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An Analysis of the Impacts of Religious Ethics Principles on the Individual Lifestyle in the Contemporary Era

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT	
Article History: Received: 28 December 2023 Revised: 09 February 2024 Accepted: 20 March 2024		SUBJECT & OBJECTIVES: The article provides an analysis and evidence on the impact of ethical principles on individual lifestyles. Ethical principles in their moderate state are admitted and recommended in Islam.	
Key Words: Ethical Principles Religious Ethics Theocentrism Soul Control Individual Lifestyle		METHOD & FINDING: In an analytical-descriptive method, this study examined Islamic ethical principles and clarified their impacts on people's lifestyles. Muslims need to be aware of ethical principles to choose a way of life that is in line with their beliefs to avoid an identity crisis. CONCLUSION: Man is in dire need of rethinking to live according to transcendental values and beliefs, particularly in the contemporary age. Islam invites humans to live based on ethical principles and harmonize their lifestyle with values and doctrines by which they can find perfection and salvation. In this respect, man is required to benefit from believing in the oneness of Almighty Allah (SWT) and the Day of Judgment as well as controlling the soul that influences people's lifestyles. Additionally, man has to manage his/her deeds toward achieving perfection and avoiding identity crisis i.e., s/he must harmonize his beliefs with his/her lifestyle including social relations, wearing clothes, entertainment, eating habits, etc.	
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Introduction

Ethical principles are people's basic qualities that help hold the fabric of society together. In other words, they are standards of right and wrong that a person or group may have. They can be passed down to us by our family and peers, dictated by society or religion, and certainly changed throughout our lives, depending on our experiences. We live in a contemporary world where various lifestyles due to Western culture and welfare facilitate us to find different options in opting for our lifestyles. Contrary to the ancient era when Muslims followed one determined lifestyle and had no various choices for their way of living, they can nowadays choose the way of life based on Islamic teachings, ethical principles, and moral systems (*Ref: Ebrahimi & Kamaruzaman, 2017*).

However, some people behave based on a lifestyle similar to Western culture dominating parts of the world. As fundamental principles of Islam, every Muslim believes

in Allah (SWT), His oneness, His justice, His Messengers, and the day of Judgment. However, s/he might be influenced by non-Islamic lifestyles derived from Western culture. Believing in Islamic doctrines but following a non-Islamic lifestyle might lead man toward an identity crisis. Hence, there is a binding adaptability and harmony between believing and protecting Islamic moral principles, deduced from the fundamental doctrines of Islam, and behaving on their basis in life to avoid the probable identity crisis (*Obead & Ali, 2023*).

By utilizing library research, descriptive analysis, and analytical approaches, this study comprehensively examines the impacts of religious ethics principles on the individual lifestyle and tries to adapt them in the contemporary era. Although diverse aspects of individuals' lives could be included in the study's examination, it investigates how the mentioned principles impact some prominent elements, e.g.,

social relations, clothing, entertainment, and eating habits. This research did not conduct experimental techniques.

Therefore, it was based upon the selection and profound analysis of primary and secondary sources that delve into philosophy of ethics and the related sciences. For this purpose, we conducted an analytical-descriptive methodology dealing with ethical, Qur'anic, traditional, theological, biographical, and historical sources that better fit the category of the research. The selection of the sources was conducted using the following criteria:

1. Relation to the topics
 2. Level of academic quality and relevancy
 3. Language
 4. Diversity in formats
 5. Availability and accessibility
 6. Date of publication.
- Hence, as the main question of the article, how do the ethical principles impact the individual lifestyle?

Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

1. Ethical Principles

They have a normative nature and observe moral dos and don'ts. In other words, ethical principles include ethical right and wrong which are accepted by a person or social group. These principles can justify human ethical opts and indicate why a certain behavior or characteristic is acted by a human being (*Ref: Robinson, 2008; Zakieh-Sadat Hosseini et al, 2021, 91-106*).

2. Religious Ethics

Religious ethics is a scholarly area that studies the many ways in which religion and ethics are interrelated. Scholars of religious ethics critically investigate religion's efforts to shape the character and guide the behavior of individuals, groups, and institutions, and they often draw on religious sources to address contemporary or perennial moral problems (*Ref: Miller, 2016*).

3. Individual Lifestyle

It reflects an individual's attitudes, way of life, values, or worldview. Therefore, a lifestyle is a means of forging a sense of self and creating cultural symbols that resonate with personal identity. Lifestyle is the interests, opinions, behaviors, and behavioral orientations of an individual, group, or culture (Ref: Lynn & Angeline, 2011).

