Religiosity for Promotion of Behavior: Role of Islamic Worships in Moral Development of Muslim Youth

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Abstract

The question of moral rectitude and upbringing of youth in the current social arena is the contemporary discovery attributed to social and family norms that also undergo change due to social and economic reasons. Consequently, deferring levels of piety become more or less acceptable according to an individual's surroundings and age. The study was done to determine the association between religiosity and behaviors likely to improve the moral, social and psychological habits of young Muslims. The discussion of the article contextualizes the effects of observing practices of Islam on a larger scale. A sample study of this research can be used as evidence to counter the contemporary environment which inevitably generates contradictions for young people. The contradictions result in uncertainty and materialistic atmosphere which does not cater to their spiritual needs and the requirements to develop as the youth of Ummah. Yet, we cannot stop or avoid the negative channels and their effects prevailing on the internet. We can; however, extend the positive spiritual energy in youth that is only possible through careful observance of religious practices comprising regular prayers, fasting, charity and pilgrimage (Hajj). The current apathy of our youth towards the religious injunctions may be attributed to social and family norms that are in some cases relative to the economic conditions and social backup. This will evaluate and assess the way and means of effective inlaying of moral fields where our young people can improve their moral aptitude and rectitude. The impasse of current moral turpitude can be shattered with the bounding relation of human activity and Islamic ritual.

Keywords: Religiosity, Promotion of Behavior, Spirituality, Training, Youth, Rituals, Morals

Introduction

The world has experienced continuous occurrences of record immoral behavior amongst the youth over the years. The issue is even greater in western countries, especially in America and Europe. When it comes to the causes of behavioral change in youth,

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intellectuals and religious scholars have multiple opinions regarding morality e.g. family values, code of ethics and social traditions in terms of norms and customs.[1]

Youth and the question of moral behavior are prominent social discourses as youth's perception of right and wrong impacts the society deeply. Therefore, it will not be wrong to say that youth's understanding of morality has implications in shaping the society's perception regarding youth's participation, citizenship, 'education' and governance and how they are corrected if they cross the threshold of morals set forth by the society and religion. Christian Smith proposes that religion may exert positive constructive influences in the lives of youth through three major ways: firstly, through moral directives because religions promote specific moral directions of self-control through religious traditions; secondly, religion provides youth with skills of learning such as coping with pressure and stress; thirdly, society and religion provide organizational ties, capital, and networks that support the youth.[2] Religiosity is one of the psychosocial determinants which suggest that religion may affect the health of people by promoting healthy practices and enhancing social support through offering comfort in situations of stress.[3]

But on what basis are such practices and policies built and how do they reflect the needs of the social lives of the young generation, who recognize only fear of punishment as a guiding element, and thus without that fear, they do not abstain from dire actions. Living by their passion, they pursue the pleasures appropriate to their character developed over the years through the means available/provided to them; hence, making them avoid the opposite pains and subsequent achievements of virtuosity. Moreover, they lack the concept of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it.[4] The fundamental nature of this challenge should be addressed with reason and strategy, which requires our understanding of moral philosophy and notions of youth development and how issues of morality and their solution can be made reasonable, logical and comprehensible.

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[1]Abdullah Al-Khalifah, "Religiosity in Islam as a Protective Mechanism Against Criminal Temptation," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 11, no. 1 (1994): 141-156.

[2] Christain Smith, Theorizing Religious Effects Among American Adolescents," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 1 (2003): 56-72.

[3] H. G Koenig, Dewey Bernard Larson, Susan S. Larson, "Religion and Coping with Serious Medical Illness", *The Annals of Pharmacotherapy* 35, no.1 (2001): 78-86.

[4] Sheila Brown, *Understanding Youth Crime: Listening to Youth?* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998), 129.

