strong emphasis on character building because it forms the basis of a person's distinct psychological, physical, and behavioral traits. Character is a coordinated arrangement of an individual's deep, profound, and mental attributes that define and set him distinct from others. It is linked to an individual's traits, philosophy, values, activities, and sentiments.¹²

Building character is a crucial part of society's advancement. But it's a personal process that calls for self-exertion and individual work. Traits cannot be changed by any machine to make an individual a distinct respectable person.

Researchers have highlighted fundamental traits that make an individual an epitome of excellence. These are as follows;

a. Modesty

Modesty is described as an attribute or behavior that is uncomplicated, modest, and devoid of ostentation or excessive self-promotion. It means showcasing oneself, one's abilities, and one's resources in a humble and modest way, usually emphasizing the need not drawing attention to oneself or seeking praise.¹³

⁸ Isma'il, *Character Education Based on Religious Values*

⁹ Al-Imran:104

¹⁰ At-Tirmidhi, *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, Book 1, Hadith 2003 (Arabic ref: book 27, hadith 109), (Cairo: Dar Al-Hadith, 2003).

¹¹ Malik ibn Anas, *Al-Muwatta*, Book 47, Hadith 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1995).

¹² Muhammad Sarwar Hijazi and Jamil Akhtar, "The Impact of the Prophetic Sunnah on Character Building of an Individual Person," *Iqān* 1, no. 2 (2019).

¹³ Gerhard Blicke et al., "The Roles of Self-Disclosure, Modesty, and Self-Mentioning in

In Islam, 'Modesty' is known as the sovereign of the mom's akhlāq, and the term "تواضع" is used to denote it. Quran mentions it as a central quality of a follower. The individuals who walk modestly on earth are the true servants of the Most Merciful; when the imprudent treats them badly, they respond with salam and serenity.

"وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا"¹⁴

"For, [true] servants of the Most Gracious are [only] they who walk gently on earth, and who, whenever the foolish address them, reply with [words of] peace."

Prophet's humbleness was encapsulated in his actions, such as cooperating with others, living, resting, eating, and dressing modestly. He rode on donkeys and camels. He never stood out in social events.¹⁵ Aisha (R.A) reported: "He used to keep himself busy serving his family and when it was time for prayer he would go out to pray."¹⁶

Humbleness and pomposity can be identified through three signs: not wanting to be the center of attention, feeling awkward when praised, and admitting one's mistakes and sins. Allah values modest individuals who are accommodating and delicate to everyone.

Since modesty is closely linked to character development, it is clear that modesty has a major positive impact on character development. Humility, self-awareness, and openness to acknowledging one's shortcomings are necessary. Becoming modest teaches people to listen closely, respect other people's contributions, and avoid becoming conceited. It also facilitates effective communication, constructive interpersonal relationships, and personal growth. Resilience and a well-rounded character are developed by humility, which encourages lifelong learning and openness to diverse points of view.

b. Devotion

The Arabic word 'khushu' is frequently used in Islamic spirituality to refer to a posture of humbling devotion and intense focus during prayers.¹⁷ It refers to the reverence and obedience that a believer ought to feel internally when doing acts of worship, particularly during the Salah. Being cognitively present, spiritually focused, and emotionally endowed in the act of worship is necessary to maintain khushu. It involves developing awe and awareness of Allah's presence as well as fully engrossing oneself in prayer. The quality and spiritual importance of the prayers is thought to be enhanced by this condition of khushu, enabling the believer to engage more deeply with their religion and their Creator.¹⁸

This quality of "Khashioon," (the humble ones), is crucial for developing moral character. When a person has fear in his heart, he develops a strong feeling of self-awareness and empathy, enabling people to relate to others more deeply. This trait of believer fosters an atmosphere of respect and mutual understanding by recognizing their weaknesses and capabilities without being haughty.

Relationship Development: A Longitudinal Multi-Source Investigation," *Career Development International* 13, no. 3 (2008): 224–240.

¹⁴ Al-Furqan:63

¹⁵ Yasir Qadhi, "Humility and the Muslim: Manners of the Believers," *MuslimMatters*, December 16, 2022, <https://muslimmatters.org/2022/12/16/humility-and-the-muslim-manners-of-the-believers-i-dr-yasir-qadhi/>

¹⁶ Sahih al-Bukhari, Book; Call to Prayers (Adhaan), Chapter 44; If somebody was busy with his domestic work and Iqama, Hadith 676

¹⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Garden of Purification: The Concise Legacy*, 147–153.