4. Theocentrism

Theocentrism is a philosophical and theological perspective that places God at the center of all understanding and reality. In this view, God is the primary focus of existence, meaning that all human activities, beliefs, and values should be oriented around divine principles and authority. Theocentrism contrasts with anthropocentrism, which centers on human beings as the most significant entities in the universe.

Essentially, theocentrism emphasizes that God's will and nature are central to understanding life and morality (Ref: Hoffman & Sandelands, 2005).

5. Soul Control

Soul Control is the ability to manipulate the properties of souls. In other words, it is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior in the face of temptations and impulses (Ref: Diamond, 2013).

Research Background

Various books and articles might be found in this respect, some of which come as follows:

1. International Sources

Makarim al-Akhlāq written by Ṭabarsī, in which the author intended to recount a bit of the praised morality of the Prophet and Imams (PBUT) their states, actions, manners in sitting and standing, journey and home, and other issues in this regard for education and the life of people (Ref: Ṭabarsī, 1972).

Thawāb al-A'māl wa 'Iqāb al-A'māl written by Shaykh Ṣadūq, in which the author mentioned Islamic hadiths describing right and wrong deeds and their spiritual

consequences which lead to *Thawāb al-A'māl* (reward) or *'Iqāb al-A'māl* (punishment). It has always benefited the Shi'a scholars and the common Shi'a and is remarked as one of the greatest Shi'a hadith collections (Ref: *Ṣadūq, 1989*).

Jāmi' al-Sa'ādāt written by *Narāqī*, in which the author believed that the theosophers of the past had made great efforts in explaining and spreading ethics due to their understanding. However, after the coming of Islam, moral points were explained in detail so that what previous theosophers and mystics of different schools of thought and religions had mentioned were inconsiderable compared to them.

Ethics for the New Millennium written by *Dalai Lama* is another book. According to the author, our survival has depended and will continue to depend on our basic goodness. It presents a moral system based on universal rather than religious principles. Its ultimate goal is happiness for every individual, irrespective

of religious beliefs. Although he is a practicing Buddhist, the *Dalai Lama's* teachings and the moral compass that guides him can lead every one of us Muslim, Christian, Jew, Buddhist, or atheist to a happier, more fulfilling life.

2. Internal Sources

As an example, there is an article entitled "*Lifestyle from a Sociological Perspective: An Introduction to Understanding and Analyzing the Concept of Lifestyle*" written by *Bayengani et al*. According to the author, the term lifestyle is a product of the modern world, in which, by weakening structural variables such as social class, choices, and behaviors are considered the basis of the formation of a person's identity and existence. The modern world and its identifiers and developments, such as the expansion and development of technological and communication tools, the increase of cultural values in families, and abundant access to these elements have a great and undeniable impact on creating

different lifestyles and accordingly forming identities that fit those styles (Ref: Bayengani et al, 2013).

As another example, there is an article entitled “*The Effect of Islamic Education and Beliefs on Lifestyle; Sociological Approach*” written by Yusefifar et al. According to the author, the lifestyle that Islam offers provides a special engineering plan for application in individual and social life, which can lead to education aligned with accepted principles and values when this plan is presented and implemented by families and other institutions in life (Ref: Yusefifar et al, 2019).

Notably, benefitting from the mentioned sources and many other works and articles, we decide to present an analysis of the impacts of religious ethics principles on the individual lifestyle in the contemporary era.

Ethical Principles

Some foundations and principles for Islamic ethics must be explained in this inquiry to show their impacts on people’s lifestyles. The

principles, playing a crucial role in individuals' way of living, will be examined in this article. Believing in the oneness of Almighty Allah (SWT) and the Day of Judgment as well as controlling the soul determine ethical principles that influence people’s lifestyles including social relations, wearing clothes, eating habits, entertainment, etc.

1. Theocentrism

This principle will consciously or unconsciously impact our decisions and behaviors. In other words, there is one who is the ultimate, necessary, and absolute being as well as independent, transcending any other ones in existence (Ref: Hoffman & Sandelands, 2005).

This absolute being i.e., Allah (SWT) is the infinite, eternal, unparticipated, and the reason for all contingent beings' coming-to-be and continued existence. Contrary to the theocentrism is anthropocentrism or cosmocentrism of humanism, rationalism, naturalism, secularism, and materialism

that lay aside Allah (SWT) from the center. In this respect, Almighty Allah (SWT) repeatedly said,

“Allah—there is no god except Him—is the Living One, the All-sustainer. Neither drowsiness befalls Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth”
(*The Qur'an*, 2: 255).

Theocentrism requires believing in the Holy Qur'an, The Lord, and His messenger whose mission was to purify people's morality to achieve happiness (*Noori, 1988, Vol.11: 187*).

