



## **THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC VALUES IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

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### **Abstract**

The article discusses about the role of Islam in human development. The importance and tasks of Islamic values in the development of national morals and manners were analyzed, and it was proposed to apply these values to the upbringing and education process of the young generation.

**Keywords:** Islamic values, values immunity, nationality, perfect human, values viability, values prevention, moral virtue, language education, order manners, social needs.

### **Introduction**

The concept of educating the perfect human being has remained one of the enduring subjects of discourse for millennia. In the process of attaining human perfection, not only universal and national values but also religious values play a crucial role. In particular, Islam stands out in this regard due to its ability to harmonize with universal principles on the matter of the perfect human.

Today, the concept of perfection specific to our people, along with moral values and ethical norms, is grounded in the ideas of the Holy Qur'an and Hadith. While the notion of perfection encompasses Islamic values, historical heritage, and interpersonal relationships, it does not negate universal principles. The national values of our people, formed over a long historical journey, are in harmony with our understanding of human perfection. Thus, the concept of perfection in our context emerges at the intersection of three paths. Human perfection is not a new concept for us; in fact, it has long been revered by our people as a lofty value. The Eastern understanding of perfection has been expressed not only in our epics, tales, and legends, but also in numerous works dedicated to ethical norms. A symbolic image of Eastern values has been formed and presented as an ideal model.



Although the term "value" has only recently entered academic usage as a scientific category, the historical roots of values are deeply ancient. Since the beginning of humanity, objects, events, and processes have held certain meanings, and some of these have possessed intrinsic worth. This value may increase, become more refined, or be supplemented over time—or conversely, it may diminish under the influence of historical forces. Those elements of value that are beneficial in human activity are preserved and passed down through the centuries. This applies not only to material objects but also to spiritual values and lifestyles. They serve the benefit of humanity.

Indeed, many universal values were initially specific to particular ethnic groups or nations. The vitality of values can be influenced by both internal and external factors. In either case, the "immunity" of values is activated in an effort to preserve the existing value system. As an example of an external factor, one might cite invasions, while an internal factor could be the detachment of youth from their national identity and their susceptibility to foreign influences. In both situations, values require preventive measures and protection.

The unifying red thread among all values is the concept of the Perfect Human Being. The perfect human can only emerge within a perfected society. Spirituality is recognized as a key mechanism that ensures the development of both society and the individual. Our national spirituality, in turn, is inconceivable without Islam.

In the majority of literature related to this subject—whether religious or secular—the spiritual essence of the individual is never interpreted in isolation from society. If we focus on the individual, we find that spirituality is inherent to human existence. In the Glossary of Key Concepts of Spirituality, the human being is described as a synthesis of three interdependent components: body, soul, and spirituality. When defining the perfect human, the book states: "The doctrine of the perfect human being envisions the individual attaining maturity from spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical perspectives."

As previously mentioned, Islamic teachings approach issues of morality and physical being in a comprehensive manner, shaping a distinct system of values. These values are crucial for individuals in determining their place in society.

In his work *Tasawwuf*, Najmiddin Komilov defines perfect human beings as the conscience of society. However, he considers the physical aspects of perfection—and the values associated with them—to be of secondary importance. In Sufism,



when discussing theology and union with God, the body is rarely mentioned. This is because, in the face of divine power, the body is merely a form or image.

The Qur'an's references to the human being can also be interpreted as references to the perfect human. Verses such as "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam" (Surah Al-Isra, 17:70) and "Indeed, We created man in the best of stature" (Surah At-Tin, 95:4) cannot be applied to all people indiscriminately. From this, it follows that the primary dimension of perfection is linked to values related to the human soul and spirituality.

The book also cites Azizziddin Nasafi, who wrote: "...the perfect human is one in whom the following four qualities have reached completion: noble speech, noble action, noble character, and knowledge."