In all contexts, adults apprehend a variety of negative emotions. The removal and punishment of abusive, immoral, sinning and neglected youth from their places is easier than providing a safe and congenial home/academic environment for the misguided young people. This safe congenial environment, however, should include more multifaceted arrangements of daily life.[5] Unlike boarding schools' approach of including just care for food and shelter, our approach should be to show practical concern and impart positive change that often brings the child out from an unfamiliar familial and social culture. But how is this practically possible? This is a demanding task as the crime among youth is easily influenced negatively; thus, making it more difficult to handle the crime rate among youth compared to crime in other age groups.

Literature Review

Research on the religious and spiritual lives of youth can involve mechanical issues and challenges different from those encountered when studying other groups, or when not exploring religious factors in the lives of the young generation.[6] Who is really responsible for character education and developing self-discipline in youth? How can moral issues of youth be handled and solved through religious spirituality? The fact is that all of us must play a role in it. When something goes wrong, even if it is not with our child, school, college or university, we can't help but ask what we can do about it. How could we make a difference? We should ask ourselves what we're doing when our youth is accessing harmful content on the Internet, and indulging in unlawful and illegal activities. The reality is that they have role models out there to outline their lives. The challenge for all of us is to present a different model. We live in a society that doesn't censor information and I infer that all of us feel a little uncomfortable about censorship. We would like to prevent our young people from having negative influences; yet, we cannot stop the negative channels prevailing on the internet or provide information about negative activities and how to avoid them. On the contrary, we can inculcate in the youth spiritual energy, which is possible only through observing the religious practices. One must be aware that not all families are able to protect their children all the time from negative activities and access to them. What

[5] Joseph R. Carrierri, *Child Custody, Foster Care and Adoptions* (New York: Lexington Publishers, 1991), 286.

[6] Brenda Berry ed., "Mom and Dad Plus Three," *Family Life News. A Newsletter of the Family Life Services of New England*. Winter (1991-92): 17.

they can do is provide them internal positive energy to fight external negative issues and influences.

Educational institutions have additional responsibility in this regard to provide a religiously motivated environment to youth in order to have civilized and moral members of society. Living in an Islamic society, we have more responsibility to train our youth on Islamic values and morals. This is only possible through reviewing such practices in the light of new empirical research that allows specific questions to be asked about the way in which youth are engaged with morality as part of their everyday lives. This research is a short model of study to evaluate the religious spirituality among youth that can help to produce further research to handle moral issues among youth.

Methodology

Presenting this in the form of a qualitative study, a group of 20 young people allowed the particular experiences of their routine life to be analyzed, whilst recognizing their unique nature. The focus of the study, although limited to one group of young Muslims boys and girls in a certain part of one community with different ages from 18-22, is that it contextualizes an overall social approach and mindset. Now to address why this age group of youth has been selected, a researcher must understand the definition of youth. To elaborate, youth, in the sense of being young, is in part an age category and a life stage and thus bears a biological attribute.[7] Simultaneously, it is a socially constructed category that carries certain time, culture, bound and characteristics.[8] According to the UN's definition of youth, the period between ages 15 and 24 has been widely accepted.[9] Ruddick remarks on the irony of exporting this biological, male-oriented definition of youth to places lacking the socio-economic resources that help to produce modern ideals of youth.[10] Bourdieu has famously argued that young people of different social classes with different

[7] Mary Bucholtz, "Youth and Cultural Practice," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31, no 2 (2002): 534.

[8] Deborah Durham, "Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa," *Anthropological Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2000):119; "Disappearing Youth: Youth as a Social Shifter in Botswana," *American Ethnologist* 31, no. 4 (2004): 46-61.

[9] Sue Ruddick, "The Politics of Aging: Globalization and the Restructuring of Youth and Childhood," *Antipode* 35, no. 2 (2003): 117.

