



MORALITY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MURTADHA MUTHAHHARI'S ETHICS

Abstract: This article explores the ethical thought of Murtadha Muthahhari, a 20th century Islamic scholar from Iran. The study aims to explore Muthahhari's views on morality and human responsibility, which form the basis of ethical behavior in social and religious contexts. Using qualitative research methods and text analysis, the study found that Muthahhari viewed ethics as a fundamental foundation for the formation of civilized and responsible human behavior. He emphasizes the importance of self-awareness as the first step to understanding true morality, which is aligned with the values of faith. The study also shows the relevance of Muthahhari's thought to contemporary moral challenges, particularly in building a just and moral society. By emphasizing the close relationship between faith, reason, and social responsibility, this study provides a deep insight into how Islamic values can be applied in the face of the complexities of modern life.

Keywords: Ethics, Murtadha Muthahhari, Morality, Responsibility, Self-awareness

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Abstrak: Artikel ini mendalami pemikiran etika Murtadha Muthahhari, seorang cendekiawan Islam abad ke-20 dari Iran. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pandangan Muthahhari tentang moralitas dan tanggung jawab manusia, yang membentuk dasar perilaku etis dalam konteks sosial dan religius. Dengan menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dan analisis teks, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa Muthahhari memandang etika sebagai landasan fundamental bagi pembentukan perilaku manusia yang beradab dan bertanggung jawab. Ia menekankan pentingnya kesadaran diri sebagai langkah awal untuk memahami moralitas sejati, yang selaras dengan nilai-nilai iman. Studi ini juga menunjukkan relevansi pemikiran Muthahhari terhadap tantangan moral kontemporer, khususnya dalam membangun masyarakat yang adil dan bermoral. Dengan menekankan hubungan erat antara keimanan, akal budi, dan tanggung jawab sosial, studi ini memberikan wawasan yang mendalam tentang bagaimana nilai-nilai Islam dapat diterapkan dalam menghadapi kompleksitas kehidupan modern.

Kata Kunci: Etika, Murtadha Muthahhari, Moralitas, Tanggung Jawab, Kesadaran Diri

INTRODUCTION

Changing social dynamics, technological developments, and the complexity of global issues create new challenges in maintaining individual morality and social responsibility. As well as emerging issues such as moral challenges facing modern society, changes in ethical values and the impact on one's actions.

Morality can be defined as the principles and values that govern our behavior and decision-making, guiding us to distinguish between right and wrong (Smith, 1988) (Smith, 1988)(Louis P. Pojman and James Fieser, 2011). Responsibility refers to an obligation or duty to act in a certain way and take responsibility for our actions. It involves a scope of duties or obligations assigned to a person by the nature of their position, function or job. Responsibility includes both the functional obligations of a role and moral obligations. (Bivins, 2006)

Murtadha Muthahhari (1919-1979) was a great Iranian scholar and thinker widely recognized for his contribution to the development of ethics in the Islamic tradition. In the Islamic intellectual tradition, he offered a profound and systematic perspective on moral principles, placing human responsibility at the core of moral living. His thought integrates religious, philosophical and social values in an ethical framework that is not only theoretical, but also relevant to the practice of everyday life. The concept of ethics developed by Muthahhari is a philosophical foundation that provides an in-depth look at the relationship between morality, human responsibility, and its influence on individual and societal harmony. (Supriadi, 2006)

Murtadha Muthahhari's ethical thinking is strongly influenced by the Islamic framework, especially the Shi'a teachings that he embraced. He believed that ethics are human actions that should reflect moral values derived from Islamic teachings. In her understanding, morality is inseparable



from religious beliefs and is an important part of the relationship between man and God.

One of the main concepts in Murtadha Muthahhari's thought is the importance of intention (*niyyah*) in every human action. He teaches that truly ethical actions must be based on good intentions, which are linked to the desire to obey religious teachings and do what is right. Therefore, moral action in Murtadha Muthahhari's view relates not only to actual deeds, but also to underlying feelings, goals, and beliefs. Murtadha Muthahhari also emphasizes the importance of justice in Islamic ethics. He taught that all individuals should be treated fairly in social and political contexts, where Murtadha Muthahhari spoke of the importance of fighting injustice and inequality.

