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Conclusion

In conclusion, Kaf' amī's ethical system offers an alternative paradigm that integrates theological knowledge, spiritual discipline, and practical moral formation into a coherent framework. Rather than reducing ethics to the theoretical analysis of virtues, he presents it as a transformative process grounded in knowledge of God, self-purification, self-reckoning, repentance, prayer, and adherence to the Qur'an. His model thus bridges the gap between ethical theory and moral practice, demonstrating that genuine moral development requires both sound knowledge and sustained spiritual motivation.

Beyond its historical significance, Kaf' amī's ethical framework provides valuable insights for contemporary discussions of Islamic ethics and moral education by emphasizing the integration of knowledge, spirituality, and practice. Future research may further examine its relationship with other traditions of Islamic and virtue ethics, as well as its potential applications in contemporary approaches to character formation and ethical education.

ings. Within this framework, virtues reach their full realization only when they become manifest in a person's actions, intentions, and way of life. Therefore, the value of morality is demonstrated not only through the definition and understanding of virtues but also through the ability of individuals to actualize and sustain them in practical life. This emphasis on the formative and practical dimension of ethics constitutes one of the most significant innovative aspects of Kafami's ethical model in comparison with approaches that focus primarily on the theoretical analysis of morality.

ing inner dispositions, and maintaining constant awareness of the self. For instance, courage cannot be achieved simply by defining it as the mean between cowardice and recklessness; rather, its cultivation requires addressing internal factors such as excessive attachments, irrational fears, and insufficient trust in divine promises. Thus, the realization of virtue requires simultaneous attention to the intellectual, psychological, and educational dimensions of human existence.

From this perspective, the fundamental difference between Kafami's approach and many philosophical formulations of Islamic ethics lies in his shift of emphasis from explaining the structure of virtue to examining the process through which a virtuous person is formed. Alongside questions concerning the nature of virtues and the ethical goal of human life, Kafami focuses on the mechanisms through which the soul is cultivated, reformed, and prepared to embody moral excellence. Therefore, his ethical system can be understood as a complementary contribution to the theoretical tradition of Islamic ethics, as it establishes a connection between moral knowledge and practical cultivation.

Another distinctive feature of Kafami's model is that it does not restrict ethics to the philosophical analysis of virtues; rather, it examines morality in relation to spiritual experience, the struggle against the Nafs, and the inner journey of human be-

understanding of human nature and its ultimate purpose. These approaches have made significant contributions to the analysis of ethical concepts, the classification of virtues, and the presentation of coherent accounts of human perfection. Nevertheless, the question of how knowledge of virtue is transformed into a virtuous character, and the internal mechanisms through which this transformation occurs, has received comparatively less systematic attention.

The significance of Kafami's approach becomes evident precisely in addressing this issue. In his writings, ethics is not presented merely as a theoretical discussion of virtues and vices or as a philosophical explanation of human perfection; rather, it is understood as an educational process aimed at the gradual transformation of the soul. His continuous dialogue with the Nafs demonstrates his particular concern with internal obstacles, psychological weaknesses, and forms of resistance that prevent individuals from realizing moral virtues. From this perspective, the ethical question is not limited to identifying the nature of virtue; it also concerns how human beings can cultivate the spiritual and psychological conditions necessary for transforming virtue from an abstract concept into an embodied reality.

Accordingly, in Kafami's thought, virtue is not merely something to be intellectually recognized; it must be developed through a gradual process of reforming motivations, disciplin-

cultivation. In this sense, Kafami presents ethics as a comprehensive journey of human transformation in which the intellect, heart, and action are integrated in pursuit of divine proximity.

The Innovative Aspects of Kafami's Model

The model of Islamic ethics that can be reconstructed from MN represents a distinctive approach within the Islamic ethical tradition, as it emphasizes not only the theoretical foundations of virtue but also the process through which virtues become embodied and established within the human self. Many ethical systems developed in the Islamic tradition, particularly those of thinkers such as Ghazzālī, Ibn Miskawayh, and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who were influenced by philosophical ethics, primarily sought to explain the ultimate goal of human existence and the conditions through which human beings attain happiness. Within this framework, the central concerns of ethics were the understanding of human nature, the place of humanity within the order of existence, the definition of happiness, and the identification of virtues that lead individuals toward this ultimate end.

For example, in Ghazzali ethics known as *The Alchemy of Happiness*, the knowledge of self (cf. pp.19-30), the knowledge of God (cf. pp.31-42), the knowledge of this and the next world (cf. 43-63) are central for an ethical. Likewise, similar to the Aristotelian virtue tradition, the proper ordering of the faculties of the soul and the acquisition of virtues are based upon a correct

gance, ostentation (riya'), and selfish desire. These vices are not viewed merely as isolated immoral behaviors; rather, they represent deeper spiritual disorders that distort the human relationship with God. For this reason, moral reform requires more than controlling external actions. It demands a transformation of the inner orientation of the self, in which desires, intentions, and emotions are gradually purified and redirected toward divine purposes. (MN, P.111)

Kafami also emphasizes the importance of moral reflection and awareness of consequences (nazr fi al-'awaqib). Before engaging in any action, individuals must examine its ultimate effects on their souls and their relationship with God. Reflection upon the Hereafter serves as a powerful ethical mechanism because it allows human beings to evaluate temporary desires in light of eternal realities. Through this process, moral decision-making becomes an act of conscious spiritual responsibility rather than a response to immediate impulses.

Therefore, Kafami's meta-ethical framework reveals a dynamic understanding of morality in which knowledge provides direction, motivation provides energy, and spiritual discipline provides the means for transformation. His ethical system demonstrates that moral excellence cannot be achieved through intellectual recognition of virtues alone; rather, it requires a continuous process of awareness, self-evaluation, and practical

Allah) constitutes the deepest foundation of moral motivation. The more a person understands divine perfection, mercy, and wisdom, the stronger his desire becomes to align his actions with the divine will. Virtuous behavior, in this framework, is not merely the result of external obligation or social expectation; it emerges from an inner recognition of truth and a sincere desire for proximity to God. Thus, Kafami's ethical model moves beyond a purely duty-based understanding of morality and emphasizes the role of spiritual awareness in generating moral commitment. (MN, P.132; PP.157-158)

To cultivate this motivation, Kafami employs a balanced pedagogical method based on both encouragement (targhib) and warning (tarhib). On the one hand, he emphasizes divine mercy, the rewards of obedience, and the spiritual benefits of virtues in order to inspire hope and aspiration within the believer. On the other hand, he warns against the destructive consequences of sin and moral corruption, reminding individuals of accountability, death, and the Hereafter. This balance prevents ethical life from falling into either despair or complacency. The individual is encouraged to pursue perfection while remaining conscious of his own weaknesses and constant need for divine assistance.