[10] Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera, "Introduction: Being Young and Muslim in Neoliberal Times", in *Being Young and Muslim. New Cultural. Politics in the Global South and North*, ed. Linda Herrera and Asef Bayat, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 132.

cultural and gendered backgrounds indeed have little in common, certain fundamental dispositions – a particular habitus to use Bourdieu's own term 'youth' becomes a meaningful analytical category.[11] In contrast, LeBlanc claims that in West Africa, being an adult rather than youth is accomplished by engaging in public demonstrations of religious and social commitment.[12] According to LeBlanc, many young people justify their irreligious behavior with the certainty that "growing older will lead them to more Muslim-style behavior and the adoption of Muslim marker."[13] Consequently above mentioned ideas, definitions of youth give the idea of age with energy and motivation to accept and reject anything which is more or less acceptable according to a youngster's age.

The importance of religious spirituality as a tool for youth training can be discussed through empirical pieces of evidence. Recent research on social psychology identifies the importance of religion in curing psychological disorders among people, especially the youth.

Impacts of Religious Rituals in Youth's Moral Training

Many surveys and researches presented along with the training workshops and projects have highlighted the role of religion and spirituality to address the need for a conducive environment for the moral training of youth. Research on the religious and spiritual lives of youth can involve mechanical and involuntary issues and challenges, different from those encountered when studying other groups and their behavior in society.[14] This discussion has also addressed the positive influence extended to youth as a

[11] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 116; *Sociology in Question* (London: Sage Publishers, 1993), 37.

[12] Marie-Nathalie LeBlanc, "Versioning Womanhood and Muslimhood: 'Fashion' and the Life Course in Contemporary Bouak´e, Cˆote d'Ivoire," *Africa* 70, no. 3 (2000): 471; "From Sya to Islam: Social Change and Identity among Muslim Youth in Bouak´e, Cˆote d'Ivoire" *Paideuma* 46, no. 1 (2000): 87; Adeline Masquelier, "Negotiating Futures: Islam, Youth, and the State in Niger," in *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, ed. Benjamin F. Soares and Ren´eOtayek, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 72.

[13] Flisher Patel, Sarah Heetrick, and Patrick Mc Gorry, "Mental Health of Young People: A Global Public Health Challenge," Lancet, 2, (2007): 369-382.

[14] U.S. Public Health Service, *Report of the Surgeon General's Confer- ence on Children's Mental Health: A National Action Agenda* (Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, 2000), 46.

result of practicing religious affiliation, education, and involvement.[15] Youngsters certainly can and do gain from such experiences. Being a Muslim, we believe that Islamic system of ritual has a powerful effect on the behavior of Muslim youth. So this belief should be judged empirically and how a different religious orientation may exert its influence on the perception of the youth.[16]

Our basic concern is for the moral training of youth to be effective. In this regard, it must take into account the cultural, social, philosophical, spiritual and psychological factors of religion and religious practices that may influence moral development. The way growing children think and feel about right and wrong depends to a great extent on society's dominant culture, as expressed through mass communication media, family institutions, educational outlets and socio-political environment of society.[17] These factors promote values, attitudes, and points of view that may affirm or negate what is taught at home, in mosque/ church, or in school. Within that same society, there are underlying, implicit philosophies that structure moral discourse among old and young. And for those who belong to religious institutions, there are religious suppositions and perspectives that make their own contributions.[18] It is often assumed in youth studies that young people represent a break with the past and are instruments of 'modernization'.[19]

So far in the case of Muslim youth, the practicing Muslim youth will always look into the teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Religiously motivated Muslim youth's aim is to restore the past glory of Muslim Scholars and supremacy of Islam by following the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and companions of Prophet (SAW) as well. This factor has helped this study to evaluate the

[15] Ronalad E. Dahl, "Adolescent Brain Development: A Period of Vulnerabilities and Opportunities," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1021, no.2 (2004): 32.

[16] Berry, "Mom and Dad Plus Three," 72.

[17] Johan G. Smetana, "Social-Cognitive Domain Theory: Consistencies and Cariations in Children's Moral and Social Judgments," in *Handbook of Moral Development*, ed. M. Killen & J. G. Smetana (Mahwah: Erlbaum, 2006), 181.

