Rethinking the Causes of Moral Decline from the Perspectives of the Bible and the Qur'ān

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Abstract

This study explores the essential causes of moral decline in humans, as presented in the Bible and Qur'ān. Applying a thematic comparative approach supported by textual analysis, this study explores the shared themes, parallels, and scriptural visions of the key causes of moral decline. By analyzing key passages, this article highlights how both scriptures identify the four timeless essential factors of recurring moral decline: Satan, envy, anger, and lying. These four elements serve as the roots of many modern ethical crises, distorting the moral fabric of human behavior in contemporary societies. While many empirical and applied studies have addressed the external symptoms of moral decline, this study aims to examine its key causes from a theological and scriptural perspective. Drawing on the ethical framework of both the Bible and the Qur'ān, this study highlights how these divine texts diagnose the roots of human moral failure and offer solutions for humanity to regain its instinctual purity and live in peace and prosperity. The study's findings demonstrate the shared moral wisdom of Christian and Islamic traditions, emphasizing that identifying and understanding the deep-rooted causes of moral decline within the framework of the divine guidance of the Bible and the Qur'ān is vital for resolving contemporary ethical challenges in an increasingly fragmented world. Thus, this study contributes to interfaith moral discourse and opens avenues for further studies on addressing ethical issues in the modern context.

Keywords: anger; Bible; envy; lying; moral decline; Qurʾān; Satan

INTRODUCTION

The concept of "moral decline" signifies the belief that the ethical standards of society are deteriorating over time. Thus, the issue of moral decline has been present since the beginning of human existence on Earth (Mastroianni & Gilbert, 2023). Furthermore, most social, economic, and political issues are only aspects of the absence of morality (Alvi et al., 2022). A recent study emphasized that morality plays a crucial role in shaping and regulating social perception, facilitating the formation of social identities and political relations (Pagliaro et al., 2024). Another study outlines the fact that the absence of moral sentiments in economic frameworks can undermine social welfare, emphasizing the effective role of ethical considerations in promoting sustainable economic growth (Erasmo et al., 2023). This study seeks to identify and examine the enduring causes of moral decline that continue to corrupt human conduct and alienate people from divine guidance in today's complex context. By engaging with key scriptural passages from the Bible and the Qur'ān, this article aims to explore how these sacred texts diagnose the roots of moral decline and propose a holistic approach and moral responses to confront them, bridging ancient wisdom with contemporary realities. This study aims to offer an ethical framework deduced from the divine guidance of the Bible and the Qur'ān to demonstrate the power of religion in sustaining moral order and strengthening human moral and spiritual well-being.

This study posits that the four fundamental factors, namely temptations of Satan, envy, anger, and lying, represent not merely theological or historical concerns but timeless root causes of many modern ethical crises, distorting the moral fabric of human behavior in contemporary societies. This study argues that identifying and understanding these four key causes of moral decline is essential for resolving various contemporary ethical dilemmas. These four causes

were selected in the study based on their central role and recurring presentation in the moral teachings of both the Bible and the Qur'an as root causes of moral degradation, highlighting their pivotal status in understanding moral decline from a scriptural perspective. Furthermore, a substantial body of research identifies each of these four factors as among the most influential causes contributing to humans' moral decline.

Covan's (2021) article, "The Devil-the First Apophatic Theologian," attributes to the devil the causes of moral deterioration and the existence of evil in the world. This article draws on theological and biblical sources to discuss the nature and actions of the devil. Schimmel's (1997) book, "The seven Deadly Sins: A New Interpretations," counts envy and anger as two of the primary causes of unhappiness and moral struggle in the social and religious contexts. In their article, "Envy and Extreme Violence," Knoll et al. (2022) associate envy with moral inferiority and violent criminal behavior. Dubreuil's (2015) article, "Anger and Morality," presents how anger can motivate wrongdoing and aggressive behavior. Garcia's (1998) article, "Lies and the Vices of Self-Deception," demonstrates that lying is morally wrong and is seen as the most heinous act of treachery and manipulation. Furthermore, contemporary scholarship continues to underscore the significant role of religious moral teachings in dealing with the moral challenges of modern societies. In his book, "The Culture of Cynicism: American Morality in Decline," Stivers (1994) argues that the absence of moral authority in modern technological societies has contributed to fostering pervasive cynicism, moral decay, and social division. In his work, "Biblical Ethics and Social Change," Mott (2011) draws attention to the significant role of biblical principles in promoting personal morality and societal reform. In the Islamic context, Hunter (2017) in his chapter "Science, the Qur'ān, and the Moral Community," Doran Hunter outlines the essential role of

Qur'ānic moral guidance in building a just and moral society and securing social well-being.