Within this motivational framework, Kafami identifies several moral diseases that obstruct human spiritual development, including greed, excessive attachment to worldly life, arro-

a means of spiritual education. Prayer teaches the human being his poverty and dependence before God, thereby removing arrogance from the heart and cultivating humility and servitude. Munajat, in his understanding, represents a loving dialogue between the servant and God. Through it, individuals confess their weaknesses and sins while seeking divine mercy and guidance. Such spiritual intimacy keeps the heart alive and prevents hardness and heedlessness.(MN, PP.180-181)

The fourth foundation of Kafami's ethical system lies in his meta-ethical analysis and his attempt to establish a comprehensive motivational structure for moral action. For Kafami, ethics cannot be reduced to the identification of virtues and vices; rather, it requires an explanation of why human beings should pursue moral excellence and how they can sustain ethical commitment. Therefore, he establishes a fundamental relationship between knowledge, motivation, and moral practice. In his view, moral action becomes meaningful and stable only when it is grounded in a correct understanding of human existence, the purpose of creation, and the individual's relationship with God. Ethical knowledge, therefore, is not merely theoretical awareness but a transformative form of knowledge that awakens the human being to his spiritual position and responsibilities before the Creator.

Accordingly, Kafami argues that knowledge of God (ma'rifat

Several central concepts emphasized by Kafami are piety (taqwa), patience (sabr), trust in God (tawakkul), sincerity (ikhlas), and repentance (tawbah). Taqwa means constant awareness of God and vigilance against sin. A pious person measures all actions according to divine standards and avoids anything that distances him from God. Patience is equally important because the path of moral development is filled with difficulties, temptations, and hardships. Without patience, the individual cannot persevere in the pursuit of virtue. (MN, P.148)

Sincerity occupies a central place in his ethics. He regards ostentation (riya') as one of the gravest moral diseases because it empties worship of its spiritual reality. A person who performs good deeds merely to attract the praise of others seeks human approval instead of divine pleasure and thereby distances himself from authentic spirituality. (MN, P.108; P.156; P.110)

Repentance also holds a crucial position in Kafami's thought. He believes that no matter how deeply a person falls into sin, the path back to God always remains open. Genuine repentance not only leads to forgiveness but also purifies Nafs and prepares it to resume its spiritual journey. This perspective preserves hope within the believer and prevents despair.

In addition to the Qur'an, supplication and intimate prayer (munajat) play a vital role in the reform of Nafs. Kafami, who was among the great scholars of supplication, viewed prayer as

vention of arrogance and self-delusion. Human beings are often inclined to justify their wrong actions and imagine themselves righteous while they are following their passions.

Kafami also employs warnings as a method of moral education. He frequently reminds Nafs of death, the Day of Judgment, accountability before God, and the transitory nature of worldly life. Such reminders awaken human beings from negligence and reduce attachment to temporary worldly attractions. In his ethical vision, the struggle against Nafs is the greatest form of jihad because the inner enemy accompanies the individual constantly and continuously invites him toward sin and forgetfulness.

Accordingly, no enduring social reform can occur without inner reform. Society is composed of individuals, and unless individuals purify themselves inwardly, corruption will continue to dominate society. Therefore, self-purification becomes a prerequisite for broader moral and social transformation.

The third foundation is the presentation of methods for reforming the Nafs. He considers the Qur'an to be the primary source of moral education and believes that it offers a complete program for human guidance. The Qur'an, in his understanding, is not merely a text for recitation or ritual blessing; it is a comprehensive educational guide that leads humanity from the darkness of ignorance into the light of divine guidance. (MN, PP.118-121)

returning to sin.” (MN, p. 116)

The second foundation of Kafami's ethical thought concerns the way one must deal with Nafs. Because he was deeply familiar with the prayers and teachings of the Imams, he learned from them how the human Nafs should be disciplined and educated. In many of his writings, he addresses his own Nafs directly, sometimes reproaching it harshly and at other times warning or advising it. This method reveals that the Nafs is, in his view, the principal battlefield of moral struggle. (MN, p.103)

Kafami believes that the human Nafs naturally inclines toward comfort, worldly pleasures, and selfish desires. If these inclinations are left uncontrolled, they lead human beings away from the path of happiness. Therefore, he strongly emphasizes self-reckoning (*muhasabah al-nafs*). A person must constantly evaluate his intentions, actions, and inner states, asking whether they are truly aligned with divine pleasure. Such continuous vigilance protects the individual from heedlessness and moral deviation.

One of the distinctive features of Kafami's ethical method is his suspicion toward Nafs. He does not trust the Nafs completely nor accept its inclinations without examination. This perspective originates from Islamic teachings that regard the lower self as vulnerable to temptation and deception. However, his purpose is not the destruction of human dignity, but rather the pre-

vitality and its connection to the source of existence. When a person remembers his sins or reflects upon God's greatness and is moved to tears, this indicates that his heart remains alive and receptive to divine light. However, when a person reaches the point where remembrance of God no longer affects him and his heart becomes hardened, this signifies spiritual corruption and alienation from the truth.

For Kafami, softness of the heart is one of the most important indicators of spiritual health. Sin, excessive attachment to worldly life, and neglect of God gradually harden the heart and deprive it of the ability to receive divine illumination.

This explains why Kafami gives such prominence to supplications and devotional practices in his works. They are not merely verbal acts of worship; they are instruments for spiritual purification and inner awakening. He conveys this meaning when he writes as follows: "the dryness of the eyes comes from the hardness of the heart, and it is a sign of distance from the Lord. Everything has a weight or a measure — except tears shed from the fear of Allah in the depths of the night. For a tiny drop, though small in size, can extinguish oceans of fire. And a single tear, even if no larger than the head of a fly, becomes like Mount Uhud on the Day of Judgment in reward and merit. Weeping out of fear of Allah illuminates the heart and protects one from

stomach, yet an exalted dignity. They behold the heights of truth and ascend toward them, while they observe the abyss of falsehood and avoid it. Their appetite does not drive them to consume carrion, nor does it carry them into extravagance. They eat only to gain strength to strive in worship, and they sleep only to endure long nights of wakefulness. They examine their food: from where was it obtained, and how did it arrive? Who harvested it and planted it? Who threshed it and lifted it? Who measured it and ground it? Who baked it and kneaded it? They continue examining until they purify their gold upon the fire of refinement, perfect its purity upon the touchstone, and cleanse their thoughts from the thorns of doubt. Such is the awe of the God-conscious: They startle like ostriches startled in fear, and they do not eat as cattle eat.” (MN, pp. 90-91)