[18] Tina Malti and Monika Keller, "Development of Moral Emotions in Cultural Context," in *Emotions, Aggression, and Morality in Children: Bridging Development and Psychopathology*, ed. William Arsenio and Elizabeth Lemerise (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2010), 128.

[19] Mamadou Diouf, "Afterword," in *Makers and Breakers: Children and Youth in Postcolonial Africa*, ed. Alcinda Honwana and Filip De Boeck (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), 84.

changes in adopting Islamic rituals resulting in cure for moral issues in Muslim youth's life.

Anthropologists have long assumed that modernization would lead to a worldwide progressive decline in religion or at least its withdrawal to the private arena. From this perspective, not only were religion and modernization incompatible, but secularization was a precondition for modernization.[20] Islam is not foreign to a modern identity. Rather, both coexist since, for religiously motivated youth, material, and spiritual progress run parallel. They aspire to a modern lifestyle that provides them with success in this life and the hereafter. They believe that Islam is a perfect code of life and the Qur'ān is a perfect book in which all kinds of social and individual questions have been answered. It fulfills one's search for modernity based on Islamic teachings, with a strong belief in the ability to correct oneself and others as well. In this regard, the present research focuses on the assistance and guidance that Islamic teachings can extend to the youth. The answer to this question has been applied through Islamic system of worship.

Role of Islamic System of Worship in Behavioral Change.

According to Al-Ghazali, human beings have four recognized traits and habits which include animal, evil, wild and spiritual traits.[21] Among all four traits, spirituality indicates the faith validated by sacraments and worships. Religious rituals, according to Nasr, bring Muslims closer to the creator in order to attain closeness of self-satisfaction[22]. According to Ghazali, religious rituals and worship should be performed to improve a person's relationship with creator and creation; otherwise it is just a formal practice. Islamic system of worship is carried out for physical, psychological, social and spiritual benefit of the Muslims[23]. Alongside, purification of body and soul can be achieved through performing worships described by Islam.[24] Just take one example of how recitation of the Qur'ān enlightens the spirit and complements with prayer, charity, fasting and hajj. In much the same way, charity, as spending something in Allah's way, gets a person closer to

[20] Aline Hitti, Kelly Lynn Mulvey and Melanie Killen, Social Exclusion and Culture: The Role of Group Norms: Group Identity and Fairness, *Anales de Psicologia* 27, no. 3 (2011): 167.

[21] Muhammad Al-Gazzali, *Khuluq al-Muslim* (Damascus: Dar Al-kalam, 2004), 5-8.

[22] Syed Hussein Nasr, *Islamic Spirituality Foundations* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987). 48:236-242.

[23] Muhamamd Ibrahim, *Al-qa'idah al-tarbawiyyah fil Islām* (Jordan: Dār Magdlawī, 1997), 107.

[24] Sa'eīd Hawa, *Al-Mustaklaṣ fī Tazkiyyatil Anfūs* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2006), 54.

Allah[25] as in the following verse "And of the Bedouins there are some who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and look upon what they spend (in Allah's cause) as means of nearness to Allah, and a cause of receiving the Messenger's invocations. Indeed, the expenditures are a means of nearness for them."[26]

Therefore, the sample study and methodology have been selected to evaluate the spiritual role of worship in moral training of Muslim youth. The pilot study has been narrowed down to a group of 20 young people both girls and boys aged between 18-22 years.

Statement of Problem

Assessment practices should examine how religion and religious practices in the case of Islamic rituals are important in a youth's life and how these religious orientation and practices may influence the behaviors of young Muslims. This research has also addressed the positive value accorded to the youth from religious affiliation, spiritual motivation, and involvement of internal spiritual motivation in worship. Assessment practices should examine how Islam as a religion is or is not part of their life and how a different Islamic orientation of beliefs and worships may influence them spiritually.

