

Micro-dynamics of Islamic Development Process and Barriers

Shafiullah Jan

Assistant Professor, Institute of Management Sciences

Ali Abdullah

Lecturer, Institute of Management Sciences

Zohra Jabeen

Assistant Professor, Institute of Management Sciences

Abstract:

This paper discusses Ghazalian ethical framework of development in the context of actions of the inward self to purify one from the evils and replacing them with good qualities for Islamic development process. These evils include envy, ostentation, and pride and conceit which has the negative consequences on other individuals in general and society in specific. It is suggested that without removing such evils, achieving *falāh* in *akḥirah* in the context of development is not possible.

Introduction

There are some ‘*amal*’ both at individual and institutional level that hinder the actualisation of development and corrupt the whole society. According to Ghazalian ethical framework, there are two types of actions; actions which are actions of the outward self (*Al-a’ \bar{m} āl az- \bar{z} āhira*) such as worship and *muamalat* represented by *haququllah* and *haququl-ibad* (Jan et al 2018), and secondly actions focus toward inward self (*Al-a’ \bar{m} āl al-bātina*). These inwardly actions aim to purify inner self from the evils and filling and replacing with good qualities. Furthermore, *Al-a’ \bar{m} āl al-bātina*, according to Ghazalian ethics, has further classified into actions which aim to purify the soul (*tazkiyyat al-qalb*) from evil character-traits, and actions, which beautifies the the soul (*tabliyat – al-qalb*) and filled with noble qualities. These ‘*amal*’ in Ghazalian ethical framework combined with ‘*ilm*’ dominated by the notion of *tawḥid* along the interactive dynamic journey complete the Islamic development process (Jan, 2013). In other words, to create an ideal and just society, where individual as *khaliḥ* of Allah on this earth utilise the resources for the benefits of *ummah*, it is important that all types of evil from heart are removed through *tazkiyyah* and replaced with *rububiyyah*. In this paper, envy, ostentation, pride and conceit, which comprised part of *tazkiyyat al-qalb*, are discussed and how they can be replaced

with good qualities, comprising *tabliyat – al-qalb*. According to Ghazalian ethics, such evils are destructive for sustainable development in society and the sources of all other evil characters (*bidayat al bidayah*) in the society; therefore, are frowned upon in Islam (Al-Ghazali, 2005). Furthermore, these behaviour issues have consequences on other individuals in the society, which in turn effects the development in society. Hence, we have utilised the Ghazalian ethical framework of ethics to suggest how one can achieve the progress on the Islamic development process. These themes are discussed in details and have linked to development. It is further shown in the discussion below that how these actions of inward self can be integrated in to policies to allow society as a whole to progress toward the *falah* (Jan, 2013)

Methodology

In this paper Ghazalian ethical discourse constitutes the main framework around which the substance of this research is developed by proposing micro-dynamic oriented development framework centred around ‘development of human beings’ which essentialises spiritual development as part of ‘development’. According to Taylor (2013 :10), discourse analysis is “the study of language as evidence of a system or formation of meanings, and connections of those meanings to society”. The approach in this paper is discursive analysis due to theoretical nature of the paper. In general, such approach “is used as part of research methodology to identify specific characteristics in textual messages” (Jan, and Asutay, 2019: 10).

Barreiers to development and Ghazalian ethical framework

Envy

Envy (*hasad*) is considered one of the major forces, which have shaped man and society (Schoeck, 1970). According to Schoeck (1970), it is a negative mind state of a person toward another person’s happiness, superior attributies, or attainments and desires to be taken away, even wishing to remove such gain will do no benefit to the person (Schoeck, 1970).

Envy, according to Imam Ghazali (2005) is considered as one of the most destructive evils, as it corrupts the soul and diverts the human beings from achievement of *falah* in *akbriah*. In Islam, all the goods human possesses are the gifts bestow upon them from

Allah; and anyone who wishes for its removal is challenging Divine wisdom; thus displeasing the Divine ruling.

According to Islamic teaching, an individual is not considered a true believer unless and until “he does not want for other Muslim brothers what he wants for himself (Sahih Al Bukhari, *Iman*, 7)”, nevertheless those who envy others do not act in such a manner. Thus, envy of a person wipe out good deeds similarly as fire consumes the wood as mentioned by Prophet Muhammad(PBUH) that “envy consumes good deeds the way fire devours dry wood (*abu Dawud*, 4919)”. The word *tazkiyyah* in Qur’an (2:222; 9:108), also an important axiom of IME (Jan et al. 2015; 2016), has been used to explain the journey toward perfection through purification of inward self from evils of soul such as envy and hence “implies the endogenisation of Islamic norms and values for development in terms of micro development of individual, society and the natural environment according to their development path. (Jan and Asutay, 2019: 120)”. Furthermore, *tazkiyyah* is “not a static state of purification, but a dynamic concept that seeks to motivate individuals and societies to grow by a constant process of purification. (Sardar, 1997: 50)”.