¹⁸ *The Concise Legacy*, 147-153.

With values rooted in religious beliefs, devotion provides a moral compass that helps people traverse the difficulties of life. It develops habits of tenacity and integrity by instilling self-discipline and accountability. Additionally, devotion develops a sense of belonging and service, inspiring people to show compassion and generosity to others. Devotion offers resilience and inner strength during difficult times, enabling people to face obstacles with bravery and faith. As a result, by being devoted to their rituals and beliefs, people develop a stronger spiritual bond and strive to live up to the best standards of their religion.

c. Avoiding Frivolous behavior

The term "frivolous" describes things or acts that lack gravity, significance, or worth. It refers to something unimportant, superficial, or not deserving of serious study.¹⁹

In Islam "laghv" is defined as behaviors or attitudes that lack seriousness or a goal, frequently resulting in the waste of time and effort, and put stress to avoid it as a trait of *momin*. Avoiding frivolous conduct fosters traits like responsibility, focus, and self-discipline and is essential to character development. People who avoid such behavior develop a sense of direction and purpose in their lives. This quality motivates them to prioritize actions that advance their personal development and general well-being and set significant goals.²⁰

People forget that they will be judged both for their deeds and words. As a result, Allah's Messenger warned us: "A slave speak the words without knowing its interpretations/consequences and it will be a source of hell fire for him and a slave may utter a word which displease Allah. Whoever can guarantee, what is between his jaws, I will guarantee paradise."²¹ Defending the mouth and tongue against offensive words like lying, backbiting, slandering, swearing, arguing, and so forth. The Prophet reminded his disciples of the tongue since it moves quickly and easily. Once spoken, words have the power to cause tremendous damage that cannot be repaired. Controlling one's tongue up front is far simpler than dealing with the fallout later.²²

Refraining from frivolous actions enhances time management, productivity, and self-discipline. It fosters closer relationships, promoting better-roundedness and meaningful encounters. This approach fosters empathy, attentive listening, and assistance in others' goals. By abstaining from frivolous behavior, individuals develop a character anchored on purpose, self-discipline, and meaningful connections with themselves and others.

d. Generosity

Generosity is the quality of being ready and willing to share, give, or offer help—often without expecting anything in return. That means having a generous and considerate attitude toward lending a hand—whether with money, labor, support, or other forms of giving. Generosity is at the core of human goodness and is essential to building strong communities and fostering goodwill.²³ This is a fundamental aspect of Islam that serves to strengthen one's character. It shows kindness, compassion, and social responsibility. Giving a portion of one's income to the less fortunate helps people grow in empathy and understanding for them.

Zakah serves as a standard to distinguish between deference and disobedience, sincerity and insincerity, and piety and injustice. This practice cultivates altruism, selflessness, and a

¹⁹ Mustafa Muhammad at-Tahan, *Perfect Muslim Character in the Modern World: Frequent Remembrance of Allah and Avoid Talkativeness*, trans. El Falah Staff Members (Cairo, Egypt: Al Falah Foundation, 1999), 73–85.

²⁰ *Perfect Muslim Character in the Modern World: 73-85*

²¹ Ahmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasa'i, *Sunan an-Nasa'i*, trans. Nasiruddin al-Khattab, vol. 6, The Book of Faith and its Signs, Hadith no. 4995 (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007).

²² Ayesha Utz, *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2011), 81.

²³ *Perfect Muslim character in the modern world*, 86.

commitment to the well-being of the community. Giving fosters the development of an unselfish, sympathetic personality that actively considers the needs of others.²⁴

Giving fosters thankfulness and modesty, fostering a sense of humility by accepting blessings and sharing them freely. This mindset appreciates what one has, focusing on what is valuable rather than focusing on what is lacking. This mindset strengthens character by promoting fair-mindedness and understanding of societal interconnectedness.²⁵

Generosity is a transformative character development trait that aids in the purification of the soul by selflessly giving one's assets, whether financial or emotional. It fosters virtues like kindness, compassion, mercy, and gratitude, leading to a profound sense of fulfillment and spiritual development.

Generosity encourages detachment from material possessions, breaking bonds of materialism and greed. It allows individuals to focus on life's important aspects, breaking free from consumerism's restrictions and appreciating the transience of material assets.

By recognizing shared experiences and the need to make positive contributions to society, generosity promotes human togetherness. By fostering community relationships and peaceful cohabitation, this understanding uplifts people's spirits and benefits society.

e. Truthfulness and Trustworthiness

Building and maintaining successful personal and professional relationships requires consistent honesty, trustworthiness, and honorability, which are essential traits for maintaining transparency and credibility.²⁶

In Islam the word “*amanat*” encompasses numerous trusts set by Allah, society, or people, while “*a’had*” encompasses numerous compacts, vows, and commitments made between Allah and humanity, highlighting the importance of adhering to these trusts.

