# The Ethic Theory Of Taha Abdurrahman

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**Abstract:**
This research paper deals with an important topic related to the intellectual and philosophical project of Dr. TAHA ABDURRAHMAN, which is about the Ethic theory and its intellectual and knowledge effects in the contemporary Islamic project.  Where i I tried to identify its most important features and foundations, as well as I represent some of its characteristics and advantages, as I mentioned its requirements in the current era, and This is in order to explain its origins and meanings, as well as to know its methodological and analytical tools and mechanisms, and this is in order to gain a deeper understanding of its repercussions on various aspects of life.

**Keywords:** ethics; theory; religion; knowledge; rules.

**Introduction:**
Praise be to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, and blessings and peace be upon the most noble of messengers, our master Muhammad, and upon his family, companions, and those who follow them in excellence until the Day of Judgment. To proceed:

This is a concise and beneficial statement regarding what is known today in the intellectual arena as " Ethic Theory according to Taha Abdurrahman." It relates to his method of addressing many of the central issues presented in his intellectual and philosophical project. Through it, I have attempted to present the most important features of Ethic Theory, along with an explanation of its significance and impact on contemporary intellectual reality.

**Problem Statement:**
This research revolves around a central question concerning the intellectual and philosophical heritage of Dr. Taha Abdurrahman, which is: What is the reality of  Ethic Theory in Tahawi thought? What are its most important principles and characteristics? And what is the significance of this philosophy in contemporary Islamic discourse?

**Research Axes:**

To address the aforementioned problem statement, the research is divided into important axes as follows:

Introduction.
    Axis 1: The Concept of Ethic Philosophy in Taha Abdurrahman's Thought.
    Axis 2: Principles of Ethic Theory.
    Axis 3: Characteristics of Ethic Theory.
    Axis 4: Implications of Ethic Theory.
    Conclusion.

**Concept of Ethic Philosophy in Taha Abdurrahman's Thought:**
Before discussing the claim of Ethic Theory and its concept linguistically and technically, it is necessary to briefly address the theorist himself; that is, the Ethic philosopher Dr. Taha Abdurrahman from Morocco, as follows:

**1.1 Introduction to the Researcher Taha Abdurrahman:**
Taha Abdurrahman is a well-known Moroccan philosopher and thinker, often referred to as the "Philosopher of Ethics" or the "Jurist of Philosophy." He was born in 1944 in the city of El Jadida, Morocco, where he received his primary education. He then moved to Casablanca, where he completed his secondary education.

He obtained a bachelor's degree in philosophy from Mohammed V University in Rabat, then traveled to France to continue his studies at the Sorbonne University. There, he obtained a second bachelor's degree in philosophy, followed by a Ph.D. in 1972 in the field of "Language and Philosophy." He returned to Morocco and became a professor at Mohammed V University in Rabat, teaching logic and philosophy of language. In 1985, he obtained his Doctorate of State with a thesis entitled "A Treatise on Argumentative and Natural Inference and Its Models."

He authored numerous books, exceeding twenty titles, covering a diverse range of subjects including logic, philosophy, intellectual renewal, and critique of modernity. Some notable examples include "The Jurisprudence of Philosophy," "Language and Balance or Intellectual Abundance," "Multiplicity of Values," "The Misery of Dualism," "Post-Dualism Drift," "The Spirit of Religion," "The Spirit of Modernity," "The Question of Work," "The Question of Ethics," "The Religion of Modesty," "The Gates of Fortitude," and so on.

Due to this prolific output, Dr. Taha Abdurrahman is considered one of the most prominent Arab thinkers of the last few decades, alongside figures like Mohammed Arkoun, Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, Abdullah Al-Arawi, Mohammed Abid Al-Jabri, and Mohammed Amara. He has been awarded numerous prizes, including the Morocco Book Award (twice), the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) Prize for Islamic Thought and Philosophy in 2006, and the Mohammed VI Award for Islamic Thought and Studies in 2014.

**1.2 Ethics According to Taha Abdurrahman:**

It is known that Dr. Taha Abdurrahman chooses his terms carefully, as he possesses a great wealth of linguistic and philosophical knowledge, qualifying him to delve into the use of appropriate words and meanings for any subject. He also has a strong attachment to the Islamic and Arab heritage, which is evident in his choice of the term " Ethic."