In preserving the development through constant process of growth toward perfection in the light of *tazkiyyah*, which is an important aspect of Islamic development process, the cleansing of means, and its mechanisms engaged in this process are important. According to this, *rububiyyah in an integral element of achieving tazkiyyah*, which refers to “Divine arrangements for nourishment, sustenance and directing things towards their perfection. (Ahmad, 1979: 12)”. This implies that there ought to be harmony between various aspects of economic and social life to achieve sustainable economic growth and development. The concept of *rububiyyah*, one of the philosophical foundations in IME supports the continuation of the *amanah*. Individual’s life on earth in its wholeness relates eternally to Allah (*tawhid*) (Naqvi, 2003), which illustrates the vertical ethical dimension of Ghazlian framework, “linking imperfect and finite social institutions with a Perfect and Infinite Being. (Naqvi, 1994: 26)”. Hence, in the context of development with respect to horizontal dimension of equality, individual as *khalifah*, must realise that all resources available to them as *amanah* belong to Allah, therefore, must be undertaken upon themselves to shared all the benefits justly among mankind (Ghazali, 1990). Such an individual , according to Malik (2011:300), “endowed with these qualities is expected to be an active agent of change and therefore respond to the development of other

individuals, society, natural environment and the state according to the ontology of Islam as articulated in axioms, signifying the aspect of development”. However, an envy may cause individuals to divert some resources from productive used and deprive others from its benefits. Hence, in the context of interactive dynamic journey, such actions deny articulation of belief in Allah who is the source and guidance to reach *ihسان* and *falah* (Jan, 2013).

Islam has laid down number of redistributive mechanisms in the form of both obligatory and voluntary payments to reduce the envy, which serves to draw off excessive well being from wealthy members of society and redistribute it among poor to ensure a just society build on the spirit of brotherhood, co-operation and mutual love and thus to maximize *ihسانی* social capital (Jan et al, 2018).

Ostentation

Ostentation (*riyā*), derived “from the Latin word ‘ostendere’, which means ‘to show’(Moorman, 2007: 150)”. In cultural perspective, “ostentation refers to the structure of one’s mental outlook, where a person gets satisfaction from showing off his/her possessions, qualities or achievement in a manner opposite to its true nature or when a person performs rites of worship merely to obtain a place in the hearts of others” (Jan, 2013: 190). Thus, in Islam, according to Al Ghazali (2005), ostentation is considered a hidden polytheism (*ash-shirk al-kebaf*), which is one of the two forms of polytheism.

In providing Islamo-religious perspective, in one *hadith*, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) described the condition of three persons who will be brought in the court of Allah. “Allah will ask, What you have done for me? He will reply, I have been killed for your sake. Allah will retort: you wanted it to be said that so and so is brave, and that was already said, and that is our reward. The same will be said to religious scholars, to the man who has performed the pilgrimage to Makkah, and to the recite of Qur’an (Shahi Bukhari, 10)”. Thus, from the context of Islamic teaching, the root cause of ostentation is to desire or want something from a source other than Allah, which is against the basic *aqidah* as everything is from Allah as the ultimate provider.. Thus such attitude ultimately denies the complete adherence to *haququllah*, an important aspect of Ghazalian ethical framework, thus obstructs achievement of *falah* in *akbirah* (Jan et al 2015).

It has been claimed at many places that one of the root causes of corruption in any society is also ostentation. (Wraith, 1964)..The less privileged in the society are more willing to turn to means which are neither legal nor moral in order to keep up with socially privileged. For example, it is socially acceptable behaviour in East Asian societies to spend extravagantly in marriage functions to show off in the community, as such functions are occasions to show high status in the society, which is nevertheless considered *asraf*(Prodigality) in Islam, and strictly denounced by Allah in Qur'an (Hossain, 2005). As a consequence, such practices of ostentation most of the time lead to anger and hostility amongst those who are unable to afford such luxuries at the same level in the society.

Furthermore, according to Ghazalian ethical framework (Jan, 2013), one of the worst vices of society is ostentation, which, at one hand, has the tendency to corrupts one's heart to expect from a source other than Allah (*rububiyyah*), consequently hindering the establishment of vertical ethical dimension of Islam represented by *haququllah* (Jan et al 2015). On the hand, spending Allah's given limited resources and surplus income on activities other than to benefit the society as large lead to corruption, inequality, and injustice, thus hindering the attainment of horizontal dimension of justice as represented by *haququl-ibad* (Jan et al, 2019; Jan et al 2015, 16; Naqvi 1994).According to Jan (2013: 244):

“The vertical and horizontal dimensions of justice in Ghazalian framework aims that an individual as a *khalifah* establishes justice (*adl*) and promote *ihسان* (beneficence) through need fulfilment of members of the society and through *tazkiyyah* encourages equitable distribution of income and wealth in society to promote harmony, growth and stability. Within this understanding of *khalifah*, all these elements of Islamic development process are inter-related and inter-connected to enable the individuals to attain *falah* in *akbarah* for every and each person according to the *ihسانی* culture”.