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رُغُونَ²⁷

“Who are true to their trusts and their covenants.”

The Prophet emphasizes the significance of fulfilling vows and commitments in Islam, stating that those who fail to do so lack confidence and Islam. Trust is broken when something is set in trust, and lies are made in conversations. In disagreements, tolerability and profound quality are exceeded.²⁸

Being trustworthy and true is fundamental to developing one's character since it serves as the foundation for moral strength and integrity. Being truthful encourages people to be sincere and authentic. People show transparency and integrity by expressing the truth and acting honorably, which establishes the foundation for developing relationships based on trust. This dedication to honesty fosters inner harmony and tranquility in addition to increasing one's credibility.

The foundation of wholesome interactions and relationships is trustworthiness. When someone is seen as trustworthy and dependable, others appreciate and feel confident around them. People gain the respect and trust of their peers, family, and community when they fulfill their obligations, stay true to their word, and protect confidentiality.

f. Moderation

Moderation describes the trait of avoiding excess or extremes in one's activities, behaviors, or decisions. Finding a rational and balanced approach to numerous parts of life, such as habits, consumption, emotions, and actions, is required. Finding a suitable and sustainable middle

²⁴ Ibid, 265

²⁵ *Garden of Purification*, 108-111

²⁶ *Garden of Purification*, 136-144.

²⁷ Al-Muminun:8

²⁸ *Riyadh-as-salihin*, the book of the prohibited actions., hadith,1543.

ground between overindulgence and extreme abstinence is what is meant by practicing moderation.²⁹

Islam promotes happiness and achievement through its statutes and rules, promoting balance in human existence. However, Allah discourages extravagance, reflecting negatively on human personality. Muslims should spend on others for Allah. Allah says in the Quran;

"وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا"³⁰

"The true believers of the Almighty, are those who are neither wasteful nor meager in their spending but keep the golden mean between the two"

Individual character building requires balanced spending, as excess or israf implies spending beyond means, implying luxury is relative and not measurable. Inefficiency claims unnecessary expenses, detestable as repayment and residence.

The Quran and Sunnah both warn believers against overindulging in food and alcohol. Allah forbids overindulging in food and drink. He does not like people who overindulge.

A person can only fill their stomach to the fullest capacity, according to the Prophet. His back merely needs a little assistance from him. He shall have three portions for eating, water, and breathing if he must consume more food.³¹

Excessive eating causes apathy in performing compulsory chores like as prayer and other prescribed deeds. It raises the chances of disobedience by arousing cravings and lowering self-control. After overindulgence, for example, a person is more inclined to feel upset. Scientific studies have shown that when you have a full stomach, your mind performs less effectively. When the stomach is full, more blood is involved in processing the food, leaving less for the brain to think.³²

Extravagance encompasses all pointless use of resources, including excessive consumption of water or food, and is prohibited from exceeding the limits of what is considered acceptable or standard. Individuals who consume more than their necessities are considered squanderers by Allah. Strictness and overspending are prohibited, as they are considered a form of luxury or extravagance. Allah advises those who consume more to maintain a balance between their needs and desires.³³

Extravagance is a disliked quality that can ruin a person's character and have detrimental effects on society.³⁴ It causes class strife to arise, cultural ethics and morals to collapse, and societal resources and assets to be destroyed. This results from the careless and inappropriate use of resources, which might go against public and Islamic norms. Furthermore, according to Muslim sociologist Ibn Khaldun, administrations that get troubled by excess and extravagance will quickly begin to deteriorate, indicating that extravagance can contribute to the downfall of states.³⁵

On the other side, the character trait of meagerness, characterized by severe frugality or stinginess, also poses difficulties. While moderation is key, extreme meagerness can discourage sharing or providing aid to those in need. It could encourage an attitude of scarcity that prevents the development of generosity and compassion. Due to their unwillingness to devote time or money to relationships, people who tend toward meagerness may find it

²⁹ Garden of Purification, 61

³⁰ Al-Furqan:67

³¹ Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Chapters on Zuhd, hadith no 2380

³² Psychology from the Islamic Perspective, 85.

³³ Al-A'raf:31

³⁴ Al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī, Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur'ān (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2020), s.v. "سرف".