These studies reinforce this article's central argument that divine religious texts remain pivotal sources for identifying the persistent roots of moral decline, emphasizing that Satan, envy, anger, and lying are universal and timeless causes of ethical failure. These moral failings continue to shape the ethical challenges faced by modern global society. Furthermore, identifying the causes of moral decline and their proposed solutions, as articulated in the Bible and the Qur'an, remains largely unexamined. The present article is an attempt to address this gap.

METHOD

This article employs a thematic-textual comparative and analytical approach to examine how the primary causes of moral failings—Satan, envy, anger, and lying—are addressed within the Bible and the Qur'ān as timeless human spiritual trials, offering parallel ethical warnings and guidance. The thematic comparison aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the relevance of the religious moral framework in identifying the enduring causes of human moral decline. The analytical approach used in this study seeks to identify and analyze the shared scriptural moral themes relevant to the key causes of moral decline and the proposed solution to confront them. The analysis gives a special focuses on what the Bible and the Qur'an teach about fighting Satan's whisperings, purifying the heart from jealousy and envy, and controlling one's anger and tongue, ultimately aiming to end up with a moral code that can be effective in reshaping human morality. The comparison between the Bible and the Qur'ān in this study is based on their shared ethical guidance and approach to addressing the core moral failings threatening individual and social well-being. The core analysis gives a primary focuses on the

Bible and the Qur'ān, while occasional references to Judaism are also considered to situate the discussion within the wider Abrahamic ethical tradition.

This article's scope is restricted to addressing the essential causes of humans' moral decline from a religious perspective as presented in the Bible and the Qur'an, highlighting that moral excellence must be grounded in an awareness of these underlying moral causes. However, secular ethical discourse should be explored in future studies. This article does not delve into further subordinate causes, as this is too mighty of a task and can be addressed in a future article. It does not engage with theological debates and discourses on the veracity of the scriptural texts, as this is beyond the scope of the article and its purpose. This article has made use only of the officially established texts, far removed from any authority or personal involvement favoring one side over another. This approach supports the implementation of a neutral and objective methodology in examining scriptural teachings on moral decline.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Religiosity and Morality

Morality is a set of principles derived from the basic ideals of religion to be implemented by humans (Muslehuddin, 2003). Some researchers argue that religion is not important or relevant to the development of human well-being, emphasizing that the decline of religion can contribute to the development of universal rights and tolerance. They further contend that religion can reinforce social divisions and hostile attitudes (De Wit, 2016; Hobson & Inzlicht, 2016). In contrast, other perspectives suggest that religion can offer guidance on the true perceptions of life and how to handle the complexities of the world (Laksana & Wood, 2019). These perspectives argue that human rationality is not a sufficient source of ethics, since rationality

is often connected with optimal decision-making, while human decisions are affected by ethical considerations and intrinsic values extending beyond simple logical reasoning (Johnson & Reath, 2011).

Moreover, religion has historically contributed to the formation of ethical and moral values (Astrachan et al., 2020). But why religion? In answering this question, Smith (2002) noted: "Religion was a moral force, the powers that men revered were on the side of social order and moral low; and the fear of God was a motive to enforce the laws of society, which were also the laws of morality." In the same vein, Benedict (1938) added: "Moral concerns become a central value of religion in man's history just as the pearl constitutes the value of the oyster. As the oyster must develop pearls, religion must develop moral engagement". Therefore, commitment to religion is a safe haven for developing good morals (Erni & Asror, 2022). Without religion or God, humans can never develop morality and sound behavior or conduct (Zuckerman, 2020).

Religion is a power that can change human attitudes and keep them away from bad behavior and low attributes. It inculcates a sense of God-fearing and encourages individuals to achieve high attributes and upright morality. Proving firm faith and a strong moral character is a permanent guarantee for humans to live in harmony and make ethical choices (I. H. Smith & Kouchaki, 2021). In particular, the primary focus of divine religions is to refine human behavior and shape moral character (Batool, 2025; Khazaei, 2019; Rustum & Moin, 2024). Within the Islamic tradition, one of the main missions of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH, the Seal of Prophets, was to perfect the excellence of character (Al-Bukhārī, 1989). Religious texts of divine scriptures are a significant source of moral knowledge. "They provide detailed rules and 'interdictions' about how life should and should not be lived" (Day, 2020). They can shape human beliefs, show the nature of good and evil, and answer questions related to purpose in life

(Davis et al., 2019). They contain a set of moral and ethical principles that guide human actions and affect decision-making (Liyanapathirana & Akroyd, 2023). Furthermore, they help humans make choices that align with their values (Cornwell et al., 2005). The Vatican Council concludes: "humans, as moral beings with dignity, find their "full confirmation in the very fact of revelation, through which is signified the establishment of contact between God and people "' (Pope John Paul II, 2008).

