Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh as a Universal Ethical Paradigm:

An Interdisciplinary and Comparative Study Across World Religions

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Abstract

Across civilizations and historical periods, human societies have relied on ethical frameworks to regulate behavior, ensure social cohesion, and promote collective well-being. Despite doctrinal differences among world religions, a shared moral principle—righteous action—emerges as a universal foundation. Known in Islamic tradition as Amal-e-Saleh and culturally articulated as Kormo Jog, this principle finds parallel expressions in Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, Confucianism, and Zoroastrianism. This paper presents a comprehensive comparative analysis of these traditions, demonstrating that ethical action grounded in intention, responsibility, and compassion constitutes a universal moral core. The study further argues that this shared ethical paradigm has significant implications for contemporary challenges such as social inequality, governance crises, environmental sustainability, and global cooperation.

Keywords

Amal-e-Saleh, Kormo Jog, Karma, Dharma, Comparative Religion, Moral Philosophy, Ethics, Sustainability, Social Responsibility

1. Introduction

The question of how humans ought to act has occupied philosophers, theologians, and policymakers for millennia. While modern societies often frame ethics in secular or legal terms, religious traditions historically provided the primary moral infrastructure guiding individual and collective behavior. In a world increasingly marked by ideological polarization, recognizing common ethical ground is both academically relevant and socially urgent.

This study explores Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh as a conceptual bridge across religious traditions. Rather than treating religions as isolated moral systems, the paper adopts a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to examine how righteous action functions as a shared ethical imperative, transcending theological boundaries.

2. Theoretical Framework: Defining Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh

Kormo Jog, a South Asian moral concept, broadly refers to actions aligned with righteousness, moral duty, and social responsibility. In Islamic theology, Amal-e-Saleh refers to righteous deeds performed with sincere intention (niyyah) and ethical consciousness, emphasizing accountability before God and society.

Three core dimensions define this framework:

Intention – moral actions must be rooted in sincerity and ethical awareness

Action – ethics must be practiced, not merely believed

Impact – actions should promote justice, compassion, and collective well-being

This tripartite structure is not unique to Islam but appears, with contextual variation, across major religious traditions.

Kormo Jog, a South Asian moral concept, broadly refers to actions aligned with righteousness, moral duty, and social responsibility. In Islamic theology, Amal-e-Saleh denotes righteous deeds performed with sincere intention (niyyah) and ethical awareness, emphasizing accountability before God and society. This framework is defined by three core dimensions: Intention, which requires sincerity and moral consciousness; Action, which demands that ethics be practiced rather than only believed; and Impact, which insists that deeds foster justice, compassion, and collective well-being. Although rooted in Islam, this tripartite structure is not unique to it; similar ethical models appear across major religious traditions, reflecting a shared moral grammar.

Defining Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh:
Theoretical Framework

Righteous Actions Aligned with Moral Duty and Social Responsibility

Intention
**Sincere Niyyah
Ethical Awareness**

Action
**Righteous Deeds
Practice Ethics**

Impact
**Justice & Compassion
Collective Well-Being**

Intention • Action • Impact

A Universal Ethical Framework Across Faiths

Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh is a universal ethical framework that integrates moral intention, righteous action, and positive social impact. Rooted in Islamic ethical thought and reflected across major religious and philosophical traditions, the framework emphasizes that ethical value arises from the alignment between inner moral consciousness and outward behavior.

The framework is structured around three interconnected components. First, ethical intention (niyyah) represents moral awareness, sincerity, and responsibility behind an action. Without ethical intention, actions lack moral depth and accountability. Second, righteous action (kormo/amal) refers to the practical implementation of ethical values through justice, honesty, compassion, and responsible conduct in personal and social life. Ethics, within this framework, must be practiced rather than merely believed. Third, positive social impact (saleh) ensures that actions contribute to collective well-being by reducing harm, promoting equity, and supporting sustainable social and environmental systems.

These components operate dynamically: intention guides action, action produces impact, and observed impact reinforces ethical intention. Accountability functions at both

individual and societal levels, ensuring consistency between values and outcomes. As a result, Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh serves as a holistic ethical model applicable to governance, education, sustainability, and social development, demonstrating that righteous action is a shared moral foundation across human civilizations.

3. Comparative Religious Analysis

3.1 Islam: Amal-e-Saleh and Moral Accountability

In Islam, Amal-e-Saleh is inseparable from faith (iman). Ethical action encompasses charity (zakat), social justice, honesty, environmental stewardship, and care for the vulnerable. Moral worth is measured not solely by outcome but by intention and adherence to justice, making ethics both personal and systemic.

