THE ETHICS AND ROLE OF RESILIENCE: A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the ethics and role of resilience, focusing on its moral dimensions and its influence on individuals and communities. Resilience, while often seen as a valuable trait for overcoming adversity, is context-dependent and can have both positive and negative consequences. Cultivating resilience through self-awareness, emotional regulation, and support from others can promote moral growth but may also lead to complacency if unchecked. In Islam, resilience is closely linked to faith, patience, and trust in God, as reflected in the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The paper explores different types of resilience—psychological, emotional, social, and physical—and highlights its role as a social responsibility in Islam, fostering mutual support, justice, and empathy. Additionally, resilience is essential in addressing social decay, encouraging solidarity during crises. Strategies to enhance resilience, both from Islamic and psychological perspectives, are discussed, emphasizing divine discipline, patience, and self-mastery. The connection between spirituality and resilience is also explored, showing how higher spirituality contributes to well-being and moral resilience.

KEYWORDS: Resilience, moral dimensions, emotional regulation, Islamic perspective, faith, patience, trust in God, psychological, emotional & social resilience, spirituality, quality of life

The ethics of resilience explore the moral aspects of how individuals face and overcome adversity. Resilience is often seen as a valuable trait, allowing people to recover from difficult situations while maintaining their integrity. However, resilience can also have negative consequences, such as making individuals too accepting of injustice, unaware of their own limitations, or resistant to necessary change. Therefore, the morality of resilience depends on how it is nurtured, demonstrated, and assessed within different contexts. One way to foster moral resilience is by cultivating self-awareness, emotional regulation, and a positive mindset (Williams, 2024). These qualities help individuals align their actions with their values, manage emotions and impulses, and view challenges as opportunities for growth. Seeking support from others who share similar moral values, such as colleagues, friends, or mentors, can further strengthen moral resilience.

To evaluate moral resilience, it is essential to consider its effects on both the individual and the broader community. For individuals, resilience is beneficial when it helps them overcome personal challenges, achieve their goals, and realize their potential. However, for the collective, resilience can become harmful if it fosters complacency, arrogance, or indifference. Resilient leaders, for example, may become blind to their weaknesses, overestimate their abilities, and dismiss feedback, ultimately weakening their effectiveness and damaging their teams or organizations (Arenas, Connelly & Williams, 2019).

The morality of resilience is not a static or universal concept but one that is fluid and context-dependent. Resilience can be morally positive or negative, depending on how it is understood, cultivated, and expressed in various situations. It can serve as a source of strength and integrity or become a cause of weakness and compromise. The key challenge lies in balancing resilience with other moral virtues, such as justice, humility, and openness. Resilience should be

viewed as a tool to achieve moral goals, rather than being treated as an end in itself.

The Resilience as Moral Value

Resilience can be viewed as both a value and a skill (Maree, 2017, p.35). As a value, it represents something we cherish and use to guide our actions and decisions. As a skill, it is something we can learn and strengthen through practice and experience. Resilience, as a value, inspires us to persevere and overcome challenges, while as a skill, it can be developed and refined through various strategies and techniques (Gwyther, Resnick & Roberto, 2010, p.78).

The Resilience as moral value - Islamic Perspective

Resilience as a moral value, to cope with adversity and overcome challenges in life, is highly regarded in Islam, as it reflects one's faith, patience, and trust in God. Resilience is also a key component of human well-being, as it enables individuals and communities to thrive despite difficulties and hardships.

The sources in Islam that support the concept of resilience as a moral value are:

1. **The Holy Quran,** which is the word of Allah, contains many verses that encourage resilience and perseverance in the face of trials and tribulations. For example, Allah says: "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth and lives and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient, who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to God, and indeed to Him we will return.' Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy. And it is those who are the (rightly) guided."(Holy Quran, 2:155-157)

2. **The Sunnah,** which is the example and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him), who is the best role model of resilience for Muslims. He (PBUH) faced many hardships and obstacles in his mission of spreading Islam, but He (PBUH) never gave up or despaired. He always relied

on God and sought His help and guidance. He (PBUH) also taught his followers to be resilient and optimistic, and to support each other in times of difficulty. He (PBUH) said: "The most severely tested people are the prophets, then the next best and the next best. A person is tested according to his level of faith. If his faith is strong, he is tested more severely, and if his faith is weak, he is tested less severely. The believer will continue to be tested until he walks on the earth without any sin." (Jame- al-Tirmidhi : 2398)