The Bible and Qur'ān contain the broad principles needed to negotiate the problems that arise in human societies in different ages. They provide a moral system that is constant and can improve all facets of human life and the soul. This system implies rewards for virtues and punishments for sin to help humans morally and shun vices (Malinowski, 1936). It emphasizes compassion, love, harmony, selflessness, inner peace, forgiveness, trust, sound behavior, and developing a sense of purpose and meaning by manifesting the rewards and sanctions associated with morality (Elsayed et al., 2023). Consequently, human moral behavior is influenced by commitment to divine and moral imperatives and guidance.

Scriptural Commonalities in Focus

In Muslims' belief, the God who revealed the Torah to Moses and the Gospels to Jesus is the same God who gave the Qur'ān to Muḥammad. God says in the Qur'ān: "He has sent down upon you, [O Muḥammad], the Book in truth, confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel." (Qur'ān, 3:3) These divine scriptures instruct the magnitude of living morally, the immense rewards of the virtuous and the severe sanctions awaiting the evil doers. In other words, morality is the supreme value that is central to the teachings of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

The Qur'ān narrates events which are mentioned in the Bible such as the creation of Adam and Eve, their temptations by Iblis

(Lucifer), Cain and Abel and the first human's murder, and the stories of the preceding Prophets and their implications. The commonalities and similarities of the Qur'ānic teachings and narratives with those of the Bible have led some Western researchers and thinkers to engage in a long debate and claim that Muḥammad PBUH quoted Qur'ānic events and stories from the Biblical passages and reproduced the Qur'ān either by reading them himself or through his Jewish and Christian friends (Shepardson, 1890). Prominent orientalists of the nineteenth and twentieth century such as Theodor Noldeke, William Muir, A. Sprenger, Ignaz Goldziher, Wellhausen, W. Montgomery Watt and Richard Bell rehearsed the old Meccan disbelievers' views on the Prophet Muḥammad PBUH and the Qur'ān in the times of the commence of *waḥy* (revelation). They asserted that the term *waḥy* is nothing but "suggestions" and "intellectual locution" (Bell, 1934).

In his masterpiece, Life of Adam and Eve, M.D. Johnson commented on the similarities of the portrayal of Satan's temptation to Adam in the Bible and the Qur'ān: "It is possible that Muḥammad had knowledge about the Fallen Angel and how it happened from other Jewish or Christian writings. There are also similarities between some verses in the Quran and the Gospel of Bartholomew, but it is not possible to confirm which source Muḥammad used. The fact that there are coinciding descriptions in both writings indicates that they have a common source or that Muḥammad knew the Gospel of Bartholomew or another source that describes the same material of origin" (Johnson, 1985). In the same vein, Bamberger added, "Muḥammad used both Jewish and Christian literature and combined it with superstitions of his own people" (Bamberger, 2010). It is worthy to mention that Johnson and Bamberger give their readers the impression that the Qur'ān is an ordinary book composed and authored by a human who mastered rhyming the words and derived its teachings and instructions from Judaism and Christianity. In Islamic literature,

illiteracy is one of the remarkable attributes of Prophet Muḥammad PBUH. He had no formal education and had never read a sacred book. The Qur'ān was a divine revelation that came to him from God the Exalted in Might (Al-Dawri, 1994; Ḥusayn, 2021; Sarḥān, 2007). Thomas Carlyle, a Scottish orientalist, said: "We must not forget: that he [Muhammed] had no school learning; of the thing we call school learning none at all. The art of writing was but just introduced into Arabia; it seems to be the true opinion that Mahomet never could write!" (Carlyle, 2013). Based on the Qur'ānic view, it is evidently impossible that Prophet Muḥammad could compose the Qur'ān or even change a single letter of it (Qur'ān, 10:15). Moreover, the Qur'ān refers to the Prophet Muḥammad as *Al-Nabī Al-Ummī* (the Unlettered Prophet), which contributes to the veracity of his Prophethood.