The statement of the problem which is developed in this research focuses on religion, and the role of worshiping system in Islam in providing guidance and inspiration to the young people. The sample study of this research can be used as evidence to counter the contemporary environment, which inevitably contains many contradictions for young people, who, as a result, have grown up in uncertainty and materialistically occupied atmosphere. Questions for the interview of sample population have been taken from day-to-day life. The reference point of statement of the problem is the Qur'ān, which describes itself as a guide and a healing to those who believe.[27]

Sample Study and Results

Owning to the scope covered by this study, only the spiritual aspect of Islamic worship for Muslim youth has been captured in this research. The role of worships as

[25] Baligh M. al-Ḥelālī, *al-ʾĪmān Awwalann* (Cairo: Dār al-tawze' waln Nashr, 2000),53.
[26] Al-Qur'ān 9:99
[27] Al-Qur'ān 41:44

captured in the Qur'an Qur'ān comprises of certain salient spiritual aspects associated with the pious people. These include; careful observance of the rituals (*'Ibādah*), which is composed of prayers (*ṣalāt*), fasting (*ṣawm*), charity (*zakāt*) and pilgrimage to Makkah (at least once in a lifetime) i.e. (hajj). The study attempts to find out the spiritual and moral impacts of these worships both from the Islamic perspective and practical application on youth as mentioned in the Islamic texts, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Worshipping is one of the basic pillars of Islam. It must be understood that the Islamic forms of worship do not subject people to perform useless acts and meaningless movements. All the Islamic compulsory forms of worship are designed as exercises and training to enable people to acquire correct morals and habits and to live righteously, and to adhere to these virtues till the end, whatever be the changes in their circumstances.

Consequently, in order to acquire and asses the influences of the Islamic system of worship on youth, a survey of 20 young Muslims was conducted. To narrow down the sample study, they were divided into five groups each for the interview. The sample population consisted of 12 boys and 8 girls divided into four members group. The age group of all participants was between 18-22 years. The survey was conducted through a qualitative approach to interview with open-ended questions. In order to get the opinion of sample population regarding impact of worship on their life and behavior, some general questions were made to clearly understand their responses. The responses of the sample population were recorded through written answers to the questions.

The technique of random sampling was applied in selecting the respondents of the study in three stages. In stage one, 20 young Muslim boys and girls were chosen at random. In stage two, these young boys and girls were divided into five groups and each group consisted of four members. In the third stage, these five groups were interviewed separately in order to maintain rationality of their answers. The questions and findings of the research were assessed via four themes/pillars of Islamic worship which are *ṣalāt*, *zakāt*, Sawm, and Hajj. All four themes were followed by the questions of regularity in worship and their level of involvement in them and the physical, spiritual, and psychological benefits of the particular worship on participants.

Theme 1: Impacts of Ṣalāt on Moral Behavior of Muslim Youth.

Ṣalāt (prayer) is a second pillar and a compulsory form of worship in Islam. It is mandatory for all Muslims to offer prayers five times a day regularly. It is an exercise that

a person offers with interest and willingness. The prayers are offered before Allah with the hope that life may be free from all physical, moral and social ailments. The Qur'ān and Sunnah encourage Muslims to perform *ṣalāt* in congregation to enhance their social relationship.[28] The core benefit of *ṣalāt* is avoiding sins as well as attaining purification of body and soul.[29] Additionally, prayer brings blessings and reduces stress.[30] Practically, prayer creates a strong bond between believer and Allah.

Reply of Participants

In order to evaluate the description of the *ṣalāt* and practical application on human beings, all 20 participants were asked seven few questions about *ṣalāt* and received the reply accordingly.

The answer of question that do they offer salah,10 participants replied that they always tried to offer regular prayer five times a day; 4 of the participants replied that they usually missed one prayer of *Fajr*; and 4 out of 20 answered that they usually missed two prayers of *Fajr* (Morning prayer) and *'Ishā'* (Night prayer). 2 of them said that they offered only two prayers during the day if they had time.

15 participants observed no obvious change due to a lack of concentration and interest. However, 3 of them said that they felt peace of mind, and internal satisfaction whenever they offered *ṣalāt*. 2 of the participants recorded that they felt a strong bond with Allah Almighty and felt energetic and strong after offering prayer.