Opposed to happiness is wretchedness, which results from separation from God and domination by heedlessness. A wretched person is one whose heart has become empty of divine remembrance and absorbed in worldly attachments and selfish desires. Such a person may appear outwardly successful but inwardly lives in darkness and spiritual restlessness. Kafami identifies several signs of this estrangement from God. One of the most important signs is the inability of a person to humble himself before God, to supplicate sincerely, or to weep in divine presence. In his view, tears are a sign of the heart's spiritual

and withhold even small acts of kindness.” O Nafs! Happiness is the one who takes lesson from his yesterday and stores provisions for his own Nafs. Wretched is the one who gathers wealth for others while withholding from himself the provisions for his final journey.” (MN, pp. 84-85)

Thus, obedience to God constitutes the essence of true happiness. This obedience is not limited to the outward performance of rituals; rather, it involves the submission of the heart and the harmonization of all dimensions of life with divine guidance. Kafami also emphasizes the importance of following the prophets and Imams, whom he considers God’s deputies and guides on earth. Human beings cannot attain perfection without their guidance, because they illuminate the path toward spiritual contemplation. He writes, “how many servants of Allah there are who know no lord besides Him and do not take their own desires as their god. Their faces are radiant, their deeds pleasing, their hearts heavenly while their bodies remain earthly. In longing they are intoxicated and overwhelmed; in fear they are like a bird trapped in a snare. In love they taste no sleep of the sleeper, nor do they fear the blame of any blamer. They do not seek provision from ignoble people, and they are content with dry bread. If they become wealthy, they make what they possess as though it were nothing; and if they become poor, they regard their barren land as a banquet. A worn garment, an empty

transcends material success or worldly pleasure. A person may possess wealth, power, and social status while inwardly suffering from anxiety, emptiness, and spiritual misery because of separation from God. Conversely, another individual may endure hardship and poverty while still experiencing profound inner peace due to closeness to God.

As he states “O Nafs! The miser suffers three things: heat and cold, and the perils of crossing the sea in pursuit of wealth after wealth. He gathers it all together, only to leave it behind swiftly. He exhausts himself and burdens his heart with sorrow. The stingy man is the one who is so protective of a sound coin that he will not even break it for exchange, yet after his death it is divided recklessly among others. The fortunate one is he who prepares himself for the long journey. If wealth is granted to him, he distributes it to the right and left. He enriches his neighbors with it and extinguishes his fires through it. He does not cling to it in his hand, nor leave it for tomorrow, nor hoard it for his children. Rather, it is provision which he sends ahead for his final destination, giving it in charity with both his right hand and his left. So woe to the misers because of what their pockets contain: “The Day when it will be heated in the Fire of Hell and their foreheads and sides will be branded with it...” Shall I tell you who they are? Shall I say to you who they are? They are the hoarders, the greedy ones — “Those who show off

which the human being stands between two possible destinies: happiness and wretchedness. Humanity possesses the potential for spiritual elevation and nearness to God, yet at the same time may descend into misery through heedlessness and submission to worldly desires. Therefore, ethics in Kafami's perspective is a continuous movement from imperfection toward perfection and from negligence toward spiritual awakening.

In Kafami's writings, ethics is not simply a theoretical subject. Rather, it is deeply practical and transformative. He does not merely identify virtues and vices; he also presents methods for purifying the Nafs and creating moral motivation within the individual. In his view, knowledge of God, self-awareness, constant self-examination, and recourse to the Qur'an and supplication are among the most essential instruments for human moral development. Ethics, therefore, is inseparable from spirituality and inner purification.

The first foundation of Kafami's ethical system is his understanding of happiness (sa'adah) and wretchedness (shaqawah). He defines happiness as the genuine connection of the human being with God and believes that all ethical striving should ultimately lead to this connection. According to him, happiness should be found only when a person's life is aligned with the divine will and when he submits himself to God and His chosen representatives on earth, i.e. Imams. Happiness, in this sense,

1971).

This distinction is crucial for understanding the boundaries between different ethical traditions. While various moral theories may recognize many of the same ethical concepts, they differ with respect to what they consider foundational in moral evaluation and where they locate the primary source of moral significance. Kafami's originality lies precisely in relocating the center of ethics from rules, obligations, or even virtues understood merely as stable character traits to the continuous practice of spiritual vigilance, self-reckoning, and the existential relationship between the human being and God. Ethics, in his view, is therefore not simply a system of normative prescriptions but an ongoing process of inner transformation directed toward nearness to the Divine.

Kafami's Reconstruction of the Foundations of Islamic Ethics

Kafami's ethical system can be regarded as one of the most significant moral systems within the Islamic and Shi'i intellectual tradition. In his thought, ethics is not merely a collection of personal or social rules of conduct; rather, it is a path through which human beings attain the truth of their existence and draw nearer to God. Kafami, relying on the Qur'an, narrations, and the supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt (PBUT), attempts to construct a comprehensive moral and educational framework in

itual purification. Rather, its originality lies in the central place these concepts occupy within his ethical system. Although other traditions acknowledge similar themes, they do not assign them the same foundational status. As discussed earlier, different ethical schools often share important clarity of his language, together with its intellectual depth, makes the work valuable both to general readers and to scholars of Islamic ethics.

The distinctiveness of Kafami's ethical method does not imply that other Muslim moral thinkers neglected concepts such as self-reckoning, repentance, or spiritual purification. Rather, its originality lies in the central place these concepts occupy within his ethical system. Although other traditions acknowledge similar themes, they do not assign them the same foundational status. As discussed earlier, different ethical schools often share important moral concepts while differing fundamentally in what they regard as the primary basis of moral evaluation.

For example, within the deontological tradition of Islamic ethics, particularly in the duty-centered moral framework associated with the Mu'tazilite theologian 'Abd al-Jabbār, justice ('adl) and injustice (ẓulm) function as the fundamental normative principles governing moral judgment. The presence of injustice renders an action morally defective, and moral evaluation is determined primarily by conformity to normative duties and obligations rather than by the cultivation of inward virtues or the gradual purification of the soul (Hourani,

formation. In contrast, he describes the “sleeping” or negligent Nafs as one characterized by laziness, heedlessness, passivity, and spiritual negligence. Such conditions, he argues, can only be overcome through sustained reflection, patience, vigilance, and deliberate moral decision-making. Spiritual awareness thus becomes the indispensable prerequisite for ethical reform.

Accordingly, MN presents practical methods of moral self-accountability, including regular self-examination, honest acknowledgment of one's mistakes, continuous behavioral reform, and careful purification of one's intentions. Kafami emphasizes sincerity (ikhlāṣ) as the indispensable condition of moral introspection and demonstrates how persistent self-reckoning gradually transforms the human Nafs and refines moral character. The work further provides spiritual guidance intended to deepen self-awareness, strengthen faith, and cultivate inner peace, harmony, and reconciliation with oneself.

