The Nature of Islamic Ethics and Its Implications for Education

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Abstract
This study seeks to elaborate on the nature of Islamic ethics and its relevance to education. This study is expected to obtain in-depth academic data or information about the nature of Islamic ethics and how it relates to the spirits and values of education. For that purpose, I used the literature review method, which started with identifying, collecting, and grouping relevant articles, to be analyzed and concluded. The results of the study show that the Islamic ethics is relevant to several spirits and values of Islamic education, including sincerity, justice, honesty, feeling the presence of God, obedience to obligations, patience, obedience to the law, forgiveness, commitment to the truth of science, esotericism, and pleasure in giving.

Abstrak
Kajian ini berupaya untuk mengelaborasi hakikat etika Islam dan relevansinya dengan pendidikan. Kajian ini diharapkan akan memperoleh data atau informasi akademik yang mendalam tentang hakikat etika Islam dan bagaimana relevansinya dengan semangat dan nilai-nilai pendidikan. Untuk tujuan itu, saya menggunakan metode literature review yang dimulai dengan proses identifikasi,
pengumpulan, dan pengelompokkan artikel-artikel yang relevan, untuk kemudian dianalisis dan disimpulkan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa hakikat etika Islam relevan dengan beberapa semangat dan nilai-nilai pendidikan Islam, antara lain keikhlasan, keadilan, kejujuran, merasakan kehadiran Tuhan, ketaatan pada kewajiban, kesabaran, ketaatan pada hukum, pengampunan, cinta ilmu, esoterisme, dan senang memberi.

**Keywords:** Islamic ethic, Islamic education, *ikhlāsh*, justice, honesty.

**Introduction**

The concept of ethics known by modern society has a close meaning with the concept of morality\(^1\) and *ihsān* in Islamic teachings\(^2\) that have been recognized since fifteen centuries ago. However, the closeness of meaning does not mean that each has the same meaning and philosophical basis. Ethics in an academic sense is a philosophy that reflects moral teachings.\(^3\) Because ethics is nothing but moral philosophy, the characteristics of philosophy that are rational, critical, fundamental, systematic, and normative are always attached to ethics. Thus, ethics is also interpreted as rational, critical, fundamental, and systematic thinking about moral teachings. From this understanding, it is clear that ethics cannot be fully equated with the notion of morality or *ihsān* in Islamic teachings. Even if the term ethics is also known in Islamic academic circles, the term ethics inevitably must be combined with the word Islam as its parent to become “Islamic ethics”. So,


in addition to the concepts of morality and *ihsän*, which are genuine Islamic terms, the term “Islamic ethics” can also be used, as the concepts of Islamic economics, Islamic banking, Islamic accounting, Islamic law, Islamic education, and so on.

Suppose ethics in general (secular ethics) refers to rational, critical, fundamental, systematic, and normative philosophy. In that case, Islamic ethics refers to monotheism as the principle and foundation of its philosophy. Whereas secular ethics only relies on human abilities in sich, which is therefore only anthropomorphic, Islamic ethics is rooted in divine ethics (*naqli*) and human abilities (*aqli*). So it is theomorphic. In contrast to secular ethics developed by modern society, Islamic ethics does not only rely on human abilities, which are limited, but are explored and developed from *naqliyah* sources (Al-Qur’an and As-Sunnah). Therein lies the excellence of Islamic ethics. Further differences between secular ethics and Islamic ethics can be found in their respective views on humans, society, and the universe. The different opinions on humans, society, and nature ultimately give rise to fundamental differences in moral principles, norms, views about good and evil, and others.

In the view of secular ethics, humans are nothing more than material beings, mono-dimensional beings who are all material. To fulfill their material needs, humans have individual freedom called existential freedom, namely the ability of humans to determine themselves. Although in practice, human existential freedom often ignores their sense of responsibility, especially their social responsibilities. In the view of Islamic ethics based on monotheism, humans are the caliph of Allah on

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6 Englehardt and Pritchard, “Teaching Practical Ethics.”
earth and His servants. These two essential characteristics form the fundamental nature of human beings. As His servants, humans are required to obey and obey His will. He must accept, surrender, be content, and be passive when dealing with the will of God Almighty. Humans must also be willing to accept instructions, guidance, and life guidance from Him without reservation.