## 1.2.1 Linguistic Understanding of Ethic:

Dr. Taha Abdurrahman begins to define the concept of " Ethic " by exploring the derivation in the Arabic language, which determines the fundamental meanings of linguistic usage. He sees that the term " Ethic" refers to two meanings: Firstly, "istirā'ah" which means to request someone to take care of something, and "ri'ā" (taking care) is a commitment. Secondly, "istawdā'ah" which means to leave something with someone as a trust, and "wadi'ah" (trust) is anything entrusted until it is returned to the trustee[1]. Thus, "istirā'ah" revolves around the commitment to take care of a specific thing, while "istawdā'ah" revolves around the commitment to preserve a specific thing.

Based on this basis, Ethic is divided into two types. The first is "Istimani Istiraa'i," meaning "taking care of something," commonly referred to as "responsibility," indicating this clearly due to its frequent usage. The second is "Istimani Istidai'i," which signifies the concept of preservation and indicates the maintenance of something in a specific place, keeping it in the state it was entrusted in[2]. While "taking care" implies looking after something without necessarily ensuring its preservation in the state it was taken care of, and this care may even involve altering its state.

Therefore, we can say that the trust mentioned by Allah in the Quran (Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 72) branches into two trusts: Firstly, "the trust of responsibility," which involves taking care of something, based on choice and freedom. Secondly, "the trust of custodianship," which involves preserving something[3]. It is known that custodianship cannot exist without preserving what is entrusted, so the most important condition for it is retention.

## 1.2.2 Ethic in Terminology:

Dr. Taha Abdurrahman builds his claim of Ethic based on the linguistic meanings and connotations previously mentioned for the term " Ethic." He sees that humans are entrusted with two significant trusts: they are responsible for choosing what they will take care of, thus committing to responsibility. Moreover, they are the custodian who must preserve what they undertake to maintain. He refers to the ancient unseen covenant, consisting of two essential elements: firstly, the "initial choice" where humans choose to bear it, and secondly, "bearing the trust," which is the condition upon which the first depends. Dr. Taha Abdurrahman articulates this in formulating his claim of Ethic when he states, "The human's enjoyment of freedom of choice since their existence in the unseen world makes them attribute worshipful and managerial actions in the visible world to a single origin, which is divine Ethic."[4] Furthermore, this claim is an exposition of the principle of primordial nature, which preserved the choice of believing in God Almighty and assuming responsibility.

Dr. Taha Abdurrahman deduced his theory after contemplation and consideration of some important issues related to human nature, religion, and life, primarily connected to values and ethics derived from the divine attributes represented in the beautiful names of God. The human achieves ethics through the first witness (the human testimony), which is the origin of ethics[5], while intentions are the branches[6]. Here, the relationship of the subordination of ethics to divine commands is highlighted in a way that other theories do not grasp. It entails considering the command before the deed, and the human self needs to know the divine self before understanding its commands and intentions.

If that's the case, then ethic Theory is based on the premise that "humans are inherently inclined towards religion." It is a theory rooted in ethical values[7]. Dr. Taha Abdurrahman defines it by stating: "Ethic Theory is an ethical theory based on human realities shared by religions and inherited by civilizations, whether these civilizations acknowledged their religious principles or denied them."[8]

It's worth noting here that Ethic Theory doesn't just encompass the theoretical philosophical aspect. It extends beyond to mention the practical means and mechanisms in addressing various important issues. The reason for this is that Ethic Theory is an ethical theory[9]. It's known that ethical theory falls into two categories: descriptive ethical theory, which examines ethical discourse according to scientific methodology, in terms of structure, significance, and circulation, and normative ethical theory, which answers questions related to behavior in life, indicating what is beneficial or harmful, what brings happiness or misery. Ethic Theory is specifically a normative ethical theory[10], meaning it concerns itself with the practical and directive aspect of many matters, in order to overcome contemporary challenges.

**2.Principles of Ethic Theory according to Taha Abdurrahman:**
Ethic Theory, in the thought of Taha Abdurrahman, is founded on three important principles: "The Principle of Witnessing," which determines the existential identity of humans, starting from unseen witnessing and ending with witnessing upon witnessing; "The Principle of Trustworthiness," which defines their cosmic responsibility, beginning from unseen trustworthiness and ending with trustworthiness upon trustworthiness; and "The Principle of Sanctification," which determines their behavioral effectiveness, starting from self-sanctification and ending with the ascension of the soul[11]. I'll elaborate on these principles as follows:

**2.1 Principle of Witnessing:**
This principle is one of the most fundamental pillars of Ethic Theory and serves as a foundation that surpasses other theories relying solely on abstract rationality in determining the identity of things and unveiling the truths of matters. The Principle of Witnessing dictates that "a thing is what it is when witnessed by others," and this witnessing is not singular but multiple. There is "the witnessing of God," "the witnessing of the Prophet," "the witnessing of other human beings," including those belonging to other religions, "the witnessing of the parts of the human," and "the witnessing of other beings," because all entities in the Ethic world have the right to

witness. Hence, the inadequacy of non- Ethic philosophy is evident as it relies solely on the authority of the self[12].