Methodologically, Kafami adopts a psychologically analytical approach firmly grounded in Islamic spiritual and ethical values. By integrating traditional Islamic wisdom with reflective spiritual insight, he develops a comprehensive framework for self-cultivation that combines theoretical reflection with practical guidance for moral development. Theiveness of Kafami's ethical method does not imply that other Muslim moral thinkers neglected concepts such as self-reckoning, repentance, or spir-

insight that characterize Kafami's ethical methodology.

For Kafami, as long as human beings preserve their authentic humanity and place it at the center of their lives, they inevitably experience an awareness of an inner deficiency—a longing for something essential that alone can complete the meaning of human existence: spiritual perfection, true beauty, and genuine gnosis (ma'rifah). The more fully one embodies authentic humanity, the stronger this aspiration becomes. Humanity and spiritual perfection are therefore inseparable; the pursuit of inner completion is not an optional ideal but an intrinsic dimension of being human. This understanding gives rise to the central question that underlies Kafami starting point of genuine moral transformation. In contrast, he describes the “sleeping” or negligent Nafs as one characterized by laziness, heedlessness, passivity, and spiritual negligence. Such conditions, he argues, can only be overcome through sustained reflection, patience, vigilance, and accountability, including regular self-examination, honest acknowledgment of one's mistakes, continuous behavioral reform, and careful purification of one's intentions. Kafami's ethical project: how can such perfection be attained?

Kafami's answer lies in the practice of self-reckoning. He identifies the “self-reproaching soul” (al-nafs al-lawwāmah), which recognizes its faults, regrets wrongdoing, and seeks repentance, as the essential starting point of genuine moral trans-

These themes became central elements of the philosophical tradition that integrated Islamic moral teachings with the legacy of Aristotelian ethics.

MN as a model in Islamic Ethics

Unlike Aristotelian models, which regards virtue as the outcome of balancing the faculties of the soul, Kafami conceives virtue as dependent upon prior spiritual conditions, including self-reckoning (muḥāsabat al-nafs), remembrance of God (dhikr), repentance (tawbah), awareness of death, and the cultivation of a living relationship with the Divine. These are not merely instrumental practices that facilitate moral excellence; rather, they constitute the ontological and epistemological foundations of ethics, without which genuine moral character cannot be formed.

Among Kafami works, MN is regarded as one of his most significant contributions to the study of self-reckoning and spiritual purification. Structured as a reflective dialogue with the Nafs, the work establishes both the theoretical and practical foundations of self-examination, introspection, and moral reform while offering a profound account of the role of the human Nafs in the human beings preserve their authentic humanity and place it at the center of their lives, they inevitably experience an awareness of an inner pursuit of happiness and spiritual perfection. The work exemplifies the intellectual depth and spiritual

sions of Islamic ethics. Philosophers often describe ethical development as a process of refining and perfecting Nafs. Virtues are viewed as qualities that improve the condition of Nafs and strengthen its capacities. Ethical education is therefore closely connected to self-knowledge, reflection, and the cultivation of inner harmony. Moral growth involves both outward conduct and inward transformation.

Islamic virtue ethics also explores the connection between individual morality and social life. Human beings are understood as social creatures who develop their character through interaction with others. Family, education, friendship, and community all contribute to moral formation. Virtues such as generosity, honesty, loyalty, patience, and compassion emerge within social relationships and influence the quality of communal life. Ethical reflection therefore extends beyond personal behavior to include broader questions concerning social responsibility and collective well-being.

Virtue ethics, explained in this paradigm, remained a major framework for understanding morality. Discussions of character, moderation, wisdom, justice, self-discipline, and moral education shaped philosophical writings for centuries. Ethical inquiry focused on the cultivation of virtues, the regulation of desires and emotions through reason, and the formation of balanced and harmonious character traits.

proper course of action. Wisdom guides the exercise of other virtues and helps maintain balance among the different powers of Nafs(1).

Another central feature of Islamic virtue ethics is the relationship between ethics and self-discipline. Human beings often experience conflicts between rational judgment and immediate desires. Moral development requires the ability to regulate impulses and direct behavior toward higher goals. Self-control is therefore regarded as an essential virtue because it allows individuals to resist harmful tendencies and maintain ethical consistency. Through self-discipline, emotions and desires are guided rather than suppressed, enabling them to contribute positively to human life.

The concept of Nafs plays an important role in many discus-

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- (1) Because the term nafs carries a deep and nuanced meaning that is difficult to capture fully in English, I will use the original Arabic term throughout this article. While ego may be the closest single-word translation in some contexts, it does not adequately convey the full concept of nafs. In this article, nafs refers to the inner aspect of a human being that influences, urges, and sometimes tempts a person toward certain actions. It can present itself as virtuous and beneficial at times, while at other times it may encourage harmful or misguided behavior. Therefore, the original term nafs is retained to preserve its broader psychological, moral, and spiritual dimensions.

The influence of Aristotle can be seen in the importance given to moderation. Many Muslim philosophers accepted the idea that virtue lies between two extremes. Moral defects arise either from excess or deficiency, while virtue represents a balanced state. For example, excessive fear may lead to cowardice, whereas a complete lack of fear may result in recklessness. Virtue is found in the balanced condition that allows a person to respond appropriately to circumstances. Similar patterns are applied to other virtues, such as generosity, patience, self-control, and honesty.

This understanding of virtue is closely connected to the idea of habituation. Virtues are not considered innate qualities that individuals possess from birth. Instead, they are developed through repeated actions and continuous practice. Moral education therefore plays a crucial role in shaping character. Through discipline, training, and the repetition of good actions, virtues gradually become stable traits. Ethical development is viewed as a long-term process through which habits influence personality and conduct.

Islamic virtue ethics also places significant emphasis on wisdom. Wisdom is often regarded as one of the highest virtues because it enables individuals to make sound judgments and act appropriately in different situations. Moral life requires not only good intentions but also the ability to recognize the

and how ethical conduct can be cultivated. While the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad provided the primary sources of moral guidance, Islamic philosophers also engaged with the intellectual traditions of ancient Greece. Among these traditions, Aristotelian virtue ethics had a particularly significant influence on the development of philosophical ethics in the Islamic world.

A major characteristic of Islamic philosophical ethics is its emphasis on character rather than isolated actions. Ethical inquiry focuses on the qualities that shape a person's behavior and determine how individuals respond to different situations. Instead of asking only whether a specific action is right or wrong, virtue ethics examines the kind of person one should become. Moral excellence is understood as the possession of stable virtues that guide behavior consistently and appropriately.

Within this tradition, human beings are viewed as possessing different faculties, including reason, emotions, and desires. Ethical life requires the proper organization of these faculties so that they function in harmony. Reason occupies a central role because it enables individuals to distinguish right from wrong and to regulate emotions and desires. Moral development involves bringing the various dimensions of human nature into balance under the guidance of rational judgment.

erosity reflects a balanced attitude toward material possessions. Ethical life therefore involves avoiding extremes and cultivating moderation in thought, emotion, and behavior.