Murtadha Muthahhari's ethical views cover such broad and deep aspects that they allow us to explore the close link between human behavior and the moral values that underlie their actions. In Muthahhari's observation, ethics is not just a set of norms, but also a reflection on fundamental human nature and binding moral obligations.

In the context of morality and human responsibility, his thought emphasizes the importance of human freedom as a condition of morality, while still recognizing the framework of divine provisions. Several previous studies have examined Muthahhari's thought from various thematic perspectives. The article "The Constructions of Murtadha Muthahhari's Thought Regarding Divine Will and Human's Will" by Fathurrahman (2019) discusses the relationship between divine will and human will. The article highlights how Muthahhari designed a harmonious relationship between *qadha* and *qadar* and human freedom, which allows humans to take responsibility for their actions without denying divine justice (Fathurrahman, 2019).

Other studies, such as the article "The Concept of Murtadha

Muthahhari on Freedom and Equality of Women's Rights in Islam” by Sri Rahmadani Pasaribu (2023), discuss Muthahhari's views on gender equality. This study shows how Muthahhari distinguishes between equality and identity and criticizes the Western approach to women's emancipation. She asserts that in Islam, women have equal rights with men without having to eliminate the natural differences between them (Pasaribu, 2023). In addition, the article “Exploring the Dimensions of Murtadha Muthahhari's Islamic Thought Leadership and its Relevance to Freedom Learning” by Zainuddin Arifin et al. (2023) explores Muthahhari's contribution to Islamic education. The article highlights Muthahhari's progressive approach that emphasizes the importance of freedom of thought and independent learning, which is relevant to the concept of “freedom learning” (Arifin et al., 2023). And finally Naibin's research entitled “Murtadha Muthahhari: The Philosophy of Islamic Ethics,” focuses on criticizing the Western concept of ethics and highlighting the epistemological differences between Islamic ethics based on religion and reason with Western ethics that tend to be anthropocentric (Naibin, 2020).

Although these four studies have made significant contributions to understanding Muthahhari's thought, there are several research gaps that have not been filled. First, research on the concept of morality and human responsibility in Muthahhari's thought is still rarely found in depth. Most studies focus more on theological aspects, such as the relationship between divine and human will, or social issues such as gender equality, without giving special emphasis on how morality is formed within the framework of human responsibility. Second, most studies only explore the theoretical dimension without touching on the practical relevance of Muthahhari's thought in the context of modern life. These studies tend to be descriptive and do not review the implications of Muthahhari's thought for the formation of



individual moral awareness in contemporary society.

This research focuses on an in-depth exploration of Murtadha Muthahhari's concept of ethics, focusing on his understanding of morality and human responsibility. This research aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by offering a more comprehensive perspective on how Muthahhari's thought can be the basis for the formation of ethical consciousness in modern life, especially in relation to individual responsibility for their moral actions. In this study we will explore in depth the ethical concepts produced by Murtadha Muthahhari, providing a sharper understanding of how morality and human responsibility become pillars in character building and moral orientation in everyday life.

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with textual analysis techniques. Qualitative method is a research approach that aims to understand social or humanistic phenomena through in-depth descriptive data collection. This approach allows researchers to provide a comprehensive interpretation of information obtained from various sources (Creswell, 2014). Textual analysis is applied by reviewing primary literature in the form of books, journals, and other relevant works (Patton, 2002), namely writings related to Murtadha Muthahhari's thought, especially on the concept of morality and human responsibility. The study includes an analysis of Muthahhari's major works as well as an interpretation of texts that discuss Islamic ethics, aiming to explore and relate his ideas within the framework of contemporary morality.

The research also utilizes a philosophical and analytical approach to understand key concepts in Muthahhari's thought. The philosophical approach involves the use of logic and critical reasoning (Audi, 2011) to analyze the structure of arguments as well as ethical principles put forward by Muthahhari. This approach is applied in the process of evaluating the theory of morality and human responsibility that is the main focus of the article. In

addition, the study also highlights Muthahhari's interpretation of religious and philosophical texts, analyzing how he aligns traditional Islamic values with contemporary ethical issues.