Furthermore, acknowledgment and recognition of witnessing enhance the law of human nature, propelling them towards a clearer perception of truths and the retrieval of their spiritual memory, which realizes their testimony and affirmation of the uniqueness of the Creator. Dr. Taha Abdurrahman discusses the function of this principle, stating: "This principle confirms that witnessing, in all its meanings, allows humans to regain their nature, realizing their true identity and the meaning of their existence, beginning with human testimony in both unseen and visible worlds, where they affirm the oneness of God, and ending with testimony upon oneself and testimony upon others, through witnessing in terms of observation, presence, notification, and attestation."[13]

Based on this foundation, Dr. Taha Abdurrahman emphasizes the necessity of witnessing in the process of human evolution, as it transitions humans from merely establishing abstract commands to observing the obligatory witnesses. He states that this transition occurs "so that the one manifesting these commands, whether divine or human, moves from the quality of commander to the quality of witness, observing and ruling over this establishment. This observation and ruling are what truly lead to evolution."[14] Additionally, the principle of witnessing encompasses the meaning of othership, which "transforms action, through its evaluation, from random actions to beneficial actions, whether for good or for harm."[15] Accordingly, according to Dr. Taha Abdurrahman, evolution does not occur without a witness, and the degree of evolution is determined by the status of the witness. If the status of the witness is elevated, the evolution is elevated, and if it is lowered, the evolution is lowered. It is then that we realize the importance of divine witnessing, where "the truth of God is manifested to His servants, witnessing their actions and conditions in all their glory and precision, testifying to them for good or for evil, depending on their compliance or non-compliance with His law."[16]

**2.2 Principle of Trustworthiness:**
This principle is based on the belief that humans are entrusted with everything in this world. The mind, along with all the senses, wealth, nature, and all living beings, are entrusted to humans, requiring them to preserve and care for them in the aforementioned sense. Hence, his obligation extends to absolute responsibility towards everything that exists; be it a matter of faith, worship, succession, or colonialism. This responsibility ranges "from responsibility for actions to responsibility for responsibility itself, passing through responsibility for the self and responsibility for things, and even responsibility for the world."[17]

It's worth noting here that this Ethic principle, from a Tahawi perspective, corresponds to the principle of the non-coexistence of abstract contradiction or (the principle of abstract coherence), as one of the principles of the Dahranian model. This principle "dictates that the thing and its opposite never coexist"[18]. However, the credit principle restricts it "by stating that the thing and its opposite never coexist when the mind is responsible."[19] The difference between them is significant and clear, "as the responsible mind prevents itself from producing anything

harmful to existence, much or little," while we find that "the irresponsible mind is not hindered by its coherence from producing harm. Rather, it may adorn it, producing harm without hesitation or qualms."[20] The reason is that the credit principle completely strips humans of the spirit of possession and self-worship, to listen to the perfections dictated by their minds in bearing all responsibilities.

On this basis, we understand the importance of this principle in mitigating global risks that threaten humanity, which have always been caused by the irresponsible mind, in ignoring the dominance of the self, without considering the existential purposes of humans. This leads to the creation of what disrupts life, such as environmental pollution, the manufacture of deadly weapons, the espousal of racist theories, and schemes that exploit and enslave humans for the benefit of certain individuals, classes, or races.

## 2.3 Principle of Purification:

This principle is of utmost importance in Ethic theory, aiming to strive for self-purification in order to achieve moral values and spiritual meanings. This pursuit aims for the elevation of human dignity[21], distinguishing humans from other creatures. This can only be achieved through sustainable development, both in character and spirituality, which is what is meant by Tahawi thought in the concept of purification. "Because the duty of humans in the Ethic world is to seek moral progress as they seek material progress, and it is their duty to make material progress subordinate to moral progress. Otherwise, there is no progress in their humanity, even if they achieve what they achieve materially and the community they harbor gains what they have gained in various forms of technological prosperity."[22]

The focus on what is called sustainable development of human behavior in the face of the living reality, and what we witness as a material rush around the issue of overwhelming consumption, emphasizes the principle of purification. This ensures at least some balance between material and spiritual components of humanity because the prevalence of materialism and its dominance over everything leads to humans losing many important meanings that would be detrimental to their entire lives. Therefore, adherence to the principle of purification remains the solution believed to be the most capable of facing global challenges and is the best for addressing social ills, whether moral or spiritual.