3. **The Islamic history,** which is full of examples of resilient and courageous Muslims who faced various challenges and struggles in their lives, but remained steadfast and faithful to God. They include the companions of the Prophet (PBUH), the righteous caliphs, the scholars, the martyrs, the reformers, and many others. They inspire Muslims to follow their footsteps and learn from their experiences. One of the famous examples is the story of Bilal ibn Rabah, who was one of the first converts to Islam and a close companion of the Prophet. He was tortured and persecuted by the pagans of Mecca for his belief in God, but he never renounced his faith or uttered a word against God. He would only say: "Ahad, Ahad" (One, One), referring to the oneness of God. He was eventually freed by Abu Bakr, another companion of the Prophet, and became the first muezzin (caller to prayer) in Islam. He is remembered as a symbol of resilience and devotion to God (Ezz, 2024).

Types of Resilience:

There are different types of resilience that reflect various aspects of it as:

1. **Psychological Resilience:** This refers to the mental and cognitive skills that help people adapt to stress and adversity. It involves having a positive outlook, a sense of self-efficacy, and a growth mindset. Psychological resilience can be enhanced by learning new skills,

seeking feedback, and challenging negative thoughts (Kumar, 2020, p.83).

2. **Emotional Resilience:** This refers to the emotional and affective skills that help people regulate their emotions and cope with difficult feelings. It involves having emotional awareness, self-compassion, and optimism. Emotional resilience can be enhanced by practicing mindfulness, expressing gratitude, and cultivating positive emotions (Bharwaney, 2025, p.79).

3. **Social Resilience:** This refers to the social and relational skills that help people connect with others and seek support. It involves having empathy, communication, and cooperation. Social resilience can be enhanced by building trust, resolving conflicts, and joining groups (Hall & Lamont, 2013, p.98).

4. **Physical Resilience:** This refers to the physical and biological factors that help people maintain their health and well-being. It involves having a healthy lifestyle, a balanced diet, and a regular exercise. Physical resilience can be enhanced by managing stress, sleeping well, and avoiding substance abuse (Robson, 2013).

Role of Resilience in Development of Social Values:

Resilience plays an important role in the healthy development of social values, such as respect, justice, empathy, and solidarity (Aldrich, 2012, p.102). Some of the ways that resilience can promote social values are:

1. Resilience can help people to appreciate diversity and learn from different perspectives. Resilient people are able to accept and respect others who have different beliefs, cultures, and experiences, and to seek common ground and mutual understanding. Resilience can also help people to challenge stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, and to advocate for social justice and human rights.

2. Resilience can help people to form positive and supportive relationships with others. Resilient people

are able to seek and offer help when needed, to express and regulate their emotions, and to communicate effectively and constructively. Resilience can also help people to cope with conflicts and disagreements, and to find peaceful and cooperative solutions.

3. Resilience can help people to contribute to their communities and society. Resilient people are able to identify and use their strengths, skills, and talents to pursue their goals and aspirations, and to overcome obstacles and setbacks. Resilience can also help people to engage in social action and civic participation, and to make a positive difference in the world.

The resilience can be cultivated and strengthened through various strategies, such as self-awareness, positive thinking, problem-solving, self-compassion, and social support. By developing resilience, people can foster social values that can enrich their lives and benefit society.

Role of Resilience in our Deteriorating Social System

Our social system is the network of relationships, norms, values, and institutions that shape our society and influence our collective well-being. However, our social system is facing many challenges and threats, such as climate change, conflict, inequality, corruption, and polarization that can undermine its stability and functionality. These challenges and threats can cause social decay and deterioration, which means the loss of social cohesion, trust, justice, and solidarity among people and groups. Social decay and deterioration can have negative impacts on the quality of life, human rights, and social development of individuals and communities.

Resilience is the ability to cope with and recover from adversity, which can foster strength and growth in individuals and communities. Resilience plays an important role in preventing or reversing social decay and deterioration, by enhancing the capacities and capabilities of people and groups to adapt to changing circumstances, to overcome challenges and threats, and to create positive change (Jha, Miner & Stanton-Geddes, 2013, p.46). Resilience can also promote social values, such as respect, empathy, and

cooperation that can improve the social system and its outcomes.