And as His caliph, humans must be active, creative, *ijtihad*, jihad to realize a safe, peaceful, prosperous life in the universe, under the pleasure of God. Islamic ethics also views humans as intelligent and willful creatures. Because of the gift of reason, humans deserve to receive the mandate as His caliph. They have that will, and humans deserve to be held accountable in the hereafter for all their choices of attitudes and actions today. Islamic ethics views that humans, with their primordial nature (*fitrah*), can understand and accept the Maharaja, Oneness, Greatness, and Omnipotence of God.

وأذ اخذ ربك من بين آدم من ظهورهم ثريتهم واشهدهم على أنفسهم وست ربكم قالوا بلى شهدنا ان تقولوا يوم القيامة اناكنا عن هذة غافلين

And (remember), when your Lord brought out the offspring of the children of Adam from their sulbi and Allah took witness against their souls (saying): “Am I not your King?” They replied: “Yes (You are our King), we are witnesses”. (We do that) so that on the Day of Resurrection you will not say: “Indeed, we are the ones who are unaware of this”. (Al-A'raf: 172).

The verse above is a primordial agreement or agreement (*al-mitsaq*) made between humans and God, so that humans recognize and accept the Omnipotence and Oneness of God. In the Islamic ethical system, humans are placed in a central position in nature. Humans are not only a part of the vastness of Allah's creation, humans are also a destination for all that exists. Everything that Allah has created in the heavens and on earth is for his sake.

الم تروا ان الله سخر لكم ما في السموت وما في الأرض واسبع عليكم نعمة ظاهرة

وابطنة
“Have you not noticed that Allah has subjected everything in the heavens and the earth to your benefit and has perfected His outward and inner blessings for you” (Luqman: 20).

The basic view of Islamic ethics about humans above emphasizes that Islamic ethics has a principle, namely monotheism, and the ultimate goal. In other words, Islamic ethics is built on the foundation of monotheism, and the purpose of Islamic ethics is to realize human life and a monotheistic society. That is why Islamic ethics always make the concepts of sincerity, justice, honesty, freedom and responsibility, independence, self-purity, courage, and humility the main subject, in addition to concepts about other virtues such as politeness, smooth speech, patience and others. Therefore, before discussing the main concepts in Islamic ethics, we will first discuss the relationship between Islamic ethics and monotheism.

**Tawhid and Islamic Ethics**

As has been emphasized, monotheism is the principle and goal of Islamic ethics. Ethics should be to reach true muwahhid because monotheism is the highest ethics in Islam. Therefore, every ulema, scholar, scholar, and ethicist should develop ideas about Islamic morals and morals in the context of upholding and manifesting monotheism among humanity. Good morals and morality that we view as noble will only be in vain if we ignore monotheism. On the other hand, holding fast while living the values of monotheism will ultimately be reflected in noble behavior and ethics.

**Tawhid**, as we know, is the absolute differentiator between the Creator and the creatures, which demands unconditional submission by all creatures to the will of the Creator.


“...the decision belongs only to Allah. He has commanded that you worship none but Him...” (Yusuf: 40).

According to a deeper understanding, monotheism is the vertical dimension of Islam, in which all aspects of human life are combined, starting from the political, economic, social, legal, and religious elements into a homogeneous whole. It is the power of monotheism. It covers all aspects of human life because these aspects come from the One, the One, namely God. Because monotheism must be used as the basis for the whole of human life, the embodiment of Islamic ethics must also cover the entirety of human life. Therefore, political, social, economic, and legal life must be based on ethics that lead to the realization of a monotheistic society.