Most of the participants said that their supplications were accepted and answered. Only 2 participants recorded that the idea of standing and bowing before the Almighty in salah and fear of invoking the wrath of Allah kept them away from sin.

15 of the subjects said that prayer had become a part of their habits and routine so they performed it as part of their routine. However, 5 of them said the feeling of affiliation, fear, consciousness, and love of Allah motivated them to offer prayer.

8 out of 20 participants answered observed no connection. 4 of them said that they considered it as a call from Allah. 5 among them answer that they just listened to the Azan

[28] Al-Khalīfah, "Religiosity in Islam as a Protective Mechanism Against Criminal Temptation," 11: 1-12.
[29] Al-Gazzali, *Khuluq-Al-Muslim*, 3-5.
[30] Al-Helālī, *al-ʾĪmān Awwalann*, 89.

and replied to the supplications of Azan. 3 of them said that they were very punctual in offering Salah on time with azan.

4 out of 20 participants had guilt, 2 of them expressed a realization of wrongdoing as a result of missing the prayer, 3 of them had no change, 5 of them expressed having the feeling of missing an important task and remained stressed, and 6 of them said that they missed talking to Allah.

Only 8 out 20 said they performed slowly if they offered with the congregation and hastily if they offered alone. 6 of the participants said that they offered *ṣalāt* slowly and with concentration.

Theme 2: Impact of Zakāt

Zakāt is a financial form of worship which is to spend in the way of Allah in order to purify the soul and reduce the love for wealth.[31] It has been made compulsory on the eligible 'scheduled' (*ṣahib-i niṣāb*) persons. The objective of this worship is to create the sentiment of kindness, sympathy, and benevolence among the various sections of the society and to establish the relationship of love and friendliness. As stated in the Qur'ān:

"O Prophet, take charity from their property so that it may clean them and purify them."[32]

It can be said that *zakāt* is the worship which cleanses the self of the worldly impurities and raises the standard of the society to the heights of decency and purity. The person who spends in Allah's way is close to the hearts of the people. Allah bestows satisfaction on the giver and motivates the giver to give more.[33]

Social implications of *zakāt* are manifold as it reduces fear, anger, anxiety, and hatred from society via the distribution of wealth.

Reply of the Participants

As the standard (*niṣāb*) of *zakāt* on Gold is set at 7.5 Tolas (88 grams), all participants are not responsible to pay *zakāt*. However, to check their interest in paying *zakāt* in future some responses have been received accordingly.

[31] Ibid. 96.
[32] Al-Qur'ān 9:103
[33] N. R. M. Mohsen, "Leadership from the Qur'ān: Operationalization of Concepts and Empirical Analysis: Relationship between Taqwa, Trust and Business Leadership Effectiveness" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1997), 112.

15 out of 20 participants replied that they were unaware of the details of *zakāt* payment as it had been taken care of by their parents. 5 of the participants opined that the giver of *zakāt* must be free, sane; and should have attained the age of puberty. He must have money or goods that increase more than his debts and that his essential needs are equal to or more than the amount of *niṣāb*. It was recorded that none of the participants was of age; hence, ineligible to pay *zakāt*. Only 4 out of 20 subjects said that Islam is the religion of human nature which teaches peace and love among followers. So, even if *zakāt* had not been an obligation, people would still pay some amount of their wealth in order to maintain peace and harmony in society.

15 out of 20 subjects did not have the required information to answer the question. However, 3 participants did not regard tax and *zakāt* as regarded. They further added that tax is an obligation of citizenship and *zakāt* is a religious responsibility. 2 of them considered tax and *zakāt* different in terms of authority of sanction, purpose, rate, and the places where they are spent.