One: This purification takes the individual out of the realm of attachment to their narrow existence to the realm of aiming towards a broader existence that may extend beyond the community to the world and beyond.

Two: The individual's moral and spiritual wealth is the result of the interaction between educational efforts within the community and competition in defining oneself to renew others, in fulfilling the duty of developing humanity.

Three: The creative potentials achieved by the individual and the community without interruption, and the spiritual potentials continually revealed to them, are greater than being limited to warding off emergencies from moral vices. Rather, it goes beyond that to the

development of the individual in themselves. It should not be restricted to a specific limit as there is no end to it.

Therefore, we can say that Ethic theory is better than others in this regard because the principle of purification in its logic corresponds to what is called by Dahranian philosophy the principle of "raised abstract third" or the principle of "abstract exchange," which dictates "that the thing is either itself or its opposite."[23] However, Ethic theory restricts this abstract issue, stating "that the thing is either itself or its opposite when action is required."[24] Therefore, "there is no choice for humans but between two options: either performing the action that purifies themselves, externally or internally, or performing the action that corrupts them, externally or internally. In short, either purification or corruption."[25] The exchange established in non- Ethic philosophy is realized in Ethic theory through the dualism of purification actions.

### 3.Characteristics of Ethic Theory:

The Ethic theory is characterized by a set of features and traits that distinguish it from other philosophies. These characteristics can be derived from the collective works of Dr. Taha Abdurrahman, as well as from the intellectual practices associated with it. Let's outline some of these characteristics:

### 3.1 Innate and Kingdomly Philosophy:

Ethic theory is intrinsically linked to the concept of human nature, which implies that "humans are naturally inclined towards religion."[26] This is an existential truth, as Dr. Taha Abdurrahman states, "Only the arrogant dispute it... and whoever denies it denies their creation."[27] In the primordial stage of human creation (the stage of the primordial covenant), humans took upon themselves both (Ethic) and (testimony) equally. The covenant of Ethic is where the Almighty presented His trust to His creations; none dared to bear it except humans. They willingly accepted it. This initial covenant, which humans confidently entrusted to their Lord, is the "first fundamental innate component entrusted to humans."[28] Dr. Taha Abdurrahman referred to it as the "sacred covenant" in the realm of the Kingdom, which signifies the world of covenants between the Creator and the creation. As for the covenant of testimony, it is a relationship between God and humans, where humans received the testimony and acknowledgment of His divinity and unity. It is a covenant that embodies the principle of the existence of human nature towards the worship of God alone.

### 3.2 It is a Connective Philosophy, not a Separative one:

This aspect is quite evident in Dr. Taha Abdurrahman's approach, where his treatment of various philosophical issues is characterized by the rhythm of original connected unity. It oscillates between the total separation of secular claims and the complete connection of religious claims. It is a call for moderation and balance originating from the unseen world and representing the rank of the original unity. This unity "precedes separation and connection,"[29] such as the unity between (politics and religion), (administration and worship), (the unseen and testimony), (existence and presence), (ethics and religion), (ethics and humanity), and (humanity and religion), and so on.

### 3.3 It is an Expansive Rational Philosophy:

Ethic theory empowers the mind to be free, independent in thought and opinion. The Ethic conception derives its credibility from the nobility of its purpose, which is worshiping God, thereby liberating the mind from the whims of the ego that may seek to say something for self-interest, prestige, or love of authority or domination. This purpose endows the mind with clarity and enables it to discern the truth, surpassing what both the secular and religious mindsets may achieve. Thus, the " Ethic conception that relies on acts of purification is deeply ingrained in rationality from both the secular and religious perspectives." It acknowledges the limits of customary reasoning, neither overstepping them like the secular approach nor meeting the boundaries of religious law as the religious approach does. Instead, it engages fully in the acts of purification, disciplining the self until its conscience is clear and its insight is sharpened, expanding the scope of its mind. It comprehends what was previously incomprehensible and understands what neither the secular nor the religious mindsets can. The more one purifies their actions, the more their mind expands[30].