Satan and Moral Deterioration

In his masterpiece, *The Fall of Satan in the Thought of St. Ephrem and John Milton*, Gary Anderson commented on the Islamic discourse on the story of Adam's creation and Satan's rebellion: "One should mention its surprising prominence in Islam the story was told and retold some seven times in the Koran and was subsequently subject to further elaboration among Muslim exegetes and storytellers" (Anderson, 2010). Qur'ān commemorates Iblis (Lucifer's) hostility and enmity to Adam and his progeny since Adam's creation.

Iblis unveils his hostility by arrogantly refusing to obey God and prostrate to Adam (Qur'ān, 2:34). As a result, God curses him, expelled him out of Paradise and reprieved him till the day of Judgement (Qur'ān, 38:77-80). Iblis' respite is his opportunity for revenge (Al-Ṭabarī, 1997). Since then, Satan and his progeny have constantly tried all their means to seduce the children of Adam, misguide them, weaken the link between God and humans and turn them ungrateful to their Creator (Qur'ān, 7: 16-17) (Omairah, 2017). He tirelessly works to distance humans from upright morality by enticing arrogance,

pride, show off, boasting, and egotism in their hearts. Anas RA reported that the Prophet PBUH said: "When God created Adam in Paradise, God bequeathed him what he wished to bequeath him. Iblis then began to walk around Adam to see what he was. When Iblis perceived that Adam was hollow, he (Iblis) knew that Adam was created as a creature who could not restrain himself" (Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, 1991). Based on the Hadith, Iblis has become familiar with Adam's doors of weakness and resolves to exploit them. Satan successfully misguides Adam and Eve into eating from the forbidden tree of eternity. He swore to both of them that he was their sincere advisor. In Qur'ān 2:37, God instructed them to repent and accepted their swift return to Him (Al-Qurṭubī, 1964). Moreover, the Qur'ān confirms that Iblis is powerless against those who have piety and maintain their moral integrity (Qur'ān 17:65).

In Genesis 3:1-24, 2 Cor 11:3, 2Tim 2:13, Psalm 8, and Rom 5:12-21, the serpent deceived and tempted Eve to eat from the forbidden tree, and then Adam ate from the tree, and they both broke God's command (Johnson, 1985). The Qur'ān aligns with the Bible on the account of Satan's misguidance of Adam and Eve.

According to the Old and New Testaments, it was the serpent who whispered to Eve, while it was Iblis, as mentioned in the Qur'ān. However, both Iblis and the serpent are different manifestations of one evil power that has mainly intended to misguide humans (Bahrunī, 1996). Satan's enmity towards Adam and his progeny was explicit in his stubbornness, jealousy, arrogance, envy, and rebellious behavior since Adam's creation (Anderson et al., 2000). Genesis 3:14-17 demonstrates the downfall of serpent, Adam and Eve from Garden to earth as their punishment for disobeying God. Despite there is no explicit reference to Adam's repentance in the Bible, there is evidence that Adam was instructed the knowledge of good and evil to be reluctant in obeying God on earth (Genesis 3:22-24). In the synoptic

Gospels, Satan is presented as Jesus' opponent in eschatology in Mark, connected to human sinfulness and moral failings in Matthew, and portrayed as the ruler of demons in Luke (Glancy, 1990).

Consequently, Satan is depicted in the Bible and the Qur'ān as a figure who exploits human weakness and tempts humans to sin, prioritize worldly pleasures and material possessions, and oppose God's Will. He is the main reason for the lack of intrinsic morality in humans and the change of good individuals into perpetrators of evil acts (Staffelbach, 2019; Zimbardo, 2008). He is seen as an adversary and tempter who tries to lead people astray from the path of righteousness. Satan may manipulate man's thoughts and cast doubt on his faith and God's commands (Abbasi et al., 2020). Again, the Bible and the Qur'ān demonstrate that commitment to God's obedience, refraining from His disobedience, and seeking refuge in God from the accursed Satan are indispensable keys for humans to protect their morality and fend off Satan's tactics. Therefore, whoever obeys God and surrenders to His Divine Will is at peace with himself, fellow human beings, and God (Esposito, 2003).