Another important characteristic of Islamic virtue ethics in Aristotelian form is its connection between moral excellence and human perfection. Ethics is not merely concerned with regulating behavior or maintaining social order. It is closely linked to the broader question of human fulfillment. Human beings are believed to possess capacities that can be developed and perfected through moral and intellectual growth. Virtues contribute to this process by enabling individuals to realize their potential and achieve a higher level of existence.

Happiness, here, is often regarded as the ultimate goal of ethical life. It is not understood simply as pleasure, wealth, or external success. Rather, it refers to a state of human flourishing that results from the perfection of character and the harmonious development of human capacities. A virtuous person experiences fulfillment because his or her life is ordered according to reason and moral excellence. Ethical development a Islamic Ethics and the Tradition of Virtue Ethics Islamic ethics developed through a combination of religious teachings, philosophical reflection, and practical concerns about human behavior. From the early centuries of Islam, scholars sought to understand how human beings should live, what qualities make a person morally good,

habituation, as virtuous actions become stable dispositions within the person. This emphasis on moral training reflects the belief that ethical character can be consciously developed throughout life.

The influence of Aristotle is particularly visible in the emphasis on virtue and moderation. Many Muslim philosophers, such as Ibn Miskawayh (c. 932–1030), Avicenna (Ibn Sina, 980–1037), Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (1201–1274), and Mulla Mahdi Naraqī (1715–1795), adopted the Aristotelian model in virtue ethics. This reading of virtue ethics follows the idea that moral excellence consists in maintaining balance among the different aspects of human nature. Human beings possess rational capacities, emotions, and desires, all of which play important roles in life. Ethical development requires the proper regulation of these elements so that none dominates the others excessively. Reason serves as the guiding principle that helps establish harmony and balance within the human personality.

The concept of moderation occupies a central place in this ethical tradition. Virtue is often understood as a mean between two extremes of excess and deficiency. Moral failings occur when emotions or desires exceed their proper limits or fall short of what is appropriate. Courage, for example, represents a balanced response to danger, while gen-

person morally excellent. While the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad provide the primary foundation for Islamic moral thought, Muslim philosophers also engaged with the ethical traditions of ancient Greece, especially the virtue ethics of Aristotle. As a result, a distinctive ethical tradition emerged that combined Islamic values with philosophical theories of character and virtue.

One of the dominant approaches in the history of Islamic philosophical ethics was virtue ethics. This approach focuses on the development of moral character rather than merely evaluating individual actions. The central concern of virtue ethics is the cultivation of stable qualities that enable human beings to act rightly and live well. Moral life is therefore understood as a process of self-improvement and character formation. Ethical behavior arises not simply from following rules or pursuing desirable consequences but from possessing virtues that guide action in a consistent and balanced manner.

A key feature of Islamic virtue ethics is the belief that human beings have the capacity for moral development. Character is not viewed as fixed or unchangeable. Through education, discipline, reflection, and repeated practice, individuals can cultivate virtues and overcome moral weaknesses. Ethical excellence is achieved gradually through

quate normative ethical theories must account for virtues, consequences, and moral rules in some way. What differentiates virtue ethics from consequentialist and deontological theories is the central role it assigns to virtue within its structure. (Sinnot, 2023) Consequentialists typically interpret virtues as character traits that tend to produce good outcomes, while deontologists understand them as dispositions that support reliable adherence to moral duties. Virtue ethicists, however, reject defining virtues in terms of more fundamental notions such as consequences or duties. Instead, they treat virtues and vices as foundational concepts, with other moral ideas being explained in relation to them. (Cf. Kawal, 2009; Watson, 1990; Hursthouse, 2026) This point is crucial, as it differentiates between distinct versions of a paradigm; understanding Kafami's model hinges on this distinction.

Islamic Ethics and the Tradition of Virtue Ethics

Islamic ethics is one of the most important branches of Islamic intellectual thought and has developed through the interaction of religious teachings, philosophical reflection, and practical concerns about human conduct. Throughout Islamic history, scholars and philosophers sought to answer fundamental questions about the nature of the good life, the purpose of human existence, and the qualities that make a

merely because they express certain ideals but because they help create better conditions for human life. Questions about justice, honesty, generosity, and responsibility are often examined in terms of the effects they have on human well-being. The theory encourages individuals to focus on the tangible results of their actions and to consider how those actions influence the lives of others.

Despite the diversity of consequentialist theories, they share a common commitment to evaluating actions by their outcomes. Whether the goal is happiness, welfare, preference satisfaction, or some other valuable end, consequentialists maintain that moral judgment ultimately depends on the consequences produced by human actions. The ethical significance of an action is therefore determined by its capacity to create positive results and reduce harm for those affected by it.

It should be noted that these three major ethical approaches, i.e. virtue ethics, consequentialism, and deontology, do not ignore consequences, duties, or virtues in their moral discussions. Rather, each framework highlights one of these elements as its primary focus. This does not imply that virtue ethicists exclusively discuss virtues, or that consequentialists only consider consequences, or that deontologists solely focus on rules. In fact, all ade-

outcomes. The morally right choice is the one expected to generate the greatest balance of benefits over harms. This approach encourages careful analysis of the effects that actions may have on individuals, communities, and society as a whole.

This paradigm places considerable importance on the future effects of actions. Moral agents are expected to think beyond immediate circumstances and consider long-term consequences. An action that appears beneficial in the short term may produce harmful effects later, while a difficult decision in the present may generate substantial benefits in the future. Ethical judgment therefore requires an assessment of both immediate and long-range outcomes.

Another important aspect of consequentialism is its flexibility. Unlike ethical theories that rely on fixed rules, consequentialism allows moral decisions to vary according to circumstances. The same action may be considered right in one situation and wrong in another, depending on the consequences it produces. Because outcomes differ across contexts, moral evaluation must take account of the specific details of each case. This feature makes consequentialism highly adaptable to complex real-world situations.

Consequentialism also emphasizes the practical impact of moral choices. Moral principles are valuable not

One of the most important forms of consequentialism is utilitarianism. Utilitarianism holds that the morally correct action is the one that produces the greatest overall happiness or utility for the greatest number of people. Happiness, pleasure, well-being, or satisfaction of preferences are often considered the primary goods that moral actions should promote. Although not all consequentialists are utilitarians, utilitarianism remains the most influential version of consequentialist ethics.

A central feature of consequentialism is its impartiality. The theory requires individuals to consider the interests of all those affected by an action rather than focusing solely on their own interests. When making moral decisions, each person's well-being counts equally. This means that moral agents must evaluate the overall consequences of their actions and choose the option that maximizes positive outcomes for everyone involved. The emphasis on impartial consideration distinguishes consequentialism from ethical approaches that prioritize personal relationships, intentions, or individual obligations.