Pre-Islamic Arab society is commonly referred to as the “Jahiliyah Society.” Their ignorant nature does not actually appear as stupidity in the commonly used sense. Their stupidity is caused by nothing but their “polytheistic” behavior, which is also their main problem. That is why Muhammad's prophetic mission in Mecca was directed to free its inhabitants from the shackles of the belief in God by pronouncing the phrase “al-nafy wa al-itsbāt”, namely “There is no god but Allah”. With “al-nafy” the process of liberating society from polytheistic beliefs begins. After negating all false beliefs, then proceed with “al-itsbāt”, which is to instill belief in the One God, the real God.

We don't know whether there are still shaky beliefs in our society, as was the case with the Jahiliyah people long ago? Without needing to answer that question, we should be aware that polytheistic behavior (shirk) can easily enter our veins and veins. Like a virus that easily enters our bodies, so does shirk. Because shirk can enter a person's soul through words, attitudes, intentions, actions, behaviors or policies that he sets.

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Shirk can easily enter the souls of ordinary people, government leaders, scientists, scholars, and even scholars.

Believing in the Oneness of God is the highest ethical manifestation. Reflecting the belief in the Oneness of God (imān) in real everyday life (‘amal shalih), this is also part of noble ethics. There is no noblest ethic except monotheism and reflecting it in daily life. In books or books on ethics, scholars and scholars always discuss the relationship between ethics and the human will to choose between moral obligations and freedom. They assume that because humans have freedom and choice, they deserve to be burdened with moral obligations.

On the other hand, because animals do not have the freedom and will to choose, they do not deserve moral obligations. One of the greatness and excellence of the Islamic system is its holistic view of human beings. In Islam's view, humans are not one-dimensional beings, which only consist of material, and their needs are only material. He is a being made up of matter and spirit, each of which is interdependent. If some of the schools of Western philosophy put more emphasis on the human form on its material elements; Islam views the essence of humanity precisely in the spirit, but the spirit will not function without the material in which it resides.

In the context of its freedom, the true spirit has a relatively unlimited will. However, human nature is limited because the human spirit is wrapped in matter (body). In other words, the freedom of the human spirit is limited by the limitations of the body in which the spirit resides. Unlike other creatures who are not virtuous, humans with their minds can will and participate in determining the course of their lives. Unlike the views of some Western philosophers—who hold that humans are free beings, creatures who are “alone” as the principle of their existence and who build their lives autonomously, and therefore creatures who “determine their lives”—humans in the view of Islam do not “determine their lives”; “but only participate in determining the course of his life.”
One of the strengths of the human spirit is its ability to understand, comprehend, create concepts, make generalizations, and the ability to conclude. This spirit power is called reason. It is why it functions as a weighing before humans choose and determine an action. However, this does not mean that the power of the human spirit is limitless.\textsuperscript{11} On the contrary, the power of the human spirit to choose and determine is limited by forces that come from outside humans, which we believe to be transcendental powers, divine powers. In other words, man's freedom also becomes bound by dependence on a Transcendental Substance (Allah, God Almighty).

In addition to this freedom, humans are also bound and limited by the transcendent divine power, so the revelation of the Qur'an as a \textit{huda} (guidance) is truly an immeasurable gift for mankind. Without the assistance of the revelation of the Qur'an, humans can't find the essence and truth of monotheism. Also, humans will find it challenging to find a straight path to the real truth of Islam. Even though Allah has sent down the gift of the Qur'an, which it shows the straight path to happiness and other instructions that are full of truth, humans are still given the freedom to choose between believing in Allah or disbelieving in Him. “Indeed We have shown him the way, some are grateful, and some are disbelievers” (Al-Insan: 3); “And say, the truth comes from your Lord, so whoever wants (beliefs) let him believe, and whoever wants (disbelievers) let him disbelieve...”. (Al-Kahf: 29); “Indeed, Saqar is one of the great calamities, as a warning to mankind. To whom among you will it will go forward or backward.” (Al-Mudatstsir: 35-37).