³⁵ Shaykh Ṣadūq, Al-Khiṣāl, vol. 1 (Qum: Islamic Publications, 1st ed., 1362 AH), 121.

difficult to develop lasting connections. A balanced character must be able to strike a balance, between responsible resource management, and a readiness to lend a helping hand.

To put it another way, extremes of both abundance and scarcity might hinder the development of a balanced personality that includes qualities like moderation, empathy, and careful resource management. A solid middle ground that encourages wise resource allocation while fostering altruism and compassion is necessary for effective character development.

g. Fear of Allah

Fear is perceived as an unpleasant emotion that may arise in reaction to a threat or hint of danger. This defense system is ingrained in humans to help them prevent suffering, harm, or even death. When someone experiences fear in the actual world, they could run away in panic or stay away from potential danger areas. But above all, the most important thing to remember is that Allah is to be feared.³⁶

Fearful people will seek refuge from Allah, strive to get closer to him and perform deeds of obedience in an attempt to gain his favor. "So flee to Allah," says Allah, indicating that one should run from Allah's anger and seek out his mercy. Is it possible to escape Allah? That is something that only a believer knows. Those who are afraid of the creation run away from it, but those who are afraid of Allah run to him. The Quran contains numerous verses that instruct believers to fear Allah alone, not other people or the world that they live in. As Allah states:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ...³⁷

"Fear your Allah, who created you from a single soul..."

Fear and optimism coexist in a healthy balance, and true believers never prioritize one over the other. Muslims worship Allah because of the innumerable blessings He has bestowed upon us, and they pray that He will accept their good deeds, repent, and pardon their transgressions. We are concerned about Allah's anger and punishment for our wrongdoings. This balance of fear, hope, and love creates the outstanding character that is needed right now. If a Muslim worshiped Allah just out of fear, hope, or love, then Ibn Rajab said that they would stray from the straight path of Islam.³⁸ Momineens are those who revere Allah out of love, terror, and hope. A true Tawheed believer, then, will not, as these aberrant beings have done, lean toward one feeling over another, be it fear, love, or hope, as this leads to an imbalance in both beliefs and emotions. Rather, all of these feelings will coexist in harmony to inspire the individual to make the right decision and bring about the intended result.

h. Patience

Patience is exemplified by exercising self-control, persevering in the face of difficulty, and maintaining composure. The ability to bear challenges, hardships, or misfortunes without losing your cool is patience.

One of the most crucial virtues for a Muslim to cultivate is patience, which is also one of life's greatest teachings. The Quran mentions patience more than 90 times. According to what Allah says, only those who are subservient to Him in humility and who are sure that they will see their Lord and that they will return to Him will find it easy to seek help through patience and prayer...³⁹

³⁶ Utz, *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*, 165.

³⁷ An-Nisa:1.

³⁸ Utz, *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*, 162.

³⁹ Ibid, 104.

"وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ"⁴⁰

"And seek aid in steadfast patience and prayer: and this, indeed, is a hard thing for all but the humble in spirit"

Patience is the ability to avoid harmful actions and rewards without question. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) exemplified patience and forgiveness, even in hardships. Forgiveness not only increases wealth but also honors one in Allah's eyes. Patience is crucial for character development, shaping individuals into emotionally resilient, morally sound, and spiritually mature individuals. It teaches how to deal with difficulties, uphold moral behavior, and form a well-rounded personality. For example, patience prevents hasty reactions and discouragement when facing professional losses, promoting persistence, integrity, and progress.

i. Enjoining good and prohibiting evil

One of the defining traits of the Muslim community is the encouragement of virtue and the prohibition of evil. In the Quran, Allah constantly refers to enjoining good and forbidding evil when describing the qualities of true believers and their obligations in life.⁴¹

"وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ"⁴²

"And let there be a nation emerging from you, inviting to all that is good and enjoining what is right."

Men and women, rulers and subjects, all are bound to promote good and shut evil by their circumstances and capacities. Both, the disobedient and obedient are saved by enjoining what is good and forbidding what is harmful. It results in a stable, moral, and prosperous society where each person can realize their full potential in terms of their spiritual, psychological, and social development.

Within Muslim society, the idea of enjoining good and prohibiting evil not only acts as a moral code but also is essential to character development. Positive character characteristics are cultivated in others as well as in oneself when people actively encourage virtue and reject destructive behavior in society.