What is particularly noteworthy is that many Sufi orders in Central Asia—especially the futuwwa (spiritual chivalry) tradition—placed significant emphasis on the discipline of the body. The body was seen as a means through which the soul could ascend from the realm of annihilation (*fanā*) to the realm of permanence (*baqā*). Husayn Va'iz Kashifi, who lived and wrote during the Timurid era, included bodily purity among the conditions of human perfection. However, such purity is not limited to merely washing one's hands and face. Physical defilement could also occur through the consumption of illicit (*harām*) food, and individuals engaged in such acts were believed to be barred from receiving spiritual truths. As one expression states: "Consuming what is unlawful is severing the bond of futuwwa." The idea that "One who reaches the people will not fall short of reaching the Truth" forms the core of *Futuvvatnāma-yi Sultānī* and helps define a person's place within society. In this work, Kashifi writes:

"Hakim Abdulmajid Sanā'ī says in his *Ḥadīqat al-Ḥaqīqa* that companionship is the result of etiquette (*adab*), and etiquette is the result of respect, and respect is the result of purity, and purity is the result of the heart, and the heart is the treasury of intellect, and intellect is the treasury of secrets, and secrets are the treasury of gnosis (*ma'rifa*)..."

The path to gnosis begins with being an 'ārif—a gnostic. Since 'irfān (mystical knowledge) is the key to all secrets, the solution to the question of the perfect human being must be sought there. A gnostic is not just an individual within society; they embody not only acquired knowledge but also deeply internalized and comprehended wisdom. A person may be a scholar of their time, yet still fail to



grasp the essence of longstanding values. Such individuals perceive only one side of the issue. Their inability to internalize spiritual knowledge becomes an obstacle to perfection. One may renounce worldly concerns and burn with longing for divine union, but without understanding the power of language in ‘irfān, this longing becomes obstructed.

Therefore, Abdulhakim Shar‘ī Juzjānī writes in his work *Tasawwuf and the Human Being*:

"Sometimes, the term ‘ārif is used in a sense that is superior to dervish and Sufi."

This is because in all Sufi orders, the path to divine union is often presented as a one-dimensional approach.

The ‘ārif (gnostic) understands the significance of values. He acknowledges their influence within society, interprets them, and seeks to apply them. The question of unity with the people is grounded in consciousness, and the fate of the ‘ārif becomes intertwined with the fate of the community. The ‘ārif does not deviate from the path shown by Islam and defined by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He regards the actions of the Prophet’s Companions as core values and strives to fulfill them perfectly. He understands that in Islam, human perfection (kāmāl) cannot be achieved without adherence to Sharī‘ah. Indeed, the principal path to truth begins with the Sharī‘ah itself.

Those who treat tasawwuf merely as a matter of the soul tend to view Sharī‘ah as merely the outward form of Islam, treating it as a secondary element. However, without Sharī‘ah, it is impossible to fully grasp Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). As scholars have noted, when discussing legal rulings, it is not the words of the Sufi masters that prevail, but rather the rulings of the jurists (fuqahā’), which demonstrates this undeniable reality.

In his work *A Conception of Sufism*, Shaykh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf presents the issue of perfection in Islam through the lens of the Sufi orders. Perfection, first and foremost, is unity—unity with other human beings, with society, with nature, and with the universe. In the pursuit of truth, this unity is often fragmented. He poses a critical question: “Who benefits from dividing believers into separate groups such as the people of Sharī‘ah, the people of Ṭarīqah, the people of Ma‘rifah, and the people of Ḥaqīqah?” In reality, there is only one truth. Thus, even the concept of perfection is not absolute in itself. This leads us to ask: which form of perfection are we truly seeking?



The answer lies in the fact that perfection in Islam is the very path walked by the Prophet—his chosen method and model of conduct. The framework for this path is Islam itself.

It has been over thirteen centuries since we became acquainted with the religion of Islam. During this time, numerous values rooted in our faith have developed in conjunction with the national identity of Central Asia. These values have become deeply embedded in our national spirituality, way of life, educational system, and even in our economic relations. Peace, social etiquette, moral beauty, and linguistic discipline have emerged as fundamental conditions of human perfection.