Jealousy and Envy

"Envy is a gun with a faulty breech-lock which flares back and burns the gunner," said Austin O'Malley (1858-1932), author of *Medical Homicide and Mutilation* (Khan & Ghani, 2018). In Islamic tradition, the Prophet Muḥammad PBUH condemned envy, saying, "Beware of (malicious) envy, for verily it destroys good deeds the way fire destroys wood" (Abū Dāwūd, 1996). In warning against envy which is one of most dangerous diseases of the heart which leads to moral decline, there are two traditional biblical wisdoms mentioned in Proverbs as follows: "Wrath is cruel and anger is outrageous, but who is able to stand before Envy?" (Proverbs 27:4) "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but Envy rots the bones" (Proverbs 27:4). Jealousy is a complex human reaction that is felt due to arrogance or

feeling threatened by self-esteem through comparisons with rivals (Duma, 2009). Envy occurs "when a person lacks a superior quality, achievement or possession and either desire it or wish that the other lacked it" (Parrott & Smith, 1993). Jealousy and envy are similar in meaning and are sometimes used synonymously. Both undermine human morality, bring the pain of deprivation, and make the life of the envier miserable rather than happy (Khan & Ghani, 2018).

Historically, envy was the first sinful act committed in heaven and on earth. The creation of Adam made the devil, the originator of all evils, burst into jealousy with malevolent envy. He refused to obey the command of God and prostrate to Adam. As a result of his arrogance and envy, he was exiled from Heaven. Since then, he has strived hardly to ruin the morality of Adam's descendants through guiding them to imitate him in his jealousy and envy (Qur'ān, 7:11-17).

The Qur'ān records the story of the first murder in human history when Hābīl (Abel) was killed by his beloved brother Qābīl (Cain). The prime motive for this murder was Cain's envy of his brother Abel. In their interpretation of Qur'ān 5:27-31, Muslim scholars of exegesis have two opinions regarding the reason for Cain's jealousy. First, Adam was instructed to marry each son to the twin sister of the other. Out of jealousy, Cain saw his twin sister as more beautiful and felt he was more worthy of marrying her than Abel. Therefore, he adamantly refused to respond to his father's guidance (Al-Ṭabarī, 1997). Second, Abel was a farmer, and Cain was a shepherd. Both were instructed by Adam to offer a sacrifice, and whoever is accepted and received, he shall marry the twin sister of Cain. Abel's sacrifice was accepted, and a fire descended from heaven and consumed it. Cain's inner self justified the murder of his brother, and he killed his brother out of jealousy (Al-Rāzī, 1999). Imām Al-Qurṭubī saw the latter interpretation as more likely to be sound than

the earlier (Al-Qurṭubī, 1964). In the same vein, the Qur'ān tells the story of the envy of Joseph's brothers, which is linked to the devil, the progenitor of all evils and the ruiner of morality. When Joseph unveiled his dream to his father, his father advised him not to relate his vision to his brothers so that the Satan may not cast envy in their hearts, as indeed Satan is a manifest enemy to humans (Qur'ān,12:4-5).

The Biblical narrative recounts Cain's angry and fury motivated by jealousy and envy towards his brother Abel; as Cain's offering is rejected and Abel was accepted (Genesis 4: 1-6). In Hebrews 11:4 and 1 John 3:12, it is demystified that Abel, by faith, offered his sacrifice, and it was accepted, whereas Cain's sacrifice was that of evil. Shlomo Yitzhaqi, a Jewish Rabbi, illustrated that envy was the chief motif for the murder of Abel (the shepherd) by Cain (the farmer). He further added that Cain's offering was rejected because it was of lesser quality, whereas Abel's offering was accepted because it was of the finest quality (Judaeus, 1952; Taylor, 2014). However, the Jewish Midrash considers inner desire to be the real reason behind the murder (Fresch, 2002; Umbarger, 2023).

> In the Biblical view, the one whose heart is full of hatred towards his fellow human being will not be morally crowned as the imitator of the righteous Abel, rather he is considered as an imitator of Cain since "the one who hates his brother is a murderer." (1 John 3:15) (Murphy, 2018). In Genesis 37-50, the jealousy of Joseph's brothers towards his future glory, as was manifested in the dream he shared with them, led his brothers to sell and exile him. However, Joseph pardons them and reacts generously and mercifully towards them (Murphy, 2018).

In the Qur'ānic view, the remedy for jealousy and envy is mentioned in Abel's response to his brother. When Cain declared his intention to kill his brother Abel. Abel said: "Indeed, God accepts only

from the righteous." (Qur'ān 5:27) And piously said: "Surely, I fear God, Lord of Worlds." (Qur'ān 5:28) Likewise, the story of Joseph in the Qur'ān was concluded by Joseph's supplications to make him die as a Muslim and to join him with the righteous (Qur'ān, 12:101). Consequently, fearing God, invoking Him, and attaining righteousness are humans' best solutions for fighting envy and saving one's inner morality.