In a society, those with ostentatious traits have no common good in their mind. The only objective of such individuals in the society is to create surplus income merely for ostentation, whereas, Islam teaches the benefit of society as the main objective.. Such type of individuals in the society becomes extravagant for the sole purpose of showing off to others and fail to contribute to the development by utilising the limited available resources rationally for the betterment of society at large.. Such types of behaviours which has the purpose of ostentation is one of the reasons of underdevelopment in Muslim countries, as Allah given abundant resources are constantly wasted for showing off.

This type of ostentation behaviour is evident at micro and macro level i.e, at individual, family and national level, where important resources have been diverted to activities which are intended to satisfy on individual egos. According to Jan (2013), Muslim countries around the globe have been blessed with abundant of national resources, however such wealth is only accumulated in the hand of few people in the societies. This is evident from different publically available indices such as corruption index, rule of law, HDI and Gini coefficient, which clearly show high level of inequalities in sectors such as health, gender and income. Such inequalities nevertheless can be reduced by diverting resources from activities merely done for ostentation purpose to promote education , health and rule of law and thus establish and promote an ideal society based on justice and equity (Jan, 2013; Jan and Asutay, 2019)

Pride and Conceit

Pride (*kibr*) is one's holding or considering oneself to be superior to others in the society. According to Al-Ghazali (2005), pride is considered the greatest of all vices and is prohibited in Islam. According to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), “a person who has a grain of mustard seed weight of pride in his heart will not enter the Paradise (Muslim, Sahih, Iman, 147, 148, 149)”. In Islamic teaching, only Allah is considered worthy of real pride, greatness and honour, therefore, any person who views themselves superior to other humanbeings is committing *shirk* by trying to make himself equal to Allah, and hence corrupting his heart and soul to achieve *falah* in *akhirah*. Conceit (*'ujb*) is different from pride in a sense that pride is a feeling to be superior to other person who is considered to be of less merit, while the feelings of conceit, on the other hand, need not any such person to exist. In Islam, such ranking or qualities to make one superior from others is Allah's given. However, ignoring all these blessing of Allah and consider oneself superior or conceited about the qualities, leads one to *shirk*. In Islamic teaching, “development is the journey toward the ultimate end, the *falah* in hereafter, while pride and conceit are *zulm* as they push one toward darkness away from the light (*nur*) (Jan, 2013:245)”. In Islam, the superiority is how one is closed to Allah, which is only achieved through piety (*taqwa*) as Qur'an (49:13) informs us:

That the most honoured of you in the eyes of Allah are those who are most in their *taqwa*

Furthermore, a person with *'ujb* in heart leads to *riya* (show off), *nifaq* (hypocrisy) and *kibr* (pride), considered one of the greatest vices in Islam. Thus, Islamic teaching suggests that

the person who is inflicted with *'ujb* views others with contempt, thus making a person to overvalue his deeds and underestimate the good deeds of others, which not only stops the person from seeing his shortcomings but also precludes one from any kind of improvements. The person whose heart is filled with pride and conceit never cares to rectify him/herself and always considers his/her actions holy and perfect, even though he/she is insignificant to Allah and hated by people in the society. In Qur'an identifies such people in the following way:

...Verily, Allah does not like such as are proud and boastful;

Those who are miserly and enjoin miserliness on other men and hide what Allah has bestowed upon them of His Bounties.... (Qur'an, 4:36-37)

Islam teaches about piety, equality, to be just with all people and not to hate or putdown others based on race, colour or nationality. Therefore, only piety and good actions makes one closer to Allah, as highlighted by to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in his last sermon,.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves. (Sahih of Muslim Hadith, 2803.1)

In the Ghazalian framework of vertical and horizontal dimensions of equality, all humanbeings are considered equal to Allah, the basic tenant of Islam. (Jan et al 2015,2016). In other words, each individual has the same distance in relation to his or her proximity to Allah. Such view exemplifies the very meaning of equality from Islamic percept of conduct. The concept of development through achievement of *falab* in *akhirah* can be achieved through establishment of society based on brotherhood, co-operation and sharing, hence to glorify Islam by showing a living example to the world.

Conclusion:

In islam it is not possible to achieve development through *falab* without fulfilling haququllah and haququl-ibad. Thus to achieve these two dimensions of development, it is important to cleanse soul from evil traits such envy, ostentation pride and conceit through *tazkiyyah* and replacing them with good qualities of *rububiyah*. In Islamic

teaching human beings are considered *khaliifah* on this earth. All resources ultimately belong to Allah. Human beings are bestowed with these resources as *amanah* to utilise them for the benefit of whole *ummah*. However, such evil traits stop one from achieving these objectives and hence hinder them from achievement of *falah* in *akbarah*. It is argued that such traits not only destroy those individuals whose hearts are filled with envy, pride and conceit but ultimately cause the society to be dysfunctional marked by corruption, inequality, distrust and extravagance. Therefore, to achieve real development, such evils are to be cleansed from the heart through *tawhid*.

It is suggested that this proposed paper can lead to further research in the field to develop a new discourse on development from the perspective of Islamic development in general and Islamic finance in specific.

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