With this method, the article produces a study that is not only descriptive, but also interpretative, to connect Murtadha Muthahhari's thought with the dynamics of morality and human responsibility in the modern context.

DISCUSSION

1. Biography of Murtadha Muthahhari

Ayatollah Murtadha Muthahhari is a philosopher, contemporary Shi'a Sufi scholar and one of the leading Islamic re-thinkers in Iran. Muthahhari Born on February 2, 1919 AD, coinciding with the Year 1338 H in the village of Fariman, near the city of Masyhad, Iran (Departemen Agama RI, 2005). His father was Muhammad Husain Muthahhari, a well-known cleric among the Shi'a Muslim community in Iran, who also became his first teacher. Murtadha Muthahhari began his formal education to study religion at the age of 12 at a boarding school in the city of Masyhad. The core of his religious education was the field of jurisprudence. He also showed a great love for philosophy, Sufism, and theologians, a love that he maintained throughout his life. To research the documents, he was mentored by senior scholar Mirza Mehdi Shhidi Razawi. After the death of his teacher, he moved to Qum in 1973. In Qum, he tutored two major Shi'a figures, namely Ayatollah Ruhumullah Khomeini who was famous for his mystical moral teachings, as well as the relationship he built with Ayatollah Muhammad Husain Thabathabi'i, the mufasir and philosopher.

In 1952, Murtadha Muthahhari left Qum for Tehere, where he



began teaching logic, fiqh, philosophy and kalam science at the madrassa-yi marvi, and two years later, he returned as a lecturer at a Faculty of Theology at Teher University, and he even became the director of the University's Philosophy Department. Murtadha Muthahhari also joined Islamic organizations, including Husainiyah-yi Irsyad which was established in 1965 (Sibarani, 2021). He delivered many sermons through this organization, which were later published as books. Apart from being busy in the field of science, Murtadha Muthahhari was also active in politics to fight the Shah Pahlevi regime which was known as a dictator. In his political movement, Murtadha Muthahhari was active in various political organizations, especially the Union of Militant Clerics (*Jami 'ab-yi Ruhaniyat-i Mubariẓ*), an organization that brought together Iranian Shi'a clerics with the aim of supporting Imam Khomeini's call. The Islamic Revolution and the overthrow of Shah Reza Pahlavi. One month before Iran's Islamic revolution, on January 2, 1979, Murtadha Muthahhari was appointed chairman of the Revolutionary Council (*Shura-yi Inqilab-i Islami*) along with several other Shi'a clerics. Such as Ayatollah Javad Bahonar and Ayatollah Hussein Beheshti.

Finally, three months after the Islamic Revolution of Iran, on May 1, 1979, after chairing a meeting of the revolutionary council at the residence of Dr. Tadullah Shahabi. A bullet fired by the Fueqani group hit him directly in the head and pierced his eyelid. Murtadha Muthahhari also ended his political activities which led to his martyrdom. He was later buried in Qum. Imam Khomeini in his eulogy could not contain his grief, and he stammered and shed tears to include "Murtadha Muthahhari was part of my flesh and bone". The life journey of Al-Shahid Ayatollah Murtadha Muthahhari can be summarized as: "he was born, he fought, he was martyred". Although Iran's Islamic Revolution caused Murtadha Muthahhari to be considered a political figure, it was his writings strongly



promoted by the revolutionary government that became his main legacy. Murtadha Muthahhari's published works, both lectures and articles, include more than 200 books in said sciences, such as: philosophy, kalam, history, sociology, anthropology, ethics, fiqh and Islamic jurisprudence, irfa (Sufism), politics and economics.

2. Murtadha Muthahhari's Concept of Ethics

Murtadha Muthahhari's ethical concept reveals that moral actions are actions that have noble benefits and great value, their value cannot be measured and compared to material wealth. Muthahhari also mentioned that in ethics, the most basic foundation is the knowledge of God (Muthahhari, 1995). Murtadha Muthahhari has examples of ethical actions, such as forgiving, this is in accordance with the relics of the Prophet from the narration of Al-Hakim telling three things that contain noble character, namely; keep in touch, give alms to people who do wrong to you. In addition to the hadith, forgiveness is also an act not only for oneself but also for others, and forgiveness is also good if it does not cause negative effects on others. From these examples, it can be concluded that moral actions are good actions that are based on the rules of Islamic law, both the hadith and the Qur'an, and do not lead to badness, while bringing and creating benefits not only for oneself but also for others. Ethical actions are not just actions taken to achieve material and personal gain (Julia, 2018).