The Biblical narrative on fighting jealousy and envy through righteousness is similar to the voice of the Qur'ān. The words in Psalms 51: 19 are: "Then you will delight in the offering of the righteous." In this regard, Masson (1958) highlights the similarity between Abel's admonition in the Qur'ān and that mentioned in the Psalms. Notwithstanding, both the Bible and the Qur'ān cite and reiterate envy as the main motive for the exile of Adam and his wife from paradise, the murder of Abel by his envious brother Cain, Joseph's suffering for long period because of his envious brothers. The Qur'ānic and Biblical themes of fighting jealousy and malicious desires through attaining righteousness overlap. The complete submission of one's passions to the Divine Will has wonderful moral results. Conversely, filling the heart with malicious envy has dreadful moral consequences.

Anger

The Qur'ān addresses human psychological emotions and considers anger a part of human nature. Words such as *al-ghayẓ* (fury) and *al-sakhaṭ* (rage) are used interchangeably in the Qur'ān to connote anger (Qur'ān, 3:134, 3:162, 4:93, 5:60, 9:15, 47:28, 48:6, 58:14, & 60:13). The Qur'ān constantly warns against anger, which is triggered by arrogance, egotism, argument, and persuasion of worldly gains. This type of anger extinguishes the light of logic and wisdom, obliterates the mind, distracts one's attention, and weakens one's morality and ability to give fair judgments. Furthermore, it inculcates grudges,

envy, ill intentions, and hatred in one's heart. On the other hand, the Qur'ān appraises this type of anger, which is a normal human reaction to violations of God's boundaries (Al-Ghazālī, 2011). This type of anger is evident in Prophet Jonah's story in the Qur'ān, who, in a state of anger, left his people because of their disobedience to Allah (Qur'ān 21:87). This is also manifest in the story of Moses when he returned to his people angry and grieved because of their disbelief in Allah and worship of the Calf (Ghazzal, 2011). The Qur'ān also appraises a type of anger that is controlled or associated with pardon, patience, and forgiveness (Qur'ān 3:134) (Ibn Kathīr, 2006).

The Qur'ān instructs the guidance on how to manage one's anger by strengthening one's piety, self-discipline, and seeking refuge in Allah against the Satan's whisperings (Qur'ān 3:133-134 & 7:200). It also invites pardoning and forgiving the faults of others as well as repelling evil deeds (Qur'ān 41:34) (Al-Nawawī, 1992). The Prophetic Hadiths provide more orientations towards controlling one's anger by performing Wudu (ritual ablution), adopting quietness, and changing one's position as it helps to have less tension and be more relaxed (Faizah et al., 2021). The Prophet PBUH said, "When one of you is angry, he should be silent" (Al-Bukhārī, 1989). He said, "When one of you becomes angry while standing, he should sit down. If the anger leaves him, well and good; otherwise, he should lie down" (Abū Dāwūd, 1996). He said: "Anger comes from the devil, the devil was created of fire, and fire is extinguished only with water; so when one of you becomes angry, he should perform ablution" (Al-Bayhaqī, 2003). Once again, Islam deals with anger as a normal human feeling and guides its control rather than elimination or overflow.

From a Biblical perspective, there are two types of anger: righteous and sinful (Pedersen, 1974). The righteous and the proper one is motivated by the love of God, which is manifested in the angry reaction of Moses, who smashed the tablets of the law when his people

worshipped the calf (Exodus 32:19) (Schwartz & Kaplan, 2004). It is also obvious in Jesus' anger at the Pharisees for the cruelty of their hearts and their desire that Jesus breaks their law (Mark 3:5). Jesus's anger was also seen in the cleansing of the temple when money chargers used it as a place of business rather than a place of prayer (Mathew 21:12-13) (Bishop Youssef, 2010). Sinful and inappropriate anger is motivated by egotism and can be internal, which is felt in the heart, or external, which can be verbally or physically expressed (Cerling, 1974). Both are immoral and blameworthy and counted as a sin (Mathew 5:21-22) since they incite hostility, strife, violence, and much transgression (Proverbs 29:22, 30:33, and Luke 4:28-29) (Miller & Jackson, 2010).

