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Explanation and Justification of the Theory of Fitrah from Mortaza Motahhari's Perspective based on the Inference to the Best Explanation Model

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Abstract

Fitrah (human nature) is a vital principle in the Islamic worldview. Its numerous impacts in various philosophical discussions, including the philosophy of religion, ethics, history, epistemology and the problem of knowledge, educational philosophy, legal philosophy, and political philosophy, indicate its significance and importance. Mortaza Motahhari referred to fitrah as the "mother principle" in Islamic culture and teachings, and in his various works, he examined the effects and implications of fitrah in humans, considering it a continuation of the general essential movement of existence. However, beyond citing verses and hadiths, he rarely focused on the rational proof of the principle of fitrah, more so providing a general methodology (which, according to the author, can be based on the model of inference to the best explanation). This research, using a descriptive-analytical method and by gathering and analyzing information, first examines the essence of fitrah and human innate qualities, then aims to establish the existence of fitrah in humans. Different justifications for the existence of human tendencies in humans are analyzed to identify the correct explanation. Subsequently, some of the effects and outcomes of fitrah are explored, including the argument of fitrah in theism, the impact of fitrah on epistemology and the problem of knowledge, ethics, the philosophy of history, educational philosophy, and sociology.

Keywords: Fitrah, Proof of Fitrah, Inference to the Best Explanation, Outcomes of Fitrah, Mortaza Motahhari.

Introduction

The discussion of "fitrah" (human nature) is a vital principle in the Islamic worldview. Numerous verses in the Quran refer to this truth, describing it as the divine trust, the breath of monotheism, or the position of vicegerency of God, highlighting the intrinsic connection between human nature and the concept of monotheism within the human soul. Examining the implications and effects of fitrah in philosophical debates demonstrates that fitrah is not merely a theoretical issue without impact on other domains but significantly influences many theoretical and practical sciences. For this reason, Mortaza Mutahhari referred to the principle of fitrah as the "mother principle," "mother of knowledge," or "mother of issues"



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in Islamic culture and teachings. Despite various studies examining different aspects of fitrah, there are few that focus on proving its existence. In his discussions on fitrah, Mutahhari mainly emphasized the effects and implications of human innate dispositions, and besides referring to Quranic verses and traditions, he seldom engaged in rational proof of the principle of fitrah, often relying on a general method (arguing from the effects of fitrah to fitrah itself, along with negating other explanations). Therefore, considering the importance of this issue, the present study aims to prove the existence of fitrah based on Mortaza Mutahhari's perspective.

Research Findings

By reviewing the various works of Mortaza Mutahhari and based on his proposed method (which, in the authors' view, can be considered as the best explanation approach), and by formulating and addressing different explanations he provided for the existence of human inclinations, it becomes clear that the only possible and correct explanation for the existence of unique human perceptions and inclinations is to recognize fitrah. This indicates the existence of an origin within humans that is neither acquired nor inherited from previous generations, but rather, the hand of creation has placed these potentials in humans considering the goal of human creation (i.e., achieving perfection).

Conclusion

In this study, using the method of inference to the best explanation, the existence of fitrah in humans has been established, yielding various results. These include the impacts of fitrah on different areas such as philosophy of religion (using fitrah as an argument for theism), ethics (the reason for the inclination towards good and moral matters, the issue of the relativity or absoluteness of ethical propositions), philosophy of history (the progressive nature of history), philosophy of education (understanding education as the discovery and nurturing of human innate potentials rather than shaping them in any way desired by the educator), epistemology and the problem of knowledge (the role of innate perceptions in the foundations of knowledge, especially empirical perceptions, and the rejection of skepticism), jurisprudence, philosophy of law and political philosophy (the issue of justice and the nature of natural rights in relation to human innate potentials), and sociology (human free will in relation to society, the existence of fitrah for society, the unified nature of societies, and the theory of social justice from an Islamic perspective). Given that the concept of innate dispositions affects various dimensions of human thought and inclinations as well as human society, it seems that deeper examination is required, particularly regarding the impact of innate dispositions on governance and national development. The findings of this study can serve as a first step towards addressing the need for an Islamic-Iranian model for national development.

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