Theme 3: Impacts of Ṣawm (Fasting)

Fasting is the fourth pillar of Islam made compulsory during the holy month of Ramadan which all capable Muslims must perform.[34] Apart from the obligatory fasting during Ramadan, there are other occasions during the Islamic year when fasting is encouraged to observe. Fasting renders innumerable health benefits including lowering of blood sugar, cholesterol, and blood pressure.[35]In addition to the health benefits, it has some psychological effects as well, including peace and serenity, with personal resentment at the minimum. Practically, obligatory/compulsory fasting in the right manner in order to strengthen one's bond with Allah and enjoy the several positive outcomes may lead to quality of life both physically and spiritually.

Reply of the Participants

All young percipients included in the analysis responded to the questions in the following way.

[34] Al-Qur'ān 2:183

[35] Al-Khalifah, "Religiosity in Islam as a Protective Mechanism Against Criminal Temptation," 9-10.

The reply to the regularity in fasting, 16 out of 20 participants fasted during Ramadan. The remaining 4 preferred fasting if Ramadan occurred in winter. They faced difficulty managing their studies if they fasted during summer. One of the subjects recorded that he fasted whenever he felt like as he considered internal motivation the driving force to follow Islamic rituals.

Answering to the question of volunteer fasting, 6 out of 20 students said they fasted occasionally, 4 of them said they fasted for the sake of blessings in life. 7 of them said that they did not fast other than Ramadan. 3 of them replied that they always tried to fast on Monday and Thursday for the sake of reward from Allah.

Regarding the impact of fasting on life, 2 out of 20 participants said that they felt physical strength and spiritual energy during Ramadan. 3 of them replied that fasting saved them from sinning and physical ailments. 8 of them said fasting enhanced their diet plan during Ramadan. 4 of the subjects felt no physical benefits but a spiritual connection with Allah. 3 of them considered weather as the main source of effects; they found fasting in winters easier than in summer.

4 out of 20 participants replied that it helped them in exerting self-control to refrain from eating habits. 4 of them replied that it helped in the same manner as previous participants, but effects were limited to Ramadan only. 6 of them did not experience such changes. 2 of them said that fasting helps them in anger management. 2 of the boys among participants confessed to having controlled their habit of smoking through fasting. 2 of them said that fasting and recitation lessened stress, anxiety, and aggression in them.

In regard to the question of the impact of fasting after the month of Ramadan, 8 out of 20 participants said that its effects were limited to the month of Ramadan. 3 of them recorded that feeling of Ramadan stayed maximum for a month. 2 participants said they retained its feelings and effects for two months before it gradually decreased. One of the participants said that it reduced gradually over a period of time. 6 of them said that it stayed for only few days.

Theme 4: Impact of Hajj

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam which is mandatory for all capable Muslims to observe once in their lifetime[36] if they can afford the expenses. It may be repeated by

[36] Al-Qur'ān 2:196-200

capable individuals as (Sunnah) but the first-time experience is the most required of all Muslims to observe. Practically, the act of pilgrimage to Makkah is encouraged when they are able both physically and financially. Hajj may strengthen one's bond with Allah and may lead to receiving the guidance and blessings of Allah, which will lead to positive guidance in one's dealings in practical life. The one who performs Hajj feels a spiritual affiliation with Allah which creates self-consciousness and self-assessment. A person tries to retain this consciousness and its sound effects for the rest of life. How the young participants responded to this act of worship and its impact was amazing that only 6 out of 20 participants had experienced the Hajj and the majority of them had spiritually benefited from their experience.

As mentioned above 6 of the participants had performed Hajj and out of these six only 2 had performed Hajj twice but that was Umrah (Minor Hajj). All other participants had not performed the holy ritual and 5 had little knowledge about Hajj.

All the six participants who had experienced Hajj agreed that it helped a lot but after the holy ritual, the spiritual affiliation gradually decreased. But 2 out of 6 participants said that they felt a spiritual bond with Allah Almighty. One of them said that he felt his sins were forgiven. 2 of them felt self-satisfaction. One of them said his faith in Allah strengthened after Hajj.