In the Biblical view, anger is an intrinsic human trait, but it must be managed and controlled so that it does not lead to a greater sin (Genesis 4:7, Ephesians 4:26-27, and Colossians 3:8-9) (Pedersen, 1974). Humans are invited to change their attitudes (Romans 12:2) and substitute anger with patience, love, peace, gentleness, self-control, kindness, pardon, tolerance, forgiveness, and tenderness of the heart (Galatians 5:22-24, Ephesians 4:31-32, and Luke 21:19) (McLemore, 1984).

It is obvious that both the Bible and the Qur'ān provide guidance that develops a bigger capacity for human beings and insightful strategies that are extremely helpful in managing one's anger. Both scriptures view anger as an instinctual human characteristic that must be wisely discharged and managed. Otherwise, it will accumulate from within and eventually lead to moral decline.

Lying

Lying is among the common sins that humans commit, either consciously or unconsciously, in one form or another. In her definition of lying, Sissela Bok stated, "any intentionally deceptive message which is stated. It takes place when human beings purposely distort,

withhold, or manipulate information reaching to others so as to mislead them" (Bok, 2011). It is to disseminate wrong information about something to attain a personal advantage (Ibn ʾAdī, 2002). It is the archetype of all immorality and is essentially a breach of one's faith (Chisholm & Feehan, 1977). Lying might unjustly harm someone, or be beneficial to someone while harming another, or might be said solely for the pleasure of lying, or to please others in smooth discourse. The deadly type of lying is that which is uttered in the teaching of religion (St. Augustine, 2002).

Qur'ān warns against lying as it is counted among the diseases of the heart and it gets morally worse when a human become addictive to it (Qur'ān, 2:10 & 9:77). Lying is the opposite of truth (Ibn Manẓūr, 1997) which incites a human to betray the trust, break promises, gossip, and give false witness (Qur'ān 8:27 & 22:30, 68:10-11) (Ṭabbārah, 1978). It is a sign of hypocrisy and insincerity, which brings God's wrath, curse, and severe punishment (Qur'ān, 58:14-15, & 6:21). In this regard, Al-Manāwī said, "The ugliness of lying is the cause of all other forms of ugliness. With the abandonment of lying, ugliness is abandoned too" (Al-Shaybānī, 1927). It is strictly forbidden as it is a bad moral characteristic that destroys one's faith and morality (Qur'ān, 2:9, 16:105 & 40:28) (Al-Maqarrī, 1978).

The Qur'ān indicates that humans are instinctually inclined to be truthful and avoid lying and falsehood. He can best protect his upright morality and distance himself from lying by enjoining strong faith, weighing his words before being uttered, and thinking about the consequences of lying in the Hereafter (Qur'ān, 2:9-10, 11:18-20, 16: 105, 39:60 & 50:18). It is a sign of superior morality that a human fears God, quickly and sincerely repent, be honest, purifies his innermost thoughts and tells the truth (Qur'ān 4:17-18, 110, 135 & 5:119). On the consequences of lying and rewards of being honest and telling the truth, the Prophet PBUH said: "Avoid falsehood, for falsehood leads

to wickedness and wickedness to Hell. If a man continues to speak falsehood and makes falsehood his object, he will be recorded in Allah's presence as a great liar. Adhere to the truth, for truth leads to good deeds and good deeds lead to Paradise. If a man continues to speak the truth and makes truth his object, he will be recorded in Allah's presence as eminently truthful" (Al-Nawawī, 1992).

In the Biblical view, Jesus condemns any attempt to twist the words or not explicitly tell the truth (Mathew 5:37;7:15 & John 14:6). He anticipated for his followers to be truthful (Ephesians 4:15 & 4:25). Acts 5:1-11 mentions that Ananias and Sapphira were punished with death because of their sin of lying. The couple introduced a donation and falsely pretended to be more generous than they really were (St. Augustine, 2002).

The Bible prohibits lying and counts it among the immoral things that God hates (Colossians 3:9, Leviticus:19:11 & Proverb 6:16-17) (Colish, 2005). It is considered as a practice of the lawless and is associated with hypocrisy (1 Timothy 1:9-11 & 4:2). Moreover, the liar will never dwell in the house of God, as he shares the attributes of Satan, the father of lies (Psalms 101:7, John 8:44, Revelation 21:8). It would be even worse when it is used in the judicial realm, as it distorts the facts, impairs fair judgments, and harms the innocent (Exodus 20:16, 23:7 & Deuteronomy 5:16, 19:16-21) (Swezey, 1980).