The three verses above explicitly emphasize the freedom of humans to choose between two paths (the Way of God \textit{[subul]} paths). Humans can, whether choose the Way of God (faith) or choose another way (\textit{kāfir}), with all the risks humans will bear as a consequence of that choice. The freedom to choose between faith or disbelief implicitly also shows the existence of other human freedoms, also in the context of Islamic ethics. Humans

\textsuperscript{11} Persson and Savulescu, “The Moral Importance of Reflective Empathy.”
Aesthetic Interpretation of the Qur’an Sarah R. Bin Tyeer

can freely select between “ethical” or “niretic”.\textsuperscript{12} Humans can choose between the ethics of the Qur'an which is the “morality of the Prophet” (\textit{khuluquhu al-Qur‘ān}), or the ethics of ignorance, which has plunged humans into darkness.

Because humans can freely choose between faith and morality in the Qur’an on the one hand, or disbelievers and ethical ignorance on the other, it becomes inevitable when humans are held accountable for the consequences of their choices in life. Suppose humans choose Islamic ethics that are noble, supernatural, noble, and noble as their way of life. In that case, Islamic ethics will ultimately free humans from various shackles of polytheism, ignorance, poverty, injustice, and injustice.\textsuperscript{13} That is what is meant by the liberating effect of Islamic ethics.

Muhammad’s success in breaking down the polytheistic understanding of the Arabs and freeing them from the tyranny of slavery, feudalism, and repressive power proves how Islamic ethics can free humans from various shackles and darkness. The strength of Islamic ethics in liberating humans from different shackles and darkness is reflected in the themes it carries, which include: sincerity, justice, honesty, freedom and responsibility, independence, self-purity, courage, and humility as the main topics; in addition to concepts about other virtues such as politeness, smooth speech, patience, and others.

The Relevance of Islamic Ethics to Education

The concept of ethics in Islam is relevant to several philosophies, foundations, and educational values. Some concepts of Islamic ethics relevant to education include sincerity, justice, honesty, feeling the presence of God, obedience to obligations, patience, obedience to the law, forgiveness, love of science, esotericism, and happy giving.

\textsuperscript{12} Englehardt and Pritchard, “Teaching Practical Ethics.”

**Ikhlāsh (Sincere)**

Sincerity is the spirit of every deed. It is one of the noble Islamic ethics. It is one of the main conditions for accepting one's deeds of worship. Therefore, only good deeds that are carried out sincerely will be accepted by God. Thus sincerity is ethics in worship. Word of God:

وَمَا أَمَرْنَا الْإِلَٰهُ إِلَّا مَنْ تَوْلَىٰ وَمَنْ اٰتَى الْحَقَّ مَثَلًا لِّاٰئِثٓ

“And they were not ordered but that they worship Allah while being sincere in their obedience to Allah, more inclined to the truth” (Al-Bayyinah: 5).

The Messenger of Allah said:

لايقبل الله من العمل إلا ما كان له خلصاً وأتبعه به وجهه

“Allah does not accept deeds, but deeds that are sincere and which are due to seek the pleasure of God” (H.R. Ibn Majah).

The position of sincerity is not only a condition for the acceptance of worship, but sincerity is also the starting point of worship, according to the words of the Prophet Muhammad:

افعال الأعمال النبات

“Indeed, all deeds (depends) on their intentions.”

Sincerity is also a complement to one's faith, as the words of the Prophet Muhammad:

من أحب الله وأبغض الله وأعطى الله ومنع الله فقد استكمل الإيمان

“Whoever loves for the sake of Allah, hates also for the sake of Allah, gives for the sake of Allah, forbids for the sake of Allah; then his faith has truly been perfected” (Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi).

As long as the man in his life surrenders himself to Allah with a sincere intention, then all his movements and silence,

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sleep, and the guard will always be counted as *ibtighā'i mardlātīlah* (hoping for Allah's pleasure).