Thus, contrary to polytheism, materialism, and other schools of thought that do not restrict man to a particular way of living, believing in Allah (SWT) obligates man to consider His commands in lifestyle. The aforementioned schools lead man towards unlimited freedom and enjoy whatever is pleasant in life.

2. *Ma'ād* (Resurrection)

Ma'ād is one of the roots of faith in Islam and means the return of people after death into life on *Qiyamah* (the Day of Judgment). Believing in resurrection also grants man a specific perspective and manner of living in which everyone is required to be responsible for his/her actions on the Day of Judgment. Happiness in the hereafter is not achievable by merely believing in Almighty Allah (SWT), rather it requires believing in *Ma'ād* in which everyone will find reward or punishment. There are various forms of understanding for resurrection in Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, but as a commonality, individuals are brought back to life to meet the consequences of their deeds during their lifetime.

The fundamental sources in Islam are the Qur'an and traditions which both describe the Day of Judgment in which every person would be either rewarded or punished, as well as its signs including the destruction of the universe,

blowing the Trumpet, etc. Therefore, believing in the resurrection is closely related to the individuals' lifestyles (Ref: *Misbah Yazdi, 1998*).

3. Soul Control

The man should control his inner faculties to act in a particular way to achieve perfection. In this respect, man should manage his/her inner faculties to not lead toward *al-Ifrāt wa al-Tafrīt* (exaggeration and simplicity). Soul control means to keep continuing inner faculties in the moderate form, called *'Idālat* (justice) and *I'tidāl* (moderation) in Islamic ethics. If a man intends to achieve happiness, perfection, and *Taqarrub* (seeking proximity) to Allah (SWT), s/he needs to control his/her inner faculties and protect them in moderate form.

This is contrary to Hedonism, which refers to a set of theories, all of which as commonality present that pleasure plays a central role. Based on Hedonism. Pleasure is happiness i.e., there is no

happiness but pleasure and enjoyment. *Jeremy Bentham & John Stuart Mill*, two contemporary English philosophers and economists, believe that the action is right if it tends to promote happiness or pleasure and wrong if it tends to produce unhappiness (*Misbah Yazdi, 2008: 107-109*).

However, happiness in Islamic ethics is achieved through managing pleasure, and desire as well as moderating the unlimited wishes.

Soul control plays a key role in man's character, behavior, and lifestyle since it, along with its faculties, is the offspring of all moral virtues and vices that direct people's behaviors. Before finding out how to control the soul in moderate status, we should initially know the exact meaning of soul control in advance. To find the objective, this study will examine each of the faculty of intellect, anger, and concupiscence as follows:

3.1. Faculty of 'Aql (Intellect)

Intellect or reason is a human cognitive faculty and one of The Four Sources for the deduction of the laws of *shari'a* or jurisprudential rulings.

According to epistemologists, the intellect cognizes general concepts and consists of two functions, namely *Shohūd* (intuition; cognition of self-evident propositions) and *Ta'aqul* (reasoning; discovery of theoretical knowledge). The intellect is of two kinds, namely theoretical and practical. The theoretical intellect cognizes the facts what is there and the practical intellect has a prescriptive or imperative function what ought or ought not to be done (Ref: Walczak, 2020).

Remarkably, what is regarded in this study refers back to the theoretical intellect. This faculty will be examined in both *T'tidāl* (Moderation) and *Al-Ifrāṭ Wa al-Tafrīṭ* (exaggeration and simplicity) statuses as follows:

- ***Hikmat* (Wisdom) as *T'tidāl* (Moderation) Side of Theoretical Intellect**

There is a controversial discussion on controlling and finding theoretical intellect into moderate status. Some Islamic scholars believe in the impossibility of managing the theoretical intellect into moderate status while others disbelieve in it. In a fairly nice explanation, the late *Mulla Mohammad Mahdi Narāqī* said,

There is no meaning for the theoretical intellect to be attributed to moderation since it is aimed to motivate people to seek for truth and encourage them to achieve unknown items through thinking. There is no meaning for the moderate status of intellectual faculty to receive knowledge or its limitation. The more theoretical intellect achieves, the more virtues are obtained and come close to perfection. Some

other scholars maintain that theoretical intellect can be attributed to moderation but based on the two following interpretations of moderation;

- *Practical intellect, faculty of anger and concupiscence be obedient for theoretical faculty.*
- *All faculties be in moderate status but obedient for the theoretical intellect and line with it (Narāqī, 2002, Vol.1: 97).*

Diverse ethical virtues are found when the faculty of intellect is managed. Many scholars in the science of *Akhlāq* (ethics) introduced *Hikmat* (wisdom) as an ethical virtue for the moderate status of the faculty of intellect. However, there will be found some vices e.g., *Balāhat* (stupidity) and *Makr* (sophistry) if the faculty of intellect deviates from moderate status toward *Al-Ifrāt Wa al-Tafrīt* (exaggeration and simplicity). In this respect, *Mulla Muhammad Mahdi*

Narāqī introduced *Hikmat* as the virtue of intellect and said,

There is a virtue for theoretical intellect which is introduced by scholars in ethics as wisdom by which we recognize all existents as they are (Ibid, p.110).