Some of the ways that resilience can be built and strengthened in our social system are:

1. Developing self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive thinking, which can help people to align their actions with their values, to manage their emotions and impulses, and to see challenges as opportunities for growth.
2. Seeking and offering support from others who share similar moral commitments, such as colleagues, friends, or mentors, which can create a sense of belonging, mutual aid, and solidarity.
3. Engaging in social action and civic participation, which can empower people to identify and use their strengths, skills, and talents to pursue their goals and aspirations, and to make a positive difference in the world.
4. Appreciating diversity and learning from different perspectives, which can help people to accept and respect others who have different beliefs, cultures, and experiences, and to seek common ground and mutual understanding.
5. Challenging stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, and advocating for social justice and human rights, which can help people to protect and promote the dignity, equality, and freedom of all people and groups.

By developing resilience, we can improve our social system and its outcomes, and create a more sustainable, inclusive, and peaceful society.

The Significance of Resilience in Islamic Perspective

Resilience has a significant role in the light of the Holy Quran, Sunnah, and Islamic ethics, as it is related to some of the core concepts and values of Islam, such as:

Tawakkul (trust in God): Resilience requires trusting in God's wisdom, mercy, and justice, and relying on Him for help and guidance. The Holy Quran says: "And whoever puts his trust in God, He will suffice him" (65:3). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "If you rely on God as He should be relied on, He will provide for you as He provides for the birds: they go out hungry in the morning and come back full in the evening" .

Sabr (patience): Resilience requires patience in facing difficulties and hardships, and perseverance in doing good deeds and avoiding evil ones. The Holy Quran says: "O you who believe, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, God is with the patient" (2:153). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him" .

Shukr (gratitude): Resilience requires gratitude for the blessings and favors of God, and recognition of His favors in times of ease and hardship. The Holy Quran says: "And if you are grateful, He will surely increase you [in favor]" (14:7). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "The most grateful of people to God are those who are most grateful to other people" .

Ihsan (excellence): Resilience requires excellence in worshiping God and dealing with His creation, and striving to attain the highest level of morality and spirituality. The Holy Quran says: "Indeed, God loves the doers of good" (2:195). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Ihsan is to worship God as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then He sees you" (Sahihain) .

Distinctive Features of the Islamic Moral Resilience

Moral resilience is related to some of the core concepts and values of Islam, such as trust in Allah, patience, gratitude, and excellence. Here are some of the verses and Ahadith on the importance of moral resilience:

i.   "And whoever puts his trust in God, He will suffice him" (Holy Quran, 65:3). This verse shows that resilience requires trusting in God's wisdom, mercy, and justice, and relying on Him for help and guidance.

ii.   "If you rely on God as He should be relied on, He will provide for you as He provides for the birds: they go out hungry in the morning and come back full in the evening" (Hadith, Tirmidhi). This Hadith shows that resilience requires trusting in God's provision and care, and not being anxious or fearful of the future.

iii.   "O you who believe, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, God is with the patient" (Holy Quran, 2:153). This verse shows that resilience requires patience in facing difficulties and hardships, and perseverance in doing good deeds and avoiding evil ones.

iv.   "How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him" (Hadith, Muslim). This Hadith shows that resilience requires gratitude for the blessings and favors of God, and recognition of His favors in times of ease and hardship.

v.   "Indeed, God loves the doers of good" (Holy Quran, 2:195). This verse shows that resilience requires excellence in worshiping God and dealing with His creation, and striving to attain the highest level of morality and spirituality.

vi.   "Ihsan is to worship God as if you see Him, and if you do not see Him, then He sees you" (Hadith, Bukhari and Muslim). This Hadith shows that resilience requires excellence in awareness and consciousness of God, and acting according to His will and pleasure.

The Resilience and Spirituality

Spirituality and religiosity, as motivating and guiding forces, play a significant role in human life. Spirituality, as an inner belief system, is complex and multidimensional, helping individuals seek meaning and purpose in life. It fosters experiences of hope, love, inner peace, comfort, and support. Viewed as a set of beliefs that bring vitality and significance to life events, spirituality reflects the human desire to care for both others and oneself. It can include both secular and religious perspectives. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), spirituality is a fundamental dimension of a person's quality of life. In fact, one's spirituality influences their physical, mental, and interpersonal well-being, all of which contribute to overall life quality (Medeiros and Saad, 2012, p.18).

Higher levels of religious faith and spirituality are associated with more adaptive coping responses, higher resilience to stress, more optimistic orientation to life, higher social support, and lower levels of anxiety among recovered individuals (Amaro, H., Arevaloa, S., Pradob, G., 2008, pp.113-123). It is believed that a high level of spirituality creates peace in the heart, thus providing a calm condition for a person to face various obstacles in life. It helps him to have a clear and comfortable mind so that he does not get stressed easily and feels satisfied all the time. Therefore, researchers argue that a person's high spirituality improves their quality of life and resilience.