First and foremost, it is impossible to overlook the elevated position that the concept of peace holds in Islam. In fact, the very name of the religion itself reflects this notion. Islam denounces conflicts, discord, and all forms of strife. Its sacred scripture proclaims: “But if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also]...” (Qur’an 8:61), clearly demonstrating the religion’s emphasis on peaceful resolution. A true Muslim does not harm others—neither in intention nor in action. This principle resonates with the millennia-old values of the peoples of Turan. Consequently, the word “peace” recurs frequently in their prayers and expressions of goodwill.

According to the hadith literature, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was once asked: “O Messenger of Allah, who is the best among the Muslims?” He replied: “He is the one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe.” This prophetic tradition further underscores Islam’s profound emphasis on peace and nonviolence.

In Islam, the promotion of peace is not only regarded as a crucial element in the spiritual perfection of the individual, but also as a fundamental criterion for the development of society and the prosperity of the nation. This understanding has led to the discussion and institutionalization of such values at the state level. If we consider the accomplishments of Khoja Ahrar Vali, who effectively utilized Islamic teachings to resolve conflicts among the Timurid princes, we observe a novel approach within the Naqshbandi order. The principle of the order, rooted in lawful labor and the spiritual satisfaction derived from it, was elevated to the level of political doctrine as a requirement for the ideal human being. As previously emphasized, the ideal of the perfect person is directly connected to a flourishing homeland. Where internal strife prevails, peace vanishes.



This reformist spirit within the Sufi path was, above all, a response to the demands of the time, aimed at instilling a sense of forgiveness in rulers. As expressed in the tradition: “No matter how great the sin, the reward for forgiveness is even greater.” Islam, being a religion of peace, actively encourages the widespread dissemination of morality and ethical behavior among all sectors of society. It emphasizes that every righteous act is not done solely for the sake of God, but in fact, for the individual’s own benefit. Indeed, if we contemplate deeply on our moral conduct and ethical norms, we see that they are indispensable for living in a community as social beings. Yet not everyone comprehends this essence. Some mistakenly believe they act solely for the sake of God. However, when one realizes that the Almighty has no need for these actions and that they are essential for one’s own perfection, one truly begins to appreciate the exalted status of God.

Islamic etiquette is a call to peace and harmony, and this call is rooted in the very essence of the religion. The word *adab*—commonly pronounced *odob* in our language—is derived from the Arabic root *ma’daba*, which originally signified a feast to which people are invited. Likewise, *adab* refers to a spiritual feast to which all people are continuously invited, and for this reason, it bears such a name.

For a person striving toward spiritual perfection (*kamolot*), good character is the essence of beauty. Just as unusual or unnatural beings provoke fear and astonishment among people, bad behavior within society stands out prominently, leaving a negative impression on others. In the ethical teachings of Islam, the spiritual development of the human being is given the highest priority. This, of course, does not imply a denial of physical well-being. Respect for elders, kindness toward the young, honoring one’s parents, refraining from greed for worldly riches, avoiding envy of others’ possessions, and treating women with dignity—recognizing them as beings deserving of compassion—are all considered social norms of behavior that require spiritual and moral maturity from the individual.

In the 15th and early 16th centuries, Husayn Va‘iz Kashifi, in his work *Futuvvatnamayi Sultoniy* (or *The Treatise on Chivalry and Noble Conduct*), enumerated the manners and ethics expected of members of the Sufi path. In doing so, he effectively described the ideal conduct of a Muslim. Importantly, these values are not alien to our national mentality. For instance, his assertion—“Know that the honor of humanity lies in speech, and one who does not observe the etiquette of speech is deprived of this honor. Speech must always serve virtue, and it should be



truthful and just. If not, it is better to remain silent"—demonstrates the profound importance placed by our people on the cultivation of language and speech manners.

In essence, what is presented as the etiquette of the Sufi path in this text is fully aligned with broader principles of social ethics. This reflects a deep cultural tradition in which linguistic refinement and moral restraint are interwoven into the very fabric of communal life.