Enumerating the virtues for intellect, *Ibn Miskawayh* said,

There are some subset-virtues for intellect e.g, Tafakkur (thinking), al-Dakā' (cleverness) by which man easily finds the result, al-Dukr (reminding) by which man can image all things in his mind, and purity of mind by which man can infer what is intended to learn easily (Ibn Miskawayh, 2014, p.106).

However, other Islamic thinkers have expressed some other virtues for intellect such as the recognition of trueness and falsehood in speech, rightness and wrongness in beliefs, and beauty and ugliness in practice. The mentioned virtues are

examples of *Hikmat* that manifested in their recognition. In other words, they are not something apart from wisdom. In this regard, *Şadr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī*, known as *Mullā Şadrā*, said,

Intellect is the best faculty of the human being by which man can become the successor of Almighty Allah (SWT) in the mundane world and excel all angels through wisdom, defined as cognition about the truth of things as they are (Mullā Şadrā, 1981a: 137).

He considered wisdom as the elixir of life by which man gets a lot of goodness whenever drinks it (*Ibid: 275*). Furthermore, Almighty Allah (SWT) has repeatedly mentioned wisdom as abundant good and the objective of sending Prophets (PBUH) (*Ref: The Qur'an, 2: 269; 3: 164*).

Therefore, it is mandatory to monitor the faculty of intellect to be in moderate status from which emanates wisdom.

Wisdom is the fruit of managing the faculty of intellect by which man receives knowledge and finds cognition on the reality of all existents.

- ***Makr* (Sophistry) as *al-Ifrāt* (Exaggeration) Side of Theoretical Intellect**

If a man does not manage his/her faculty of intellect, it will sometimes incline toward *Makr* which is called *al-Jarbazah*. Sophistry is an ability to deceive others which is laid into the *al-Ifrāt* (exaggeration) side of wisdom.

Although man applies his/her intellect in sophistry, it is not appropriate to call it wisdom since s/he merges it with lies and dissimulation to mislead people. *Mulla Mohammad Mahdi Narāqī* defined sophistry in the 1st volume of his book, *Jāmi' al-Sa'ādāt* as, "Finding hidden ways to deceive others. Hence, it is vice for theoretical intellect and the most lethal factor and mortal sin" (*Narāqī, 2002, Vol.1: 426-427*).

Furthermore, concerning the vice of theoretical intellect, *Narāqī* said,

There are two vices against Hikmat (wisdom) namely, sophistry and stupidity. The first one is the al-Ifrāt (exaggeration) side of wisdom from which man utilizes his/her intellectual faculty more than what deserves to be. The second one is related to the al-Tafrīt (simplicity) side in which man ignores or ceases to benefit from intellect (Narāqī, 2002, Vol.1: 110-111).

Multiple traditions disapprove of sophistry. For instance, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

He who deceives is not a Muslim among us (Ṣadūq, 1989, 1:271).

- ***Balāhat (Stupidity) as al-Tafrīt (Simplicity) Side of Theoretical Intellect***

Stupidity is the deviated condition of intellect which means to cease working on intellect purposefully with no

defect in mind. In other words, it is a kind of non-benefit and non-control on the faculty of intellect, leading to *Jahl* (ignorance) including *al-Basīt* (simple) and *al-Murakkab* (complex) ones i.e., Simple ignorance is when a man does not know something, but he knows his ignorance. Complex ignorance is when a man is ignorant but considers himself/herself knowledgeable. They both are considered the immediate consequences of useless intellect. Additionally, some other negative results originate from ignorance e.g., *Hairat* (perplexity) and *Shak* (skepticism) (*Mullā Ṣadrā, 1981b: 200*).

Referring to the Qur'an and traditions, numerous *Maṣādīq* (extensions) would be found to condemn ignorance, irrationality, and their negative consequences. For instance, Allah (SWT) said,

“Only those seek a leave [of exemption] from you who do not believe in Allah and the Last Day, and whose hearts are in doubt, so they waver in their doubt” (The Qur'an, 9: 45).

In this respect, *Imam 'Alī* (PBUH) said,

Stupidity is an ailment that cannot be remedied and a sickness that cannot be cured (Āmadī Tamīmī, 1989: Ḥadīth 1205).

Indeed, Imam Ali (PBUH) laid stupidity and wisdom against each other to show the credibility of wisdom and the worthlessness of ignorance. He said,

The desire of a wise man is in wisdom and the ambition of an ignorant one is in stupidity (Ibid: 484).