Everyone suffers from degeneration and destruction when this obligation is disregarded. Human potential and dignity are suppressed, corruption and immorality are permitted to grow unfettered, and life becomes harder. Dr. Hashmi explains;

"People may get numb to social evil and engage in it openly, and they may do so to the point where they stop seeing it as a threat to their morality, religious convictions, and long-standing customs. As a result, people get confused and lose their ability to distinguish between halal and haram, good and evil, and right and wrong."⁴³

Sincerity, honesty, and religious commitments are now seen as ignorant, traditional, and inflexible while lying, betrayal, and permissiveness are seen as astute, progressive, and adaptive. That's why everything that was once good has turned wicked and everything that was once good has turned vice versa.⁴⁴

Islam emphasizes character development, focusing on the growth of qualities like justice, compassion, honesty, and integrity. People strengthen these qualities by encouraging good

⁴⁰ Al-Baqarah: 45

⁴¹ Utz, *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*, 237.

⁴² Al-Imran:104

⁴³ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *The Parameters of Halal and Haram in Shari'ah and the Halal Industry*, Occasional Paper Series 23 (Herndon, VA: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2013), 25–26.

⁴⁴ Utz, *Psychology from the Islamic Perspective*, 246.

and prohibiting evil, fostering accountability and responsibility. Engaging in actions that encourage virtue and discourage evil helps individuals become more self-aware, enabling them to identify areas for improvement and work towards becoming better versions of themselves. This self-awareness is crucial for character development.

Analysis

Islam's long discourse on character development emphasizes how highly the religion values the development of virtue in people, regardless of their upbringing or social standing. The idea that upholding moral standards and values improves a person's relationship with Allah and promotes a peaceful and prosperous community is fundamental to Islamic beliefs. Muslims are encouraged to uphold justice, honesty, and devotion by adhering to necessary deeds and instructions from the Quran and Sunnah, thereby molding their character in conformity with the will of God. The teachings place a strong emphasis on the need for sincerity and honesty—virtues that are becoming less and less appreciated in modern culture yet are seen to be essential for both individual and group well-being. Additionally, Islam advocates for a balanced way of living that places a high value on moral integrity and compassion for others. It does this by highlighting moderation, humility, and generosity as necessary elements of character.

The discussion also emphasizes the significance of patience and fear of Allah in the formation of character, stressing the value of fortitude, self-control, and constancy in the face of difficulties. Islam aims to establish a morally upright society where people actively encourage good deeds and forbid evil deeds, take responsibility for their acts, and work toward improving both themselves and their communities. But the commentary also emphasizes the risks of disobeying this duty, which include moral deterioration, ambiguity, and a loss of ethical clarity in society. In the end, Islam's emphasis on character development provides a timeless and universal framework for people to develop virtues, deal with moral dilemmas, and make a good contribution to the well-being of all people.

A comprehensive approach to addressing the opportunities and problems of the modern world is provided by the practical strategies described for cultivating Islamic character qualities in modern society. These strategies seek to encourage moral rectitude, compassion, and social responsibility among Muslims by incorporating Islamic ideals into all facets of private and public life. Recognizing the significance of instilling Islamic principles from a young age is a fundamental component of these tactics. This method recognizes how beliefs and practices shape attitudes and actions, providing a solid basis for the growth of character. Furthermore, the suggestion to encourage community role models emphasizes the impact of morally exemplary action in forming moral character. The community can motivate others by exhibiting people who exemplify Islamic values like humility and honesty. Individuals can actively exhibit Islamic ideals in action and improve society by getting involved in the community and volunteering. All things considered, these useful tactics provide a thorough framework for promoting Islamic character qualities in modern society, taking into account both the individual and the group aspects of moral development.

Conclusion

Islam places great importance on building strong character by nurturing qualities such as patience, honesty, humility, and compassion. These virtues, deeply rooted in the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), guide Muslims in leading a life of integrity and positive contribution to society. In today's fast-paced world, maintaining these values requires conscious effort and practical approaches. For example, practicing patience can mean taking a moment to pause before reacting on social media or in stressful situations at work. Honesty and transparency can be fostered by open communication in personal and professional relationships, while humility can be cultivated by regularly reflecting on one's

actions and being open to constructive feedback. Muslims strive to embody these traits not just for personal growth but to build a trustworthy and accountable community. By holding themselves responsible for their actions and encouraging ethical behavior, they help create environments where fairness and kindness prevail. This commitment to morality also involves actively resisting harmful behaviors and standing up against injustice, thereby fulfilling their potential as positive agents of change. In essence, Islam's timeless principles are adapted into modern life through daily practices that reinforce inner strength, promote social harmony, and discourage wrongdoing, helping individuals and communities thrive morally and spiritually.



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