

PREFACE

Islām is a complete code of life as it embraces all aspects of life comprehensively. It is not a collection of certain rituals but a complete system that offers guidance to believers for dealing with life as a whole. It provides guidance for grappling with social, economic, political and ethical problems of life.

The Qur'ān says;

اليوم اكملت لكم دينكم واتممت عليكم نعمتي ورضيت لكم الاسلام ديناً

“This day have I perfected for you, your religion, and have completed My Favour to you and I have approved Islām as the religion for you.”

(Al-Mā'idah 5:3)

As it is clear, that Islām being a special code of life, is a complete ethical system and a great moral religion of the world. All its laws and injunctions are based on the most equitable and social moral foundation. It places before us an ideal that has an irresistible force and demands from its followers and votaries such a conduct which has been clearly indicated and explained in the Holy Qur'ān and in the Prophetic Ḥadīth. Islām is not concerned with only one of the many departments of human life, it covers all the departments and life itself as a whole. It is an all-embracing system, a complete code of life, bearing on and including every phase of human activity and every aspect of human conduct. It is not an unshapely pile of concepts and theories. It is not an amorphous mass of abstract rules and laws. It is not a plethora of imaginary rules with no concern with pragmatic life. It is a religion that of course, places the maximum premium on action and encourages positive conduct and positive action, as there is no cleavage between theory and practice in it. Therefore, the conduct and action of a Muslim radiate from the hard rock of his faith. Moreover, Islāmic ethical system and moral philosophy is originated from the Divine revelation, and not

from the man's philosophic speculation. The highest end of the moral life is the attainment of pleasure of Allāh. Qur'ān says;

ورضوان من الله أكبر

“And the pleasure of Allāh is the greatest of all blessings.”(Al-Tawbah 9:72)

Allāh has introduced the moral excellence of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Holy Qur'ān in the following words;

وانك لعل خلق عظيم

“And verily, you possess the best of the manners.”(Al-An'ām 68:4)

The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), Himself says;

انما بعثت لاتتم مكارم الاخلاق

“Certainly, I have been sent to complete the good behaviors.”¹

So, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has stressed very much on good behavior. He (peace be upon him) further says;

مَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ يُوضَعُ فِي الْمِيزَانِ أَنْثَقُلُ مِنْ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ، وَإِنَّ صَاحِبَ حُسْنِ الْخُلُقِ
لَيَبْدُلُهُ بِهِ دَرَجَةً صَاحِبِ الصَّوْمِ وَالصَّلَاةِ

“The heaviest thing to be placed in the balance of a believing slave on the Day of Judgment will be good

1 Mālik, Ibn Anas, Al-Muwaṭṭā' (Bayrūt: Dār Ihya' al-Turāth al-Arabī, 1965 AD) Chapter: 104, حدیث حسن الخلق

behaviors. So, the man of good moral gets the position which is obtained by the *Nafl Fast* and *Nafl Ṣalāt*.”²

Islām has stressed much to gain the moral excellence, and the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) also preached for good conduct. The philosophers of Islām, therefore, paid sufficient heed to the science of ethics. They have tried their best to chalk out their moral philosophy from the Islāmic teachings directly and finally they succeeded in getting the basic infrastructure of their moral philosophy from the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth. Imam Ghazālī, Shāh Walī-ullāh, Ibn Miskawayh, Allāmah Muḥammad Iqbāl etc., worked on these lines and have constructed the edifice of their moral philosophy on provided foundations of the Holy Qur’ān and Ḥadīth.

Though, on the other hand, Greeks (especially Socrates, Plato and Aristotle) rendered varied theories and enough literature about ethics, yet these were only theoretical discussions that were devoid of comprehensiveness. No doubt, Greeks were, like in the other fields of knowledge, pioneers in ethics too, in the known history of mankind. But they could not create consensus among themselves on even a single theory of morality. Sophists devastated the grounds of objectivity by making the morality as a matter of individual’s perceptions and choices. Thus, they strengthened the grounds of subjectivity in all fields of knowledge.

Before Sophists, most of the philosophers, engaged in hot cosmological issues. They neglected the ethical problems and issues of human beings. There were only three philosophers namely Pythagoras, Heraclitus and Democritus who were indulged in the science of ethics too, along with the metaphysical issues but their views of ethics are imperfect and incomplete.

So far as the ethics of Socrates’ school of thought is concerned; it is also devoid of universality and comprehensiveness. Same is the case of Stoicism and

2 Tirmidhī, Al-Sunan, Book: الايمان, Chapter: في استكمال الايمان, (Lahore: Fārūqī Kutub Khana, n.d) 2:85

Epicureanism where we find the two diametrically opposite philosophies of morality that are consisted on the opposite extreme views. Epicureanism neglects the importance of natural rules whereas Stoicism ignores the significance of passions and pleasures in life.

No doubt, the Greek philosophers approached the subject from a wide variety of perspectives and have produced various theories that both attract, (due to having some plausible elements with them) and repel (due to having some extreme elements with them) to the thoughtful reader, at the same time. But, here lies a need to stop and think over this plethora of Greek ethical theories objectively and find out what is the true position of Greek morality in the present world? What are its main sources and origins along with its effects on the world?

On the other hand, it is also needed to have a critical look on the moral philosophy of Islām and to find out what are the effects of the ethical views of Islām on the world? Which is the most complete and the most comprehensive ethical system of the world? Is it Islām or Greek? An objective comparison of the ethical system of Islām and Greek philosophy is deadly needed.

So, for this purpose, in this thesis, an objective comparison of the ethical systems of Islām and Greek philosophy has been undertaken. It has been established that Islām is the only religion of the world which has the most complete and the most comprehensive ethical system. Whereas the ethical system of Greek is incomplete, imperfect and defective, as it does not encompass all the aspects of human life.

I have divided my research thesis into five chapters. In the first chapter, I have tried to render the meaning of ethics, origin and definition of ethics in the light of the views of the various Muslims, Greek and Western philosophers and thinkers. Moreover, the subject matter of ethics, its importance, need and objectives have been explained comprehensively. What are the various ethical teachings in the Semetic and non-Semetic religions of the world have also been rendered in a lucid manner.

In the second chapter, a study of the evolution of ethics in Greek philosophy, different periods of ethics and the special characteristics of the ethics of each period have been rendered. An honest effort has been made to render the comprehensive study of the Greek ethics from mythological period to Decline period, and from Thales to Socrates and then from Socrates to Epicurus in this chapter. Whereas in the third chapter, the ethical views of Muslim philosophers have been rendered. The ethical views of Al-Kindī, Al-Fārābī, Ibn Miskawayh, Al-Ghazālī, Shāh Walīullāh and Iqbāl have been rendered in detail. In the fourth chapter, the ethical teachings of Islām and its philosophy have been rendered in detail. An effort has been made to reveal the comprehensiveness and universality of the ethical system of Islām in this chapter. The structure of ethical system of Islām, its sources, summum-bonum, end, objectives, kinds of ethical teachings, the philosophical principles and religious bases of Islāmic ethics, have all been rendered in a lucid style.

In the fifth chapter, an honest effort has been made to render an objective comparative study of the ethical systems of Islām and Greek philosophy and has shown/ revealed, proved the comprehensiveness, universality, completeness, and the effectiveness of the ethical system of Islām rationally and logically. Moreover, the imperfect and defective ethical teachings of Greek ethics have also been pointed out without any bias. It is hoped that it will be considered as positive effort and will be appreciated.