Spirituality is often found within the context of religion, but it may not be. Similarly, practicing spirituality can make people religious or part of an organized or emerging religion, but again it may not be. Spirituality is defined as a more or less inherent image of what is holy and a lifestyle that combines beliefs, attitudes, values, or action in response to images of holiness (Hill, at el, 2000, pp.51-77).

People know different ways to develop their spirituality, for example, by contemplating nature or art, strengthening their relationships with other people, or achieving self-transcendence by fighting against their limitations and adversities (Charzynska, 2015, pp.1629-

1646). Ekki, Halil, and Kardas (2017) observed that spirituality is defined in the health literature in seven ways (pp.73-88): (1) relationship with God, spiritual well-being or a higher power, and belief in a reality higher than oneself. (2) an understanding or feeling that spirituality comes not from within oneself but from outside oneself. (3) a state of transcendence or attachment that is inescapably associated with belief in a higher being or power. (4) Existential competence of life that is not from the material world. (5) sense of meaning and purpose in life; (6) the person's life force or power of integration; and (7) the sum of the above. A spiritually identified person has an embodied, integrated, connected, and permeable identity whose high degree of differentiation, far from isolation, actually allows him to enter into deeply conscious connection with others, nature, and the multidimensional cosmos.

Quality of life is defined as a person's sense of well-being resulting from satisfaction or dissatisfaction with areas of life that are important to him (Ravandi, at el, 2013, pp.24-30). Quality of life is a broad concept and a measure of general well-being and a person's perception of his position in life, including aspects of physical and mental health, relationships and environment. (Burns, Pillay, & Ramlall, 2016, p.6) Paraskevi Theofilou (2013) summarized quality of life as optimal levels of mental, physical, role (eg, work, parenting, caring, etc.) and social functioning, including relationships, and perceptions of health, fitness, life satisfaction, and it is well defined. It also includes housing adequacy, income and perception of the immediate environment (pp.150-162).

Resilience is the ability to adapt to life's constant changes and recover quickly from stressors. Generally, highly optimistic individuals report being more open, creative, and better at decision-making, communication, and forming new connections. They also find new ways of being and opportunities for learning. Over time, repeated experiences of optimism build personal resources that foster resilience. In healthcare settings, employees are regularly exposed to patient suffering, making them vulnerable to stress and frustration. The current economic climate has also heightened feelings of fear and uncertainty for many. To create and

sustain a more therapeutic and caring environment, healthcare staff can learn and apply techniques that harness their personal strengths and resources. These strategies can reduce the negative impact of stress and help employees become more adaptable, creative, and effective in both their personal and professional roles. By fostering internal change, employees can prevent stress from triggering a downward spiral in their health, relationships, and performance (Pipe, at el, 2011, pp.11-22).

Spirituality produces changes in cognitive skills, such as the use of abstract thinking and the ability to understand metaphors. It can also mean the ability to observe a stressful situation and take the necessary measures to deal with it. (Bai, Brubaker, Bruner, Meghani & Yeager, 2018, pp.390-398) The results of research with elderly respondents who had gone through many life experiences (Agli, Bailly, Ferrand & Martinent, 2018, pp. 268–278: Biccheri, Roussiau & Mambet-Doue, 2016, pp. 1189–1197; Chungkhamb, Hamrena, & Hyde, 2015; Chaves and Gil, 2015, pp. 3641-3652) showed that the level of spirituality of the individual has a significant positive relationship with his quality of life with moderate to strong categories.

Spirituality is generally related to better mental health, greater well-being, and higher quality of life. Physical health and medical outcomes may also be affected. In addition to its relevance to health, there are several practical reasons why health professionals should investigate spirituality, particularly in patients with severe or chronic illness. Spiritual beliefs influence medical decisions that affect health care, may conflict with medical care, and can positively or negatively affect the doctor-patient relationship. Religious community support can help patients to better cope with severe health stressors, may improve early disease diagnosis, and may increase compliance with medical treatment (Koenig, 2004, pp.76-82).