3.2. Faculty of Ġaḍab (Anger)

To find perfection and happiness, this inner faculty of human beings has to be controlled. This faculty consists of two statuses namely, *al-'Tidāl* and *al-Ifrāt Wa al-Tafrīt*. Noticeably, the moderate side is called *Shojā'at* (bravery) while the exaggeration and simplicity sides are called *Tahavvur* (temerity) and *Jobn* (cowardice). Respectively, every one of which might be an

offspring of moral virtues and vices (Ref: *Narāqī, 2002: 111*).

- ***Shojā'at* (Bravery) as *al-'Tidāl* (Moderation) Side of the Faculty of Ġaḍab (Anger)**

Shojā'at (bravery) is a virtue originating from the moderate status of the faculty of anger. To achieve perfection, man should control his/her faculty of anger to be in moderate status.

Imam Ali (PBUH) considered *Shojā'at* an honored instinct that Allah (SWT) institutionalized within man, whom He loves the most. In this respect, Imam Ali (PBUH) said,

Generosity and bravery are honored instincts that Allah (SWT), the Glorified, institutionalizes within man, whom He loves and subjects to test (Āmadī Tamīmī, 1989: Ḥadīth 1845).

Defining *Shojā'at*, *Ibn Miskawayh* said,

“It is a virtue for the faculty anger which appears for the man when it obeys al-Nafs

al-Natiqa (rational or superior soul), and an application of which results to al-Ra'y al-Maḥmūd (admired opinion) on significant affairs. Indeed, man is not frightened to do fearful deeds when they are great actions, and patience with them is praiseworthy.” (Ibn Miskawayh, 2014:105)

Logically defining *Shojā'at*, *Narāqī* compared and contrasted it with two of its opponents i.e., temerity and cowardice. He wrote,

The opponent for temerity and cowardice is bravery. Remember the nobleness of bravery, persuade your soul to its requirements to become Malakah (permanent ability), and remove the impacts of its opponents. Shojā'at is the noblest habit of the soul, and those who are disqualified of bravery are free from manliness (Āmadī Tamīmī, 1989: Ḥadīth 253).

Hence, when a man monitors his/her faculty of anger, s/he will achieve moderate status from which would emanate many other virtues including greatness of soul, self-confidence, chivalrousness, constancy, forbearance, calmness, and physical endurance (*Ibn Miskawayh, 2014: 107*).

The author of the book *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī* has also enumerated the above-mentioned virtues within (*Tūsī, 1953: 112-113*).

- ***Tahavvur (Temerity) as al-Ifrāt (Exaggeration) Side of the Faculty of Ġaḍab (Anger)***

Temerity is an action that should be avoided due to danger, but an audacious man who blurts temerity in his acts does not avoid dangerous situations. In this respect, *Narāqī* said,

Tahavvur is to take an action that should be avoided and to expose her/himself in a dangerous situation, forbidden by 'Aql (intellect) and Shari'a including narrations and verses (Narāqī, 2002, Vol.1: 251).

Narāqī cites his claimant on disapproving *Tahavvur* in Islamic doctrines in the following verse,

“And do not cast yourselves with your own hands into destruction”
(*The Qur'an*, 2: 195).

Hence, if an audacious man casts himself with his own hands into destruction, he will lose his life, not allowed in religion. It is prohibited in religious teachings to destroy Allah's (SWT) deposit that is bestowed on man. The late *Narāqī* invoked his claims by '*Aql* (intellect) which orders us to protect ourselves from dangers and mentioned that ones who cast themselves into destruction are somehow stupid since '*Uqala* (wise men) will never expose themselves in dangerous circumstances.

- ***Jobn* (Cowardice) as *al-Tafrīt* (Simplicity) Side of the Faculty of *Ġaḍab* (Anger)**

Jobn is another extreme attribute that lies on the

simplicity side of the faculty of anger. In this case, man does not do anything unless the priority for him is revenge. *Jobn*, from one aspect, is contrary to *Shojā'at* (bravery) and from another aspect is contrary to *Tahavvur* (temerity).

Cowardice is placed on the extreme side and is a big destructive vice from which man will be attributed to some despicable features such as self-abasement, lowliness, and life terribleness. They might become lazy, complacent, and unstable in their jobs. Furthermore, people will seek his/her life and wealth. Thus, s/he will be banned from perfection and salvation. The oppressors will invade his/her life and impose various kinds of infamy on a cowardly person, who might be subjected to various curses and accusations, but careless about all things that cause infamy and shame. Also, disgraced in Shari'a, s/he will abandon his/her lofty goals (*Narāqī*, 2002: 252).