To avoid lying, the Biblical guidance instructs fighting its causes, especially when a human tells lies to achieve personal advantages (Genesis 31:7, 1kings 21:1-16, Proverbs 11:1, and Proverbs 19:22), hides one's mistakes or sins (Genesis 37:28, 31-33), is driven by pride and envy (Psalms 59:12), or becomes adapted to lying (Jeremiah 9:4,5) (Echols, 1963). It warns against the consequences of lies which guides to more sins (Amos 2:4 & Exodus 8:28-29), threatens one's social respect and trust (Psalms 40:4) and brings God's wrath and severe punishment in case if a human does not repent (Proverbs 12:22; 19:5,

9; 28:13, Revelation 21:8, & Isaiah 59:1-4). It encourages telling the truth and refraining from falsehood (Philippians 4:8, Psalms 51:6, & Proverbs 4:24; 30:8) (Grudem, 2009).

It can be deduced from the foregoing discussion that both the Bible and the Qur'ān warn against lying as it leads to more vices and causes a decline in morality. They instruct that truthfulness cherishes one's faith and morality in its perfection, and the person who is lying does not show faith. They advise that one should never lie at all. Otherwise, his abode would be fire if he did not repent in time before he died.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary moral crises, as a result of being humanly overwhelmed by materialistic interests and egoistic mentalities, have affected human relations and transactions. This situation requires a serious rethinking of the causes of man's failure to ensure moral excellence as well as a serious recall to God's transcendental code of morality. In light of the foregoing discussion, this study highlights that Qur'ānic and Biblical guidance and narratives provide an integrated moral authority that is helpful for a human to focus on his purpose in life, grant him protection against the adversary of Satan, and make him successful in fighting any personal inclinations towards evil or a motivation to commit a sin. Living within the domains of religious constraints and boundaries develops self-discipline, good conduct, and fosters spiritual promotion.

A variety of reasons can be explored to reach a conclusion about humans' moral decline. However, by applying thematic-textual comparative analysis to identify and examine the causes of moral decline as articulated in the Bible and the Qur'ān, this study elucidates that there are four main recurring ethical factors that are essential for the existence of vices: Satan's adversary to humans, envy, anger, and

lying. Overcoming these challenges helps create a well-balanced human being of good moral character. Such a person can make decisions properly in different situations, behave well towards others, control his anger and emotions, speak truthfully, attain inner and outer peace, perform good deeds, and ultimately please God.

This article demonstrates the shared moral foundations of the Bible and the Qur'ān, as they almost convey the same teachings and guidance on Satan's adversary against humans and the evil consequences of jealousy, envy, anger, and lying. They significantly contribute to shaping human moral character and provide guidance for humanity at large to live in harmony and solve contemporary problems. Moreover, divine guidance does not intend to curb human desires since they are part of their natural innate, but to regulate them. Therefore, the study demonstrates that divine scriptural wisdom provides not only a descriptive moral narrative but also diagnostic insights into timeless archetypes of moral decline across human history, which remain pertinent in today's world.

Rethinking the causes of moral decline and raising awareness of their underlying effects within the framework of divine guidance of the Bible and the Qur'ān is an urgent necessity for human beings to preserve their intrinsic characteristics, practice their humanity, and develop noble values and attitudes that God has intended for them. Were it not for this divine guidance, mankind would be weak to resist Satan's misguidance and would be left wallowing in the mire of selfishness, grudges, jealousy, envy, and the bad characteristics of anger and lying. Devotion to religion, purifying one's heart, and controlling one's temper and tongue can spoil Satan's plans and successfully lead to the transformation of hate, grudge, anger, and envy into love and peace. Furthermore, religious commitment to good conduct can change a man's attitude from lying to truthfulness and his malice to purity.

By addressing the key foundations of moral decline, this study opens avenues for further research within the framework of religious ethics and interfaith studies. Future research may build upon this study to explore how the essential causes of moral decline can be integrated into addressing ethical issues of the modern digital context, such as intolerance, egocentric behavior, deceitful communication, cyberbullying, digital misinformation, violence, racial injustice, economic exploitation, and the erosion of empathetic engagement in social interactions. Other subordinate themes of moral decline, which are also addressed in both scriptures, could be the focus of future research. More studies can be conducted to expand beyond monotheistic religions to examine whether similar causes of moral decline exist in other religious traditions and the potential for fostering broader and cross-cultural theories of universal ethical archetypes.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest in this manuscript.

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