Humans are the most resilient among other living creatures. People deal with problems in their daily life in different ways, and one of the most effective and widely used methods, especially in India, is prayer. Spirituality is more related to personal search, finding greater meaning and

purpose in one's existence (Gnanaprakash, 2013, pp.383-396) Research of Defrain, Smith and Webber (2013) with adult respondents showed that the correlation between spirituality and resilience is strong. The participants' spiritual health, and more importantly, their relationship with their God, guides their behaviors and communication, which act as protective factors leading to increased resilience. Participating in spiritual exercises together in a spiritually aware family and connecting with a spiritual family in a spiritually aware community may help develop spiritual awareness from a young age and encourage living in relationship with God. Young people who lived with these spiritual powers enjoyed a sense of spiritual well-being that creates a sense of peace and satisfaction in life. The different spiritual strengths of a personality are interrelated and the relationships between spiritual strengths are bidirectional. These spiritual strengths act as protective factors by moderating risks for developmental health outcomes and are associated with increased adolescent resilience for participants.

For believers, faith in God serves as a source of comfort in old age and a way to cope with challenging situations, illustrating how faith sustains them in daily life. Prayer, recognized as a key resilience strategy among the elderly, is consistently reaffirmed in their testimonies. Expressions of gratitude for blessings, such as good health and long life, are central to their reflections on faith in God (Menezes and Reis, 2017, pp.761-6).

Research on the role of spirituality and resilience reveals a positive and significant relationship between spirituality, quality of life, and resilience across different genders, ages, occupations, and health conditions. Individuals with higher levels of spirituality tend to have a better quality of life and greater resilience in facing life's challenges. The connection between spirituality and quality of life is more prominent among older individuals, whereas among those still working or studying, the relationship between spirituality and resilience tends to be weak to moderate. Similarly, weak to moderate correlations between spirituality and resilience were found among respondents with health issues or chronic illnesses, as well as in productive individuals. Notably, the

older the respondents, the stronger the link between spirituality and resilience.

Strategies and Techniques to Cultivate Resilience -Islamic & Psychological Perspective

Some of the strategies and techniques that can help us cultivate resilience are:

i. **Divine discipline:** Divine discipline is the Islamic moral concept that God is the source, the ruler, and the rewarder of morality, based on the Quranic verse that say: "Indeed, God does not wrong the people at all, but it is the people who are wronging themselves" (Holy Quran, 10:44)

ii. **Patience:** Patience is the Islamic moral concept that helps people cope with and recover from adversity, and that is supported and rewarded by Allah, based on the Quranic verse that say: "O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, God is with the patient" (Holy Quran, 2:153)

iii. **Benevolence:** is the Islamic moral concept that helps people be kind, generous, and compassionate to others, and that is supported and rewarded by Allah, based on the Quranic verse that say: "And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive, [saying], 'We feed you only for the countenance of God. We wish not from you reward or gratitude. Indeed, We fear from our Lord a Day austere and distressful" (Holy Quran, 76:8-10)

iv. **Self-mastery:** learning to self-regulate our emotions, thoughts, and actions, and to focus on the present moment and what we can control.

v. **Self-awareness:** being true to ourselves and our values, and recognizing our strengths and weaknesses.

vi. **Self-care:** taking care of our physical, mental, and emotional health, and seeking support when needed.

vii. **Self-compassion:** being kind and forgiving to ourselves, and acknowledging our common humanity and shared suffering.

viii.   **Self-efficacy:** believing in our abilities and capacities, and setting realistic and achievable goals.

  ix.   **Self-transcendence:** finding meaning and purpose in our lives, and connecting with something greater than ourselves, such as nature, spirituality, or a cause.

In Islam, resilience is viewed not only as a personal trait but also as a social responsibility. Muslims are encouraged to support one another and work together in good deeds, particularly during times of crisis and hardship. Resilience is also a pathway to earning Allah's pleasure and reward, as Allah loves those who show patience and gratitude, promising them blessings both in this life and the hereafter. Almighty Allah says: "Indeed, those who have said, 'Our Lord is God' and then remained on a right course - the angels will descend upon them, (saying), 'Do not fear and do not grieve but receive good tidings of Paradise, which you were promised. We [angels] were your allies in worldly life and (are so) in the Hereafter. And you will have therein whatever your souls desire, and you will have therein whatever you request (or wish) as accommodation from a (Lord who is) Forgiving and Merciful." (Holy Quran, 41:30-32)

Resilience is not merely a solitary pursuit but a shared journey, woven through the fabric of our relationships and interactions with others. Like the threads of a tapestry, our resilience gains strength from the support and connections we build around us. It is a moral value that inspires us to face life's challenges with courage, stand tall with dignity, and move forward with hope. In moments of hardship, resilience becomes the quiet flame that guides us, not only lifting ourselves but also encouraging those around us to endure and thrive together.

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