Cowardice and pusillanimity have been disapproved by the infallible Imams (PBUT) in many cases. For instance, Imam Ali (PBUH) said,

Be wary of cowardice for it is indeed disgraceful and a deficiency (Āmadī Tamīmī, 1989: Ḥadīth 272).

3.3.Faculty of Concupiscence

The faculty of concupiscence has a pivotal role in man's perfection since it helps him to control his desires and joys. Man in this faculty attracts everything pleasant and desirable including sexual ones as well as eating, drinking, wearing, etc. The faculty of concupiscence, likewise the faculties of intellect and anger, consists of two sides namely, *al-'Iṭḍāl* (moderation) and *al-Ifrāṭ Wa al-Tafrīṭ* (exaggeration and simplicity).

Noticeably, the moderate side is called '*Iffat* (chastity). In contrast, the exaggeration and simplicity sides are called *Sharah* (greediness) and *Khomūd* (subsidence) respectively, every one of which might be an offspring

of moral virtues and vices. Keeping the soul moderated in the faculty of concupiscence is more important than the two previously mentioned faculties since it deviates much from moderation toward *al-Ifrāṭ Wa al-Tafrīṭ* (Lahiji, 2021: 265).

- '*Iffat* (Chastity) as *al-'Iṭḍāl* (Moderation) Side of the Faculty of Concupiscence

To define '*Iffat* lexically and technically, the author of the book *Akhlāq-i Islāmī* wrote,

'Iffat (chastity) means to save the soul from disagreeable deeds in lexical meaning, but in Ethics, it is called for moderate status comes into being for the faculty of concupiscence and protects man from al-Ifrāṭ Wa al-Tafrīṭ (Davoodi, 2020: 142).

Numerous traditions are found to admire chastity. For instance, Imam Ali (PBUH) said,

The best worship is chastity (Narāqī, 2002, Vol.2:22).

Also,

Chastity is at the top of all good things (Āmadī Tamīmī, 1989: Ḥadīth 1168).

Enumerating the virtues for ‘Iffat, Ibn Miskawayh said,

Following chastity man can find diverse virtues like comfort, patience, generosity, freedom, contentment, gentleness, regularity, reconciliation, solemnity, best guidance and piety (Ibn Miskawayh 2014: 106).

- **Sharah (Greediness) as al-Ifrāṭ (Exaggeration) Side of the Faculty of Concupiscence**

Clarifying Sharah, the late Narāqī said, “The man obeys all desires e.g., sexual desires, appetite for eating and drinking, property accumulation, etc. It is also called extreme avidity for eating and having sex. Hence, greediness is more general than other vices for the faculty of concupiscence and their origin (Narāqī, 2002, Vol.2: 17).

Disgracing Sharah, several verses of the Qur’an and narrations have been

mentioned. Disapproving Sharah and introducing Jews as more greedy than pagans in mundane life, Allah (SWT) said,

“Surely, you will find them the greediest for life, of all people even the idolaters. Each of them is eager to live a thousand years, though it would not deliver him from the punishment, were he to live [that long]. And Allah watches what they do” (The Qur’an, 2: 96).

In this respect, Imam Ali (PBUH) said,

A greedy man never finds relaxing (Āmadī Tamīmī, 1989: Ḥadīth 6601).

- **Khomūd (Subsidence) as al-Tafrīt (Simplicity) Side of the Faculty of Concupiscence**

Khomūd means to be listless and lassitude to look for necessary enjoyments even if ones permitted by religion and intellect (Ṭūsī, 1953: 120).

Khomūd is a kind of suppression against the faculty

of concupiscence in which a kind of deficiency in living, eating, sexual desires, and so on would be found. In addition, it contrasts the correct path of Shari'a and a deviation from the right line of *Takwīn* (creation).

Noticeably, Allah (SWT) has entrusted this faculty to man to benefit it in its right path toward perfection, whereas a shortcoming within causes numerous diseases and cuts off generations, which is against Allah's (SWT) will. Furthermore, innumerable traditions encourage man to provide food to have the power to worship Allah (SWT), acquire knowledge and attain moral virtues, and benefit from this blessing to make a family and enjoy sexual relations rightly (Taftazani, 1988, Vol.3: 346; Jorjani, 1907, Vol.6: 130).

Lifestyle

lifestyle is the typical way of life of an individual, group, or culture. Indeed, a relatively specific model of behaviors and culture distinguishes people

from each other (Bayengani et al, 2013: 61).

Remarkably, the aforementioned ethical principles impact and direct the way of people's lives. Anthony Giddens defined a lifestyle and said,

A lifestyle can be defined as a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfill utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity (Ref: Giddens, 2006: 81).