Consequentialists believe that moral reasoning involves comparing different possible actions and predicting their likely consequences. In many situations, individuals face several alternatives, each producing different

According to this theory, the moral value of an action depends on the results it produces. An action is considered morally right if it leads to good consequences and morally wrong if it produces harmful or undesirable outcomes. The central question in consequentialist ethics is not whether an action follows a moral rule, but whether it generates the best possible results.

The basic idea of consequentialism is that morality should be concerned with improving the world and promoting valuable outcomes. Human actions affect the well-being of individuals and societies, and these effects provide the standard by which actions should be judged. Rather than focusing on intentions, motives, or duties, consequentialists examine the actual consequences of behavior. In this view, the ethical quality of an action is determined by what it achieves rather than by the principles that motivate it.

Consequentialism developed as an alternative to ethical theories that emphasized moral duties or virtues. Its supporters argued that moral decisions should be practical and should aim at producing the greatest amount of good. If the purpose of morality is to improve human life, then actions should be evaluated according to how effectively they contribute to that goal. As a result, consequences become the primary factor in moral judgment.

personal advantages, or changing circumstances.

Another important aspect of deontology is respect for people. Every human being possesses intrinsic worth and dignity because all individuals are rational agents capable of making moral choices. As a result, people should never be treated merely as means to achieve another person's goals. Moral duty requires respecting the autonomy, rights, and dignity of all human beings. This principle forms the basis for many modern ideas about human rights and moral equality.

In deontological theory, morality is ultimately a matter of fulfilling duties that are recognized through reason. The morally good person is one who acts from a sense of obligation and remains committed to moral principles even when doing so is difficult. Moral worth is found not in the consequences of actions but in the commitment to duty and respect for universal moral law. Through obedience to duty, individuals demonstrate their rational nature and uphold the ethical principles that govern moral life.

Consequential Ethics

Consequentialism is the third influential paradigm in moral philosophy. Unlike deontology, which focuses on duties and moral rules, consequentialism evaluates actions according to their outcomes or consequences.

world would destroy trust and make communication meaningless. Therefore, lying cannot be accepted as a universal moral rule. The same reasoning applies to actions such as stealing, cheating, and breaking promises. Because these actions cannot be consistently universalized, they violate moral duty.

A distinctive feature of deontology is its rejection of consequence-based ethics. Many ethical theories, such as utilitarianism, judge actions according to the amount of happiness or benefit they produce. Deontology rejects this approach and maintains that consequences cannot determine moral rightness. Outcomes are often uncertain and may vary according to circumstances. A morally right action may sometimes lead to negative results, while an immoral action may occasionally produce beneficial consequences. Therefore, moral judgment should be based on duty rather than outcomes.

Therefore, deontology maintains that certain actions remain morally wrong even if they lead to desirable consequences. Likewise, some actions remain morally right even when they involve sacrifice or hardship. Telling the truth, keeping promises, and respecting others are considered duties that should be fulfilled regardless of the results they produce. Moral principles are not altered by convenience,

Kantian deontology.

In deontological ethics, duty is not based on emotions or personal inclinations. Human beings frequently face situations in which their desires conflict with their moral obligations. A person may want to break a promise for personal convenience or may feel tempted to lie in order to avoid difficulty. According to deontology, moral action occurs when individuals choose to fulfill their duty despite such temptations. The authority of duty is stronger than personal preference because moral obligations are grounded in reason.

To explain how moral duties can be identified, Kant introduces the concept of the categorical imperative. The categorical imperative is the supreme principle of morality and serves as a test for determining whether an action is morally acceptable. It requires individuals to act only according to principles that they could rationally will to become universal laws. In other words, before acting, a person should ask whether it would be acceptable for everyone to follow the same rule.

This principle emphasizes the universal nature of moral duty. If a person considers lying whenever it is advantageous, he or she must ask whether a world in which everyone lied would be possible. Kant argues that such a

The fundamental principle of deontology is that human beings have duties that guide their behavior known as Categorical Imperative (CI). These duties exist independently of personal desires and interests. A person may wish to act in a certain way because it is beneficial or pleasurable, but deontology requires individuals to consider whether the action is morally right. Moral decisions should therefore be guided by obligation rather than by expected rewards or consequences. Kant argues that the moral value of an action depends on the motive behind it. An action is morally worthy only when it is performed from duty. People often perform actions that appear morally good, but their real motivations may be self-interest, fear of punishment, or the desire for social approval. In such cases, the action may conform to moral rules, yet it lacks genuine moral worth because it is not motivated by duty.

For example, a person may tell the truth because lying could damage his reputation. Another person may tell the truth simply because honesty is a moral obligation. Although both individuals perform the same action, Kant argues that only the second action possesses true moral value. The first person acts from self-interest, while the second acts from duty. This distinction between acting according to duty and acting from duty is one of the central ideas of

Deontological Ethics

Deontological ethics is the second paradigm in moral philosophy. The term comes from the Greek word *deon*, meaning “duty” or “obligation.” Unlike ethical theories that evaluate actions according to their consequences or the character of subject, deontology argues that the morality of an action depends on whether it fulfills a moral duty or obligation. According to this view, some actions are right or wrong in themselves regardless of the outcomes they produce. The central question in deontological ethics, then, is not “What consequences will this action bring?” but rather “Is this action consistent with moral duty?” (Alexander, 2025)

The most influential representative of deontological ethics is Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who developed a systematic theory of morality based on reason and duty particularly his book named *Critique of Practical Reason*.

Kant believed that moral principles must be universal and applicable to all rational beings. He rejected the idea that morality should be based on emotions, personal preferences, or the pursuit of happiness. Instead, he argued that moral obligations arise from reason and must be followed because they are morally required.

justly and courageous by acting courageously. Through repetition, good actions become habits, and these habits gradually shape a virtuous character.

Moral virtues are essential for achieving happiness. Happiness cannot be attained without virtue because a flourishing human life requires the proper development of character. Individuals who are controlled by excesses, deficiencies, or irrational desires are unable to live in a balanced and fulfilling way. Moral virtues enable people to make sound decisions, establish healthy relationships, and direct their abilities toward worthwhile goals. Through virtue, individuals align their actions with reason and fulfill their human potential.

This version of virtue ethics also stresses personal responsibility in the development of moral character. Human beings possess the capacity for choice and are therefore responsible for their actions. Since virtues are acquired through practice, individuals must actively work to cultivate them. Ethical development depends on conscious effort, self-discipline, and the continual practice of good actions. In this sense, the path toward happiness lies in the individual's commitment to developing moral virtues and living according to reason. Through personal effort and the cultivation of a virtuous character, a person can move toward a life of excellence, fulfillment, and human flourishing.

to this doctrine, virtuous behavior avoids both too much and too little of a particular quality.