In this way, the Ethic -based rationality is broader, deeper, and more encompassing in thought and perspective. It possesses the means of knowledge that others lack, while also being able to comprehend knowledge that the human mind cannot grasp except through divine revelation. Thus, Ethic-based rationality, from the Tahitian perspective, encompasses prevailing abstract rationality and enhances it with the rationality of revelation, which is equipped with purposes and means. The former secures certainty in its benefits, while the latter secures certainty in its necessities. Therefore, " Ethic-based spiritualities are not rational in the narrow sense but are rational in the broader sense, or rather, the rationality of Ethic-based spiritualities is more rational than the rationality of secular knowledge."[31]

### 3.4 It is an Integrative Philosophy, not a Disintegrative one:

Any philosophical approach in the view of Dr. Taha Abdurrahman is either a pure philosophical approach following the path of "dialectical methodology," which does not adhere to nominal values, or it is a jurisprudential approach based on Ethic, following the path of "preaching methodology," which adheres to nominal values in theory or practice. Alternatively, it could be a Ethic-based jurisprudential approach, following the path of "philosophical methodology," which adheres to nominal values in theory, practice, and application.[32]

The Ethic-based philosophical perspective, compared to all that has preceded it, is based on a system that encompasses all of these approaches. It sees them as interconnected approaches, both in the terminological and logical sense of the concept of interconnection, which implies inclusion, meaning that things enter into each other in a specific arrangement, achieving integration from the lowest to the highest. The comprehensive Ethic-based perspective on these interconnected approaches entails oscillating between their rational methods, thereby completing the integrative methodology of Ethic-based philosophical thought[33].

### 4. The Imperatives of Ethic Theory:

Previously, it was mentioned that the discourse of Ethic theory encompasses meanings of advancement in ethical ranks. This is because Ethic theory is distinctly an ethical and religious

philosophy. According to Dr. Taha Abdul Rahman, it is believed to be the effective and essential remedy for most of the negative phenomena and effects generated by Western civilization. Despite acknowledging its benefits in meeting various and increasing human needs, from another perspective, it has shattered many moral and human values to the extent that it may dehumanize individuals. Hence, it is seen that "the need for the Muslim thinker to contemplate ethical practice is greater than ever before."[34]

Thus, Taha Abdul Rahman embarked on establishing his Ethic theory based on a transactional reference, forming an Islamic view of existence and humanity. This is built on his solid Sufi background and an evaluation of traditional cognitive practice with a comprehensive vision. The necessity for philosophical theorization of ethical practice arises from the following imperatives:

### 4.1 The Imperative of Ethic Harm:
By this, we mean the harms and damages caused by Western civilization on morals and human values, which "hurt the human in the core of their moral existence, leading to despair in their condition and failure in their destiny." It carries within it numerous gigantic maladies, including intellectual deficiency that cuts off the causes of ethical development, verbal injustice that narrows the scope of ethics and freezes its movement, cognitive complexity that separates it from spiritual meanings, and technological dominance that excludes all moral and spiritual acquisitions and components. Exiting these crises has become nearly impossible, making it urgently necessary to think about formulating a new project that differs entirely from its predecessors because all previous attempts to provide reforms and adjustments on this side or that facet have not been effective or powerful enough to erase the deep-seated effects of moral corruption.

### 4.2 Ethical Transformation Requirement:
Dr. Taha Abdul Rahman believes that the transformations witnessed in the world today in all aspects of individual life and societal domains undoubtedly signal that the world is "on the verge of a profound ethical transformation."[35] Perhaps this will take the form of standards and values that will be agreed upon in the future, much like the global trade system respected by the world today. Dr. Taha says, "It is not far-fetched for the leaders of this world to resort to establishing a new global ethical system, just as they have done with the global trade system."[36] This matter may take a long time due to the prevailing belief that ethics and values are not of great importance, thus making them subordinate to and trailing behind the existing political, economic, cultural, media, and military systems, among others.

### 4.3 Islamic Ethical Void Requirement:
In reality, this constitutes one of the crises facing the Islamic world in terms of legislation and philosophical theorization. Despite the existing challenge regarding ethics and values, we notice a complete absence of efforts aimed at reconsidering Islamic ethics, making this reconsideration comparable to modern Western ethical philosophies[37]. If this remains the case, the situation will worsen in the future because Muslims will have no theory to rely on except

for the inherited ethical values and spiritual meanings scattered in the sources of Islamic religion. This will threaten their existence and presence alike.

**Conclusion of the Research:**

In conclusion, I will attempt to present some important points related to this topic in the form of brief conclusions reached after the research journey, as follows:

1. The Ethic Theory is a pure Islamic philosophy that derives its rationality from the established texts of Islamic heritage. It encompasses three philosophies: testimony, trustworthiness, and purification.

2. The aim of the Ethic Theory is to establish a comprehensive Islamic project that enables confronting contemporary challenges effectively.

3. The Ethic Theory cares about human behavior in life, as it is a directional ethical philosophy aiming to redirect humans to the innate nature with which Allah created them, for the purpose of rebuilding and reforming the earth.

4. The Ethic Philosophy is a responsibility based on ethics and action, seeking to preserve the trust with which humans are entrusted in the world of concealment and stored in their original memory, aiming to build an Islamic wisdom.

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