### Justice

Among the noble and noble ethics possessed by the Prophet Muhammad was his fair attitude, both proper to himself, his family, his friends, and his opponents. Whenever he is faced with a problem, he always resolves and decides it in the fairest way possible. None of the decisions he made except succeeded in realizing a sense of justice among people who faced a problem. Therefore, it can be said that justice is one of the noble ethics owned and always held by the Prophet Muhammad. And as his people, we are also required to always be fair in terms of leadership and fair in deciding a case or issue. In the Qur'an, many verses emphasize the importance of being honest, including:

ان الله يأمركم ان تؤدوا الامنت الى اهلها واذا حكمتم بين الناس ان تحكموا بالعدل

“Indeed, Allah obliges you to give/convey a mandate to the experts, and when you judge among people, the judge in a just way” (An-Nisa: 58).

بابها الذين امنوا كونوا قوامين لله شهداء بالفسط ولايبرمنكم شنان يقوم على الاعدلوا اعدلوا هواقرب للقوى

“O you who believe, let you be people who always uphold (the truth) because of Allah, be witnesses with justice. And do not let your hatred of a group cause you not to act justly. Be fair, because justice is close to piety” (Al-Maidah: 8).

### Honesty

Honesty is an attitude that is not only commendable according to Islamic teachings but is also a commendable attitude according to various ideologies and teachings outside of Islam. Thus, honesty is a universal concept that everyone must own.

Honesty will benefit the individual who has it and will be very useful in building a civil society. Especially for a leader of the people, this honest attitude is an absolute must. Because
without honesty, trust and leadership will be damaged. Only trust and leadership accompanied by a genuine attitude will bring the safety and welfare of the people.

The Qur’anic affirmation of the importance of this honest character and attitude is found in it a lot. For example, the word of God:

“Among the believers, there are those who keep the promises they have promised to Allah, then among them, there are those who fall. And among them, some are waiting and at least they do not change their promises. So that Allah will reward those who are righteous because of truth and torments the hypocrites if he wills and accepts their repentance... Verily Allah is Forgiving, Most Merciful.” (Al-Ahzab: 23-24).

Likewise the words of the Prophet, including:

“Indeed, it is true that it leads to goodness, and goodness leads to heaven, verily, that person does right until he is established with Allah as a righteous person. And verily, lying leads to sin and sin leads to hell, surely the person sins until Allah determines that he is a liar.” (Narrated by Bukhari-Muslim).

“Seek righteousness even if you see in it there is corruption, for in righteousness there is salvation.” (Narrated by Ibn Abid Dunya).

**Feeling God’s presence**

The concept of Islamic ethics as feeling the presence of God is actually the essence of the ethical concept given by the Prophet Muhammad when asked by the angel Gabriel, namely:

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“You worship Allah as if you see Him, but if you are not able to see Him, in fact, He is see you”. Ideally, every Muslim feels the presence of the Khāliq amid his life (meaning transcendence). He sees, monitors, and watches every human movement and step.

The implications of the concept of ethics with the meaning of transcendence in the world of education can, of course, be vast, both in the concept of learning, the management of educational institutions, as well as on the attitudes and behavior of our daily education. The learning process, for example, will be more meaningful if the learning community or the academic community feels the presence of God in the midst and during learning activities. For managers of educational institutions or educational bureaucracies, awareness of the presence of Allah in their midst will also make them more careful, honest, responsible, and disciplined. And all of that will lead to the emergence of work culture as worship.

Carry out all obligations

The concept of Islamic ethics as carrying out obligations as stated by Ibn Abbas has serious implications for our education in the country. As we all experience, most of those involved in education (teachers, lecturers, other education personnel, managers of educational institutions, educational bureaucracies, and other education practitioners) demand more rights than carry out obligations. Suppose all the components of education mentioned above are aware of the nature of Ihsān as the fulfillment of all obligations. In that case, at least one of the education problems in the country can be resolved.

Be patient

The concept of Islamic ethics as being patient in accepting Allah's commands and prohibitions as understood by Imam Al-Mawardi has implications for the existence and fate of educators, especially teachers in the country. No matter how heavy the task and burden of teachers in fulfilling God's commands to spread knowledge and educate students, if
teachers realize that Allah really likes people who do good (patient), God willing, the anxiety of our educators can be reduced. Another implication of *ihsān* is patience means that our educational curriculum needs to provide a reasonable portion to educate our students to have patience. This trait sounds trivial but is essential, especially to train students when facing various life problems.