Out of 6, 2 participants said that they had become more conscious about their rights and duties towards others. One of them said his patience and faith in Allah had increased. 3 of them said they did not feel its effects in spiritual and moral training. Out of 6, 4 participants who had performed hajj or Umrah considered their family bond as motivation as they had experienced Hajj along with their parents. However, 2 of them said that they had performed hajj in the love of Allah.

Findings of the Research

Keeping in view the answers of all the questions from the themes of four pillars of Islam (*ṣalāt* (prayer), *zakāt* (mandatory specific amount spending in Allah's way), Sawm (fasting) and hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca), called practice of the rituals (*'ibādah*) in Islam, following are the findings of this whole survey regarding the impacts of Islamic rituals on the behavioral change in the youth, the findings of the study are as under.

The concept of worship in the above-mentioned pillars of Islam and responses of young people to open-ended questions is proof of youth's participation in religious

practices and its influences in their lives. These results are somehow similar to the findings of Balance's study (2000) that young people justify their irreligious behavior by the certainty that 'growing older will lead them to more Muslim-style behavior and the adoption of Muslim markers.

Reply of all participants exposes to us their level of relationship between religion, spirituality, and morality and how strong and lasting this relationship is for youngsters. This study supports to Berry and Brenda's opinion about youth's life and how a different religious orientation may influence.[37]

Analysis of this research shows that devout youngsters are more productive and morally sound in their social lives which supports the study of Hawa (2006) that strengthening of spiritual position of human beings and especially youth, also captures purification of soul through performing rituals (*'ibādah*) such as prayers, charity (*zakāt*), pilgrimage to Makkah (Hajj), reading Qur'ān and fasting.

The results of this study prove the opinion of Nasar (1987) that religious rituals especially Islamic system of ritual is practically and operationally applicable to bring about moral and spiritual change in human behavior. These rituals are also the means by which Muslims get closer to the Creator and make their lives productively.

Youth moral and social problems cannot be resolved solely through legal punishments; rather their issues can be addressed through spiritual training and energy provided by religion. The results of this study show that youth with religious productivity can be made/are more conscious about moral behavior and positive social relations.

Conclusion

When something goes wrong, even though it is not with our child, or not in our vicinity either, we can't help but ask what we could do about it and how we could make a difference. We should ask ourselves what we're doing when our youth is exposed to an unlimited amount of immoral content on the Internet in the form of pornography, abusive music, and illegal/immoral relations. The reality is that they have role models to outline their lives. The challenge for all of us is how we can give them a different model since youth's recognition of right and wrong affects social order; therefore, it shapes social perception towards youth's participation, their citizenship, their 'education' and their governance and how they are reprimanded if they step out of line. But on what basis are

[37] Berry, "Mom and Dad Plus Three," 98.

such practices and policies built and how do they reflect the reality of youth's social lives. We live in a society that doesn't censor information and I deduce that all of us feel a little uncomfortable about censorship. We would like to prevent our young people from having negative influences; yet, we can neither stop the negative channels prevailing on internet nor provide information about negative activities and guidance to avoid them. However, we can inspire the youth in the right direction by making our actions in accordance with the religious rituals of Islam. In addition to this, not all families have been able to protect their children all the time from negative activities and access to them. Nevertheless, they can provide them guidance harnessing internal positive energy to fight external negative issues and their influences. Educational institutions have additional responsibility in this regard to provide religiously motivated environment in order to produce civilized and moral members of society. Being Muslims, we have more responsibility to train our youth on Islamic values and morals, but the question is how it can be possible. This is possible only through reviewing such practices in the light of new empirical research that allows specific questions to be asked about the way in which youth are engaged with morality as part of their everyday lives. This research is a short model of sample study to evaluate the religious spirituality among youth which can help to produce more research models and discussions to handle moral issues among youth through religious spirituality. No doubt, Islam is a practical religion that allows modifying and regulating human life. This can be attained through the spiritual strength of Iman or belief strengthened by the system of worship and eventually exerting positive effects on social dealings. This research is the combination of spiritual and practical connection of a young Muslim who can either make life productive through the spiritual power of worship or destroy it both in this world and hereafter.