For example, courage is the mean between cowardice and recklessness. A coward avoids danger even when facing it is necessary, while a reckless person exposes himself to danger without proper consideration. The courageous individual responds to danger in a balanced and rational way. Similarly, generosity is the mean between stinginess and extravagance. A stingy person refuses to give when it is appropriate to do so, whereas an extravagant person gives excessively and without judgment. The generous person uses resources wisely and acts according to the demands of the situation.

Aristotle emphasizes that the mean is not a fixed point that applies equally to everyone. What is appropriate depends on the individual, the circumstances, and the guidance of reason. Virtue therefore requires practical wisdom, the ability to judge correctly and determine the proper course of action in each situation.

An important feature of Aristotle's ethical theory is the role of habit in the formation of character. Human beings are not born virtuous or vicious. Instead, character develops through repeated actions. Just as a musician becomes skilled through constant practice, a person becomes virtuous by consistently performing virtuous actions. A person becomes just by acting

A central assumption of Aristotle's ethical theory is that human beings are rational creatures. Reason distinguishes humans from other living beings and defines their unique function. He argues that every being has a specific function, and its good consists in performing that function well. Since the distinctive function of human beings is rational activity, the good life must involve the proper exercise of reason. Therefore, happiness is achieved when individuals organize their lives according to rational principles and make choices guided by sound judgment.

One of the most important concepts in Aristotle's ethics is virtue. Virtue is a stable character trait that enables a person to choose and act appropriately in different situations. It is neither a natural instinct nor a temporary feeling; rather, it is an acquired disposition developed through practice and habituation. Aristotle distinguishes between intellectual virtues and moral virtues. Intellectual virtues are cultivated through education and learning, whereas moral virtues are developed through repeated action and experience.

Moral virtues include qualities such as courage, justice, generosity, temperance, honesty, and patience. These virtues help individuals regulate their emotions, desires, and actions in a rational manner. Aristotle maintains that moral virtue is generally found in a mean between two extremes: excess and deficiency. This principle is known as the doctrine of the mean. According

bution of Kafami. Then, it becomes possible to identify more clearly the features that distinguish his approach from competing ethical frameworks and to appreciate the originality of the moral perspective he advances.

Virtue ethics

Aristotle (384-322 BCE) is one of the most influential philosophers of ancient Greece, whose ideas have had a profound impact on the history of philosophy, especially in the field of ethics. His most important ethical work, *Nicomachean Ethics*, examines the nature of the good life and the path through which human beings can attain the highest good. According to Aristotle, all human actions aim at some good, and every activity is directed toward a desirable end. Among all these ends, however, there is one ultimate goal that gives meaning to all other pursuits: happiness, or what Aristotle calls *eudaimonia*.

For him, happiness is not simply pleasure, wealth, or social success. Many people mistakenly identify happiness with material possessions or public recognition, but Aristotle argues that such things are temporary and cannot serve as the ultimate purpose of human life. Happiness is a state of human flourishing, achieved when a person fully develops his or her capacities and lives in accordance with reason. A truly happy life is one in which human potential is realized through virtuous activity.

duced by Kafami, this article is organized into three main sections. The first section presents the major paradigms within moral philosophy and ethical theory. The second section reviews significant studies and approaches related to Islamic ethics. The third section examines the book MN and analyzes the distinctive method employed by its author in formulating a model of Islamic ethics.

Paradigms in ethics

Three major paradigms have historically dominated ethical thought: virtue ethics, deontological ethics, and consequentialism. Although each of these traditions emerged in a particular intellectual context, none has remained confined to a single historical period. Rather, the history of ethics can be understood as a continuing dialogue among these three paradigms, with different eras witnessing the revival, reformulation, or renewed prominence of one approach over the others. At certain moments, virtue ethics has occupied center stage; at others, duty-based or consequentialist theories have shaped ethical discourse. Even contemporary moral philosophy largely consists of new interpretations and developments of (one of) these enduring traditions.

The following sections provide a brief overview of each of these paradigms. Familiarity with central assumptions is essential for understanding the distinctive methodological contri-

shaped by relationships, institutions, traditions, and practical circumstances. These complexities reveal the need for ethical frameworks capable of addressing multiple dimensions of human existence simultaneously rather than privileging a single aspect of moral experience.

Islamic intellectual tradition, presented by Muslim scholars, philosophers, theologians, and mystics produced extensive reflections on moral character, spiritual refinement, human responsibility, and the cultivation of virtuous conduct. These discussions drew upon both religious teachings and philosophical traditions, resulting in ethical frameworks that sought to connect moral principles with lived experience.

Sheikh Taqi al-Din Ibrahim ibn Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Muhammad Kafami (840-905 AH), a distinguished Shi'ī thinker, presents a unique perspective in his book in ethics *Muhasabat al-Nafs al-Lawwāmah* (hereafter MN). In this work, he follows a method that gives importance to the essential foundations of what can be found in virtue ethics and to religious teachings. This approach is noteworthy because, before the development of Islamic ethical thought, virtue ethics was not commonly understood as a form of religious morality. Kafami's method can be regarded as a valuable framework and an influential model for shaping a new paradigm of religious ethical thought.

In order to identify the methodological innovations intro-

opment, and the relationship between humanity and the divine. Religious scholars and interpreters of sacred texts have often sought to construct moral frameworks capable of integrating intellectual reasoning, spiritual aspiration, emotional development, and practical behavior. Such approaches generally view morality not merely as a matter of external actions but as a comprehensive way of life encompassing both individual character and social responsibility.

Nevertheless, some theological approaches have limited the scope of moral inquiry by locating the source of morality exclusively within divine commands. Divine Command Theory, commonly associated with theological voluntarism, holds that moral truths derive entirely from the will of God and that actions are right or wrong because they are commanded or prohibited by divine authority. While this perspective emphasizes the importance of obedience and religious commitment, it has also generated debates concerning the role of human reason in ethical judgment and the possibility of recognizing moral truths independently of revelation.

Although these systems present models for ethical life, it seems none of them can be considered comprehensive. For all of them focus on one aspect of human beings. Human beings encounter ethical challenges not merely as rational thinkers but also as social, emotional, and spiritual beings whose lives are

Stuart Mill shifted attention toward the outcomes of actions, maintaining that moral conduct should be evaluated according to its capacity to maximize happiness or promote the greatest good for the greatest number. Each of these traditions has provided a powerful framework for understanding moral life and continues to exert considerable influence on contemporary ethical discussions.

Despite their significance, these theories often concentrate on a particular dimension of morality and consequently offer only a partial account of ethical experience. Virtue ethics places primary emphasis on the moral character of the agent, deontological ethics focuses on duties and moral obligations, and consequential theories evaluate actions according to their results. While each perspective illuminates an important aspect of moral life, none entirely captures the complexity of human ethical existence when considered in isolation. Moral decision-making frequently involves a combination of character, obligations, intentions, relationships, and consequences, suggesting that ethical life cannot easily be reduced to a single principle or criterion.