*Obey the law*

Obedience as one of the concepts of Islamic ethics as proposed by Imam Al-Baidlawi actually has implications for value education, which so far has received less attention from practitioners of Islamic education. Obedience is meant here primarily to God. The practice of value education is indeed carried out, but its management in earnest, as in the theories of value education is almost non-existent. In many Western countries, value education learning theory is distinguished from learning theory emphasizing cognitive and psychomotor aspects. They develop their own distinctive value education theory, which can instill the values they expect from students.

*Willing to forgive*

As stated by Imam Ibn Al-Jauzy, interpreting Islamic ethics by forgiving has important implications in education. Perhaps among the many implications for the world of education, the impact of the concept of Islamic ethics are very relevant to multiculturalism education, developing an open attitude, and *tasamuh* culture. Through multicultural education, the development of an open attitude, and this *tasamuh* culture, students are trained to be open and willing to respect the attitudes and behavior of others, including apologizing for the mistakes of others.

The habit of being willing to forgive others will train students to have an open, inclusive attitude, and over time will foster a culture of tolerance, mutual respect, and respect for differences. In addition, he will increasingly realize that the truth of human science is not absolute, but relative. That is the
spirit and spirit of multicultural education, one of which means the development of a caring and understanding attitude or “politics of recognition”, recognition of people from various groups and communities.

Commitment to the truth of science

Imam Al-Qusyairi interpreted the word *ihsān*, one of them with knowledge as mentioned above. Of course, the implications of *ihsān* with the meaning of science in the world of education are fundamental. One of the main aspects of education is the transfer and development of knowledge. Of course, the science referred to here is knowledge based on monotheism and other Islamic values, such as sincerity, worship, and justice. Faith in the Creator makes students more aware of all their activities. They are responsible for their behavior by placing reason under the authority of God. Therefore, there is no separation between the means and ends of knowledge in Islam. Both are subject to ethical standards and values of faith. He must follow the principle that as a prospective scientist who must be responsible for all his activities to God, he must fulfill the social function of science to serve society, and at the same time protect and improve its ethical and moral institutions. Thus, the Islamic approach to science is built on an absolute moral and ethical foundation with a dynamic building standing on it, namely monotheism. Reason and objectivity are recommended to explore knowledge and to place intellectual efforts within the boundaries of Islamic ethics and values.

Emphasis on the esoteric aspect

Interpreting *Ihsān* with an emphasis on the esoteric (inner) aspect of the exoteric (outward) is likely to have implications for introducing Sufism values in the world of education. So far, Sufism has become one of the educational materials at Madrasah Aliyah and PTAI, but in practice, learning Sufism is more on the aspect of cognitive knowledge, not the aspect of the affective spirit. Although the science of
Sufism is still debated for its *mu'tabararah*, there are universal Sufism values, such as simple life, emphasis on inner aspects, and others, which can be used as value education content.

*Diligently give infaq*

Interpreting *Ihsân* with a willingness to donate well has important implications for the world of education. Through *infaq* education, the world of education does not only play a role in cultivating attitudes and behaviors of helping each other but also *infaq* for the sustainability of the existence of the world and the educational institution itself.

*Do good to both parents*

The word *ihsân* is quite often juxtaposed with the words of both parents. Some verses specifically command to do good to parents after the command to worship monotheism towards Allah. This proves that doing good to both parents, especially mothers, gets important attention in the Qur'an. The most straightforward implication to the world of education is how education can instill in students a sense of love, respect, and respect for both parents.

**Conclusion**

The implications of the ethical concept for education still need to be discussed and developed continuously in the academic world. Therefore, further, development is necessary, primarily to provide an overview of the implications of Islamic ethics on specific aspects of the education sector. For example, the ethics of patience, sincerity, and science have implications for which parts of education, whether the curriculum, teaching staff, learning methods, or others.

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