Murtadha Muthahhari divides goodness into two, namely; goodness that is essentially good and something that is good because it is an instrument of goodness. Likewise with evil, evil is essentially evil and evil because it is an instrument of evil. In Murtadha Muthahhari's ethics there is also what is called the science of God. Because God occupies an



important place in moral affairs. However, before we know God, we must analyze and glorify ourselves first. Knowing oneself has two purposes, namely; knowing God and the secrets of the universe, as well as knowing what to do in life and how to behave.

Therefore, when man does not know himself, then he will not be able to know how his morals and actions should be in this world, and vice versa (Muthahhari, 1995). It can be concluded that in Murtadha Muthahhari's morals or ethics, knowing and respecting oneself is very important. As many things come from self-knowledge, especially knowledge of God, which then leads to moral actions and directs how we should behave, which can be called behavioral morality.

3. The Foundation of Islamic Ethics Murtadha Muthahhari

According to Murtadha Muthahhari, the foundation and basic foundation of Islamic ethics is the knowledge of God Himself. If morality is not based on faith, then morality is like a skull without flesh. God, through faith, is the first foundation of Islamic ethics. The second foundation of Murtadha Muthahhari's Islamic ethical thought is the knowledge of the self or person. This idea emerged from Murtadha Muthahhari's reflections before giving a sermon at Tehere University, and later writing about his "personal ethical problems" (Amin, 2017). According to Murtadha Muthahhari, humans have an ego that has nothing to do with humans. Therefore, in Islamic moral rules, on the one hand, it orders to glorify oneself, on the other hand, it recommends against oneself (Taufik, 2018). Murtadha Muthahhari said that Islam views the origin of every moral consciousness as a feeling that upholds and respects one's identity.

God is the first foundation of Islamic ethical thought. The second foundation is a significant understanding of oneself or what is called self-

knowledge, which is why Islamic ethics focuses on “self-glorification” (Naibin, 2020). Self-knowledge emphasizes that people should live according to human morality and encourages them to act ethically. For Murtadha Muthahhari, self-knowledge has two purposes, including;

- Only by knowing oneself can one understand God.
- By knowing oneself one will know what to do in life and how to behave.

Thus, Islamic ethical thought according to Murtadha Muthahhari is epistemologically included in the canon of theological ethics. In this framework, religion is seen as the only source that can justify morality or ethics. The basis of Muthahhari's moral thinking is rooted in the combination of religion and reason. As a religious thinker, she shows consistency in every result of her thinking, where almost all of her scientific analysis and conclusions are based on religious beliefs as an epistemological foundation. This thinking is reflected in the concept of morality and human responsibility, which according to Muthahhari, is rooted in religious teachings that are understood rationally and systematically.

a. The Concept of Morality

Murtadha Muthahhari defines the concept of morality by describing a number of basic principles that form the basis of his views. For Murtadha Muthahhari, morality is a set of principles and values that govern human behavior and determine what is considered good and bad, right and wrong in the context of Islamic religion and ethics. In his concept, morality becomes a guide to guide individuals in decision-making and daily behavior. He states that a deep understanding of moral values, such as honesty, compassion, and justice, is the key to achieving moral perfection. For Muthahhari,

morality also involves social responsibility, where individuals have an active role in creating a moral and just environment.

Murtadha Muthahhari's views on morality are strongly influenced by the teachings of Islam. For Murtadha Muthahhari, morality cannot be separated from religious teachings and Islamic law. Morality is an effort to live in accordance with the principles of Islam, such as living a pious, just, honest and compassionate life. Morality in his view is not just a regulation of social manners, but also an effort to get closer to God and achieve spiritual perfection (Ahmad, 2021).