In Islam, Amal-e-Saleh is inseparable from faith (iman) and represents righteous deeds performed with sincere intention. Ethical action includes charity (zakat), social justice, honesty, environmental stewardship, and care for the vulnerable. It emphasizes that moral worth is not determined solely by results, but by the sincerity of intention and adherence to justice. Consequently, ethics in Islam is both personal and systemic: individuals are responsible for their inner morality while also contributing to a just and compassionate society. Amal-e-Saleh thus links spiritual faith with tangible social responsibility and accountability.

3.2 Hinduism: Karma and Dharma as Ethical Order

Hindu ethical thought emphasizes:

Karma: the law of moral causality, where actions produce corresponding consequences

Dharma: ethical duty aligned with cosmic and social order

Together, they establish a moral universe in which righteousness sustains harmony at both individual and societal levels.

Hindu ethical thought centers on Karma and Dharma. Karma refers to the law of moral causality, where every action produces corresponding consequences, shaping one's future experiences and spiritual progress. Dharma signifies ethical duty and moral order, guiding individuals to act in ways that uphold cosmic balance and social harmony. Dharma varies according to one's role, responsibilities, and context, but always emphasizes righteousness and moral integrity. Together, Karma and Dharma create a moral universe

where ethical conduct sustains harmony, promotes justice, and supports both personal growth and collective well-being.

3.3 Buddhism: Kusala Karma and the Reduction of Suffering

Buddhist ethics prioritize the alleviation of suffering (dukkha).

Kusala Karma refers to wholesome actions rooted in wisdom and compassion

Puñña (Merit) supports spiritual progress and ethical discipline

Unlike retributive moral systems, Buddhist ethics focus on mindfulness, intention, and liberation from harm.

Buddhist ethics center on reducing suffering (dukkha) through mindful and compassionate living. Kusala Karma refers to wholesome actions motivated by wisdom, compassion, and ethical awareness. Such actions generate positive mental states and contribute to spiritual growth. Puñña (Merit) is earned through ethical conduct, generosity, and disciplined practice, supporting progress toward enlightenment. Unlike retributive moral systems that emphasize punishment or reward, Buddhist ethics focus on intention and mindfulness. The goal is not merely moral compliance but liberation from harm, craving, and ignorance. Thus, ethical action in Buddhism is a path to inner transformation and collective well-being.

3.4 Christianity: Good Works and Moral Love

Christian moral theology emphasizes:

Good Works as expressions of faith

Works of Mercy addressing poverty, illness, and social exclusion

Ethical action is motivated by love (agape) and reflects obedience to divine moral law, reinforcing community care and social justice.

Christian moral theology emphasizes that good works are not merely actions but expressions of genuine faith, showing a lived commitment to God. These include works of mercy—helping the poor, caring for the sick, and supporting those socially excluded—demonstrating compassion in practice. Ethical action is driven by agape, or selfless love, and is guided by obedience to divine moral law, which shapes moral decisions and behavior. In this way, Christian ethics promotes community care and social justice, urging believers to actively respond to human suffering and build a more just and loving society.

3.5 Judaism: Mitzvot and Ethical Obligation

Judaism institutionalizes ethics through:

Mitzvot (commandments) governing personal and social conduct

Tzedakah, which frames charity as justice rather than optional generosity

This legal-ethical system ensures that moral responsibility is embedded in daily life.

Judaism institutionalizes ethics through mitzvot, commandments that guide both personal behavior and social responsibility, shaping how individuals live and interact within society. These rules cover a wide range of actions, from ritual practices to ethical duties, ensuring that morality is woven into everyday life. Tzedakah, the practice of giving, is understood not as voluntary charity but as justice, obliging individuals to support the needy and reduce inequality. This legal-ethical system makes moral responsibility a constant obligation, embedding ethical action in daily routines and community structures, and reinforcing a collective commitment to justice and compassion.

3.6 Sikhism: Seva and Honest Living

Sikh ethics emphasize:

Kirat Karni – earning a livelihood through honest labor

Seva – selfless service without expectation of reward

These principles merge spirituality with social equality and active service.

Sikh ethics emphasize Kirat Karni, the commitment to earn a livelihood through honest, ethical labor, and Seva, selfless service performed without expectation of reward. These core principles connect spiritual life with practical action, encouraging Sikhs to live with integrity and humility. By prioritizing honest work and voluntary service, Sikh ethics promotes social equality, as everyone is seen as equal before God and worthy of respect. Together, Kirat Karni and Seva foster a community-oriented mindset, where spiritual growth is expressed through daily actions that support others and build a just, compassionate society.

3.7 Confucianism: Yi and Ren in Social Harmony

Confucian ethics are relational and societal:

Yi – moral righteousness

Ren – humaneness and empathy

Moral excellence is achieved through ethical leadership, proper relationships, and social responsibility.