Defining lifestyle in detail, including the manner of living for individuals in the community and encompassing objective and mental affairs such as beliefs and values, Bayengani said,

Lifestyle is a relatively harmonious and coherent set of all the objective and mental affairs of an individual's or group's life. It consists of objective affairs such as possesses, behavioral models, social relations, consumption,

leisure activities, clothing, eating habits, home decoration, etc. It also includes some mental actions like attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, worldviews, tendencies, values and preferences, etc (Ref: Bayengani, 2013: 46).

This query seeks to mention that lifestyle is a set of relatively stable behavioral models, which includes man's attitudes, tendencies, and behaviors to achieve a goal. The behavioral models are influenced by beliefs and moral values, playing pivotal roles in the objective life in the community including models of social relations, wearing clothes, type of entertainment, eating habits, etc. We will examine the aforementioned items to prove their impacts on the lifestyle in the following:

1. Social Relations

The quality of interactions among people within a society characterizes social relations. Noticeably, Islamic ethical perspectives are entirely different from Hedonism in

the relationship between men and women, boys and girls, etc. According to Hedonism, pleasure plays a central role in relationships, while in Islam they are based on a structure introduced by Shari'a. Hence, people should control their souls to be obedient to Allah (SWT) and to avoid the consequences of its non-controlling on the day of judgment.

A kind of limitation is regarded in the relationship among individuals in Islam i.e., it is sometimes *Halāl* (permitted) and sometimes *Harām* (prohibited), while the first one is advised and admitted, but the second one is blamed and prohibited. In contrast, no limitation is found for relations in Hedonism. Verily, Shari'a determines a kind of relation in the family, with neighbors and people in the community, and introduces particular rights. For instance, as common rights for husband and wife, Islam introduced emotional rights, geniality, cheerfulness, respect,

neatness, cooperation, and loyalty, whereas some specific rights presented for them as well such as guardianship, paying alimony and dowry, etc. Unlike Hedonism, Humanism, and Liberalism, Islamic doctrines do not only determine the relationship among individuals in family and neighbors but also their relations in society is considered too (Ref: Khajegir & Afroogh, 2018).

For example, concerning the relationship with neighbors, Imam Ali (PBUH) said,

Up to forty houses are neighbors on four sides (Hurr 'Amili, 1995, Vol.2: 132).

Thus, Muslims should care about their neighbors. In this respect, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

Gabriel has continued to strongly recommend me to be kind to my neighbor until I thought that he would make him among my heirs (Ibn Abī Jumhūr, 1983, Vol.1: 256).

Pleasantness is another right that should be considered

in Muslim relations with neighbors. In this respect, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said,

Whoever believes in Allah (SWT) and the Day of Judgement should not harm his neighbor (Noori, 1988: 423).

2. Wearing Clothes

Since a particular design of clothes shows man's esthetic sense and preference to look attractive within, his style of wearing is in harmony with his beliefs on the universe and hereafter. There is an interrelation among beliefs, moral values, and people's wearing clothes because Imam Ali (PBUH) said,

Uprightness of the exteriors is a symbol of the soundness of the inner conscience (Āmadī Tamīmī, 1989: Hadīth 5805).

Hence, there is a contradiction between believing in Islamic doctrines and wearing clothes like humanists, materialists, and hedonists who cut off God from

their lives. However, some unconscious people, who face identity crises and do not know how to harmonize their lifestyle with their beliefs, may act in the mentioned contradiction. Remarkably, religion does not determine the form and shape of clothes but expresses the criteria in which the standard of clothing is considered to protect man from inclination toward immorality and degeneration. In this respect, Almighty Allah (SWT) said,

“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the faithful to draw closely over themselves their chadors [when going out]. That makes it likely for them to be recognized and not be troubled, and Allah is all-forgiving, all-merciful” (The Qur’an, 33: 59).

Accordingly, the criteria determined that faithful women are not allowed to come in public without *Hijab*. The Qur’an does not state the

form of a *Hijab* including wearing a *Chador*, *Burqa*, etc, but orders women to cover their head, neck, as well as body up to wrist and ankle, and avoid wearing abnormal, strange, and attractive clothes to *non-Mahram*.

3. Entertainment

Since Muslims are not allowed to enjoy *Harām* (forbidden) kind of entertainment, they benefit from particular ones that are far different compared to materialists, hedonists, and liberalists. On the one hand, some entertainment and recreation combined with things prohibited in Islam. No matter what the intention may be, it is not permissible if entertainment involves drinking alcohol, using drugs, gambling, and listening to frivolous and licentious music (Ref: *The Qur’an*, 5:90).

On the other hand, human beings require diversity and recreation for them to continue their lives and have high spirits. Humdrumness will curtail their daily

activities and will even harm their spirituality. The recreation and entertainment that do not lead man astray from the right path and do not cause him to fall into sin are not only permissible but are also completely approved and endorsed by the religion.