Perfection (*kamolot*) encompasses physical well-being, spiritual maturity, and moral excellence. For this reason, in raising children, our ancestors acknowledged that alongside physical health, spiritual education was of paramount importance. In particular, within *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism), great emphasis was placed on spiritual development. As a discipline primarily concerned with the inner state (*ḥāl*), *tasawwuf* aims to cultivate the perfect human being—someone who not only benefits society but is also held in high esteem by the community. This principle was foundational to the Naqshbandi order. In the Naqshbandi spiritual program, passed down from Khwaja Abdulkhaliq Ghijduwani, we find the concept of “*khalwat dar anjuman*” (solitude in the crowd), which demonstrates that a Sufi who attains closeness to the Divine should not separate from the people. Thus, perfection is realized in unity with the people. Seeking closeness to God while remaining disconnected from humanity is undesirable even in the eyes of the Almighty. If spiritual realization benefits only the individual and not the community, it cannot be regarded as complete.

The highest mark of perfection lies in treading the path of Truth (*Ḥaqq*) while bringing benefit to others. The more a person’s words, actions, and intentions serve others, guide the misguided to righteousness, and demonstrate self-sacrifice in the cause of truth, the more perfect that person is deemed to be.

Perfection is directly connected to upbringing within the family. An individual enters society with the moral foundation they received at home. A child’s behavior in public often reflects the values instilled by their family. The educational environment of our families is deeply rooted in Islamic principles. "The communication etiquette, compassion, generosity, modesty, and sense of honor cultivated within Uzbek family traditions not only fulfill a pedagogical function but also play a pivotal role in fostering human virtues and shaping the morally upright individual."



It is through values that a person's inner world, aspirations, and ideals are revealed. The home serves as the primary environment in which these values are nurtured, while the means of transmitting them is education. For this reason, Eastern families place special emphasis on upbringing. Our system of moral instruction is fundamentally based on Islamic teachings. In fact, the distinguishing feature of sharia compared to secular legal systems is its focus on moral education. Our values do not merely address individual or social needs; they also give considerable importance to divine concerns.

The expression "the servant beloved by Allah" refers not to material wealth, but to spiritual excellence. In our culture, this phrase is applied to individuals whose hearts are close to God. The hope for Paradise and the pursuit of divine approval are aspirations that define the life of every devout Muslim. Within the family structure, this ideal is never forgotten. It serves as a guiding principle in the upbringing of children, ensuring that their moral development is not only holistic but also spiritually meaningful.

In today's world, where globalization is affecting all spheres of life, attempting to "arm" the younger generation against it has proven ineffective. History offers numerous examples of this reality. For instance, Japan's encounter with the rapidly modernizing world once shocked the nation's educational system and deeply challenged its national values. Yet, this resilient people managed to confront the upheaval successfully. We cannot claim that this issue is irrelevant for us. In the present era, it is essential to cultivate in young people the capacity to live in harmony with modern times while being nourished by national values and fortified by historical consciousness.

To achieve this, we must demonstrate to them the foundational significance of our national values and the teachings of Islam as pathways to human perfection (kamolot). First and foremost, it is important to explain that national identity is built upon a strong historical foundation, and that Islamic teachings—which promote eternal virtues—regard perfection in the transient world as a prerequisite to attaining eternal success. Perfection, in this sense, is a holistic concept encompassing the harmony of physical health and spiritual maturity.



## Conclusions

In conclusion, Islam plays an irreplaceable role in shaping the concept of perfection among today's youth. Islamic values have become so deeply ingrained in our consciousness that we mistakenly assume they have been lost amidst contemporary global crises. In reality, these values continue to reside within the deeper layers of our awareness; they simply require a measure of guidance and revitalization.

Presenting Islam not only as a system of belief but also as a way of life—a standard of morality and ethics—does not obstruct the modern young person striving to live in step with the times. On the contrary, it enriches their experience. From a philosophical standpoint, Islam, with its social and ethical essence, advances the idea of the perfect human being based on the principles of humanism and goodness. It is imperative to instill this ideal into the younger generation, with the family playing a central role in this process. For among Uzbeks, the family continues to serve as the core institution for preserving and transmitting values.

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