In addition, Murtadha Muthahhari emphasizes the importance of reason in understanding morality. Morality is not only based on religious dogmas, but must also be understood and considered rationally. He views that reason is a tool for understanding and applying moral principles in everyday life. In his thought, Murtadha Muthahhari also emphasizes the responsibility of individuals towards society and the environment. Morality is not only about the individual, but also about how the individual contributes to the well-being of society and the surrounding environment.

So, it can be concluded that Murtadha Muthahhari in his view of the concept of morality is where the concept includes religious values, rational thinking, and social responsibility, which form guidelines for human behavior in achieving spiritual perfection and positive contributions to society and the surrounding world (Rusiawati, 2022).

b. Human Responsibility

Murtadha Muthahhari defines human responsibility as a moral and religious obligation that every individual must fulfill. He argues that humans have a deep moral responsibility towards themselves, their fellow human beings and God. For Murtadha Muthahhari, human

responsibility is not just a burden of obligation, but rather a calling to contribute to creating justice, morality and progress in society. He asserts that humans have an active role in shaping their personal destiny and their influence on their surroundings. His concept of responsibility embraces both the spiritual and social dimensions, encouraging individuals to take responsibility for their actions and participate in efforts to build a better community. Muthahhari's view of responsibility highlights the close link between moral freedom and character formation. According to him, humans have the freedom to choose their actions, but responsibility arises when the individual is aware of the moral impact of the choices he makes. Therefore, responsibility is not a burden, but rather a call to understand and pursue ethical values that guide daily life.

More than just individual obligations, Muthahhari emphasizes social responsibility. He views that every individual has a role to play in shaping a just and moral society. Positive contribution in the social environment becomes an integral part of human responsibility. In his perspective, responsibility is not only to oneself, but also to others and the environment in which the individual lives. Here are the main points that Murtadha Muthahhari conveyed regarding human responsibility:

- 1) Responsibility towards God: according to Murtadha Muthahhari, man's most fundamental responsibility is to God. Humans have an obligation to obey God and follow the teachings of Islam seriously.
- 2) Responsibility towards oneself: Murtadha Muthahhari argues that humans must be responsible for their personal development, both in morals, spirituality, and intellect. Individuals must strive to become a better person and develop in all aspects of life.
- 3) Responsibility towards fellow human beings: humans also have a



moral obligation to behave well and fairly towards their fellow human beings. This includes respecting the rights and dignity of other individuals, and creating a social environment filled with justice and kindness.

- 4) Social and political responsibility: Murtadha Muthahhari also emphasizes the importance of human social and political responsibility in creating a just and moral society. Humans have the responsibility to participate in the development of society in accordance with Islamic principles, including social justice, equality, and general welfare.

From the above it can be concluded that Murtadha Muthahhari's view describes human responsibility as a moral obligation that includes individual, social and spiritual dimensions. He encourages individuals to live in accordance with Islamic religious principles and contribute to a just society (Muthahhari, 1995).

CONCLUSION

Murtadha Muthahhari's ethical thought emphasizes the close relationship between morality and human responsibility in the context of Islam. As a scholar steeped in philosophy and ethics, Muthahhari offers the view that morality is not only a formal rule, but also a deep reflection of man's relationship with God, himself, and society. In his view, true morality must be based on goodwill (*niyyah*), justice and social responsibility. As such, morality not only regulates outward actions but also touches on the inner dimensions of human beings, such as goals, beliefs, and feelings.

Muthahhari's main argument is that morality is rooted in the combination of faith and reason, which provides a rational and spiritual basis for human action. He emphasizes the importance of knowing oneself as the first step in understanding morality and responsibility. By knowing oneself,

man can understand his position in relation to God and society, and exercise moral responsibility to create justice and social welfare. Morality in Muthahhari's view also includes a social dimension, which requires each individual to contribute to the formation of a just and moral society.

This research shows that Muthahhari's concept of ethics is relevant in facing moral challenges in the modern era, especially in building a harmonious society based on universal Islamic values. However, this research is still limited to conceptual exploration without touching deeply on the practical application of Muthahhari's thought in the modern context. Therefore, future research is recommended to further examine the application of Muthahhari's thought in contemporary issues, such as digital ethics, global justice, or ecological responsibility, in order to answer the increasingly complex moral challenges in the era of globalization.

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