Therefore, Muslims do not entertain prohibited pleasure and enjoyable acts but rather spend their spare time in line with their beliefs because they believe in the Day of Judgment in which man receives either a reward or punishment for deeds during his lifetime.

4. Eating Habits

What and how to eat is directed in the Qur'an and traditions. Unlike hedonists, humanists, and materialists, Muslims cannot turn a blind eye to their faith in eating whatever is tasty and enjoyable and drinking whatever is desirable, rather they have to consider permitted and prohibited

foods. In this respect, Allah (SWT) said,

*“O apostles! Eat of the good things and act righteously. Indeed I know best what you do”
(The Qur'an, 23: 51);
“O you who have faith! Eat of the good things We have provided you, and thank Allah, if it is Him that you worship”
(The Qur'an, 2: 172).*

Hence, Islamic instructions determine the lifestyle of believers since they forbid them from eating foods that are ceremonially unclean. For example, believers are prohibited from eating the flesh of dogs, bears, cheetahs, rabbits, cats, cockroaches, crocodiles, crows, eagles, and elephants. These instructions distinguish Muslims' eating habits from others. Some divine commandments present the quality of eating and drinking e.g., Muslims are recommended to wash their hands in advance, begin eating with a little salt, eat slowly, not have too much food, not eat hot food, not speak during eating, and end it with salt too.

These recommendations distinguish Muslims eating habits from the unbelievers (*Ref: The Qur'an, 6: 145; 16: 114-116, 5: 3-5, 6: 118-121; 5: 87-90, 7: 31, 23: 51; 2: 168, 40: 79*).

Analytical Review

Religious ethics have a significant impact on individual lifestyles in the contemporary era. Many religions provide a framework for moral and ethical decision-making, guiding individuals in navigating complex ethical issues and shaping their personal choices. These principles influence various aspects of life, such as relationships, work, consumption, and personal values.

For instance, religious principles often emphasize the importance of compassion, forgiveness, and helping those in need, which can motivate individuals to engage in charitable work and social activism. Similarly, religious beliefs about marriage, family, and sexuality can shape personal relationships and family structures. It's important to note that the specific impacts of religious ethics on individual lifestyles vary depending on the individual's religious tradition, personal interpretation, and other cultural and social factors.

Table 1. Ethical Principles & Individual Lifestyle

Ethical Principles								
Theocentrism								
Resurrection								
Soul Control								
Intellect			Anger			Concupiscence		
<i>Ifrāt</i>	<i>T'idāl</i>	<i>Tafrīt</i>	<i>Ifrāt</i>	<i>T'idāl</i>	<i>Tafrīt</i>	<i>Ifrāt</i>	<i>T'idāl</i>	<i>Tafrīt</i>
Sophistry	Wisdom	Stupidity	Temerity	Bravery	Cowardice	Greediness	Chastity	Subsidence
Individual Lifestyle								
Social Relations		Wearing Clothes		Entertainment		Eating Habits		

Conclusion

In the contemporary world where various options are available to lead man applying a lifestyle derived from welfare and Westernization, we are in dire need of rethinking and expanding consciousness to live according to transcendental values and beliefs. Some schools of thought such as Hedonism, Liberalism, and Humanism incline man towards absolute freedom in which material joy and pleasure play the central role.

In contrast, the school of Islam invites man to live based on ethical principles and harmonize his lifestyle with values and doctrines by which man can find perfection and salvation. In this respect, man is required to benefit from believing in the oneness of Almighty Allah (SWT) and the Day of Judgment as well as controlling the soul that influences people's lifestyles.

Controlling of the soul necessitates attaining *Hikmat* (wisdom), *Shojā'at* (bravery), and *Iffat* (chastity). They are

accessible through avoiding the faculty of intellect toward *Balāhat* (stupidity) and *Makr* (sophistry), the faculty of anger toward *Tahavvur* (temerity) and *Jobn* (cowardice) as well as the faculty of concupiscence toward *Sharah* (greediness) and *Khomūd* (Subsidence). Furthermore, man also needs to manage his deeds toward achieving perfection i.e., s/he must harmonize his beliefs with his/her lifestyle including social relations, wearing clothes, entertainment, eating habits, etc.

Incorporating the principles of religious ethics into an individual's lifestyle, especially in the modern era, can foster personal growth, social responsibility, and community cohesion. As suggestions, we can embrace compassion and empathy, promote justice and fairness, foster community engagement, cultivate personal integrity, practice environmental stewardship, promote peace and nonviolence, encourage lifelong learning, integrate mindfulness and spirituality, and promote health and well-being.

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