Confucian ethics focus on relationships and society, emphasizing that moral life is built through proper conduct within social roles. Yi represents moral righteousness, guiding individuals to do what is just and appropriate in every situation. Ren signifies humaneness and empathy, encouraging people to care for others and act with compassion. Confucian moral excellence is achieved through ethical leadership, where rulers and elders set virtuous examples, and through proper relationships, such as between parent and child, ruler and subject, and friend and friend. By prioritizing social responsibility and harmony, Confucianism promotes a moral order grounded in respect, duty, and mutual care.

3.8 Zoroastrianism: Moral Integration of Thought and Action

Zoroastrianism articulates ethics through:

Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds (Humata, Hukhta, Huvarshta)

This triadic model integrates cognition, speech, and behavior, forming one of the earliest comprehensive ethical systems.

Zoroastrianism presents a clear ethical framework centered on Good Thoughts, Good Words, and Good Deeds, known as Humata, Hukhta, and Huvarshta. This triadic model emphasizes that morality begins in the mind, is expressed through speech, and is completed through action. By integrating thought, speech, and behavior, Zoroastrian ethics teaches that a virtuous life requires consistency across all aspects of human conduct. It encourages individuals to think truthfully, speak honestly, and act righteously, reinforcing a balanced and unified moral life. As one of the earliest comprehensive ethical systems, it highlights personal responsibility and the importance of aligning inner values with outward behavior.

4. Cross-Religious Synthesis

The comparative evidence reveals a striking convergence across traditions:

Ethical Dimension	Shared Emphasis
Intention	Moral sincerity
Action	Ethical practice
Social Impact	Justice and compassion
Accountability	Moral responsibility

These shared elements suggest that ethical action is not culturally accidental but anthropologically fundamental.

Comparative evidence across religious traditions reveals a strong convergence in ethical priorities. Despite different doctrines, they commonly stress moral sincerity, where intention matters as the foundation of ethical behavior. This is paired with ethical practice, emphasizing that beliefs must be translated into real actions. The social impact of these actions is also shared, with a focus on justice and compassion toward others, especially the vulnerable. Additionally, most traditions highlight accountability, insisting that individuals bear responsibility for their choices. Together, these shared elements suggest that ethical action is not merely a cultural invention but an anthropological fundamental rooted in human nature and social life.

5. Contemporary Relevance and Applications

5.1 Ethics and Governance

Integrating Amal-e-Saleh principles into governance can promote transparency, accountability, and social justice.

5.2 Sustainability and Climate Responsibility

Righteous action frameworks support environmental stewardship as a moral obligation.

5.3 Education and Social Policy

Ethics-based education rooted in universal values can reduce extremism and social fragmentation.

5.4 Interfaith Dialogue

Recognizing shared moral ground fosters cooperation rather than conflict among religious communities.

Contemporary relevance and applications of ethical principles like Amal-e-Saleh are visible across modern society. In governance, these values encourage transparency, accountability, and social justice, strengthening public trust and reducing corruption. For sustainability, righteous action frameworks emphasize environmental stewardship as a moral obligation, promoting responsible use of resources and climate responsibility. In education and social policy, teaching ethics rooted in universal values can help reduce extremism and social fragmentation, fostering empathy and social cohesion. Finally, interfaith dialogue benefits from recognizing shared moral principles, which builds cooperation and peaceful coexistence among religious communities rather than conflict.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh represents a universal ethical grammar underlying diverse religious traditions. While theological narratives differ, the moral message remains consistent: human dignity, social responsibility, and righteous action are essential for sustainable and humane societies. Recognizing this shared ethical foundation offers a powerful pathway toward global solidarity, ethical governance, and peaceful coexistence.

This study demonstrates that Kormo Jog / Amal-e-Saleh represents a universal ethical grammar underlying diverse religious traditions. While theological narratives differ, the moral message remains consistent: human dignity, social responsibility, and righteous action are essential for sustainable and humane societies. Recognizing this shared ethical foundation offers a powerful pathway toward global solidarity, ethical governance, and peaceful coexistence. Moreover, the convergence of moral principles suggests that ethics is rooted in shared human values rather than isolated cultural norms. This shared framework can inspire collaborative approaches to global challenges such as poverty, injustice, and environmental degradation, encouraging societies to prioritize compassion, accountability, and collective wellbeing.

Author Statement

Dr. Sharif Uddin Ahmed Rana is an interdisciplinary scholar whose work explores the intersection of ethics, sustainability, technology governance, and social transformation, with a particular focus on translating moral philosophy into practical frameworks for policy and innovation.

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