Religious and theological traditions have likewise made substantial contributions to ethical thought. Within many religious communities, ethical reflection has been closely connected to broader questions concerning human purpose, spiritual devel-

Introduction

Ethical inquiry has consistently occupied a central place in the history of human thought. Across different civilizations, cultures, and intellectual traditions, philosophers, theologians, and moral thinkers have sought to understand the nature of moral conduct, the foundations of ethical judgment, and the principles that ought to guide human life. Questions concerning what makes an action right or wrong, what constitutes a good life, and how human beings should relate to themselves and others have remained among the most enduring concerns of philosophical reflection. The universality of these questions has led to the emergence of diverse ethical traditions, each offering its own account of moral value, human flourishing, and practical conduct.

Many influential approaches have been developed to address these concerns. Three of them remain prominent.

Aristotle, through his theory of virtue ethics, located the foundation of morality in the cultivation of character and the development of virtues that enable individuals to achieve human flourishing. Immanuel Kant, by contrast, argued that morality is grounded in rational duty and universal moral obligations that bind all rational agents regardless of circumstances or consequences. Utilitarian thinkers such as Jeremy Bentham and John

الملخص

تُفهم الأخلاق الإسلامية عادةً على أنها وثيقة الصلة بأخلاق الفضيلة، ولا سيّما في صيغتها الأرسطية. وعلى الرغم من أنّ عناصر من أخلاق الفضيلة يمكن أيضًا تحديدها ضمن تقاليد أخلاقية منافسة مثل الواجبية الكانطية والعواقبية، فإنّ التفسير السائد للأخلاق الإسلامية غالبًا ما ارتبط بهذا النموذج اليوناني. ووفقًا لهذا المنظور، تبلغ النفس الإنسانية السعادة من خلال التوازن المنسجم بين قواها، لتصل في النهاية إلى غايتها العليا والنهائية. أظهرت هذه الدراسة بأنّ الإطار الأخلاقي الذي قدّمه الشيخ الكفعمي، وهو أحد أبرز علماء الشيعة تأثيرًا في مجال الأدب العبادي والأدعية، قدّم بديلًا متميزًا لهذا النموذج المعروف. فبدلًا من اشتقاق الفضيلة من توازن قوى النفس، يؤسّسها الكفعمي على مجموعة من الأسس الروحية والعبادية السابقة. ومن خلال فحص كتابات الكفعمي، ولا سيّما كتابه المسمّى محاسبة النفس، يقدّم هذا البحث ولأوّل مرة، إعادة بناء منهجية لأسس الأخلاق الإسلامية استنادًا إلى النموذج المتميّز الذي ينبثق من فكره العبادي والروحي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفعمي، الأخلاق الإسلامية، إعادة بناء منهجية، أخلاق الفضيلة

Abstract

Islamic ethics is commonly understood as being closely aligned with virtue ethics, particularly in its Aristotelian formulation. Although elements of virtue ethics can also be identified within rival ethical traditions such as Kantian deontology and consequentialism, the dominant interpretation of Islamic ethics has often been associated with this Greek model. According to this perspective, the human soul attains Happiness through the harmonious balance of its faculties, ultimately reaching its highest and final end. This study argues that the ethical framework presented by sheikh Kafami, one of the most influential Shi'i scholars in the field of devotional literature and supplications, offers a distinct alternative to this well-known paradigm. Rather than deriving virtue from the equilibrium of the soul's faculties, Kafami grounds it in a set of prior spiritual and devotional foundations. By examining Kafami's writings, particularly his book named as *Muhasabat al. Nafs* (self-reckoning), this article offers, for the first time, a systematic reconstruction of Islamic-ethics foundations based on the distinctive model that emerges from his devotional and spiritual thought.

Keywords: Kafami, Islamic ethics, a systematic reconstruction, virtue ethics

**Sheikh Kafami's Methodology in
the Foundations of Islamic Eth-
ics: The Book Muhasabat al-Nafs
al-Lawwama as a Model**

منهجية الشيخ الكفعمي في أسس الأخلاق الإسلامية:
كتاب محاسبة النفس اللوامة أنموذجاً

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bala, then this affiliation to his original city is not cancelled.

The Journal Axes

Since Karbala heritage journal is a specialized heritage journal, it receives all heritage researches; including studies, indexes and bibliographies, and heritage verification. It has the following subjects:

1. Karbala history and events and accidents, which passed through its noblemen's biographies, their places and what they stated: sayings, proverbs, tales, and wisdoms. In fact, it includes all its oral and written history.
2. Studying Karbala scholars' opinions, jurisprudence, Usul and men of recounting and hadith, theories, etc. descriptively, analytically, comparatively, collectively, and critically.
3. Bibliographical studies which include all its common and objective types such as publications, Karbala scholars' manuscripts in a particular science or topic, whether spatial ones as their manuscripts in certain library, or personal ones as one of Karbala scholars' manuscripts or publications, etc.
4. Studying kerbala poets' verse in all aspects: stylistically, linguistically, textually, etc. and gathering verses of those who had no collected poetic divans.
5. Verifying Karbala manuscripts
6. At last, researchers are invited to submit their researches to the journal. objectives cannot be carried out without meeting and supporting the scientific efforts to manifest and study the heritage.

history and accidents and what happened on. All that is the heart interest of the journal.

Who are Karbala noblemen?

It is well known that the criterion of affiliation to a city is disputable. Some consider living some years in a city. Others considered the criterion is the scientific trace or the trace of residence. Others argue about the different temporal duration. Since Karbala a scientific city and a center of attraction and science students and migration for longer periods, it is not easy to limit its noblemen names.

Nevertheless, the included affiliated noblemen according to the criterion are:

1. The respected city people who belong to families that inhabited the city. Thus, these families' noblemen are Karbala city noblemen even if they left it.
2. The noblemen who settled in Karbala for getting science or teaching in its schools and hawzas, on a condition that residency period is considerable.

It is worth to mention that noblemen affiliation to more than one city according to birth, by study, learning, or residency is a very common case in our heritage. That is why we find a scholar that affiliates himself as (Al Isfehani by birth, Al Najafi by study, and Al Ha'iri by residency and burial ground). Then, in brief, we can say that if any nobleman affiliates himself to Ker-

Common starting point: it is related to this holy city which became a center and shrine for many of the prophet progeny's (p.b.u.t.) followers since Al - Taf Battle and martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the prophet's grandson(p.b.u.t.). This, theretofore, enhances establishing this city and setting a scientific movement which can be described with simple beginnings due to the political situation at that time. It kept increasing up to the twelfth Hijri century when it became a place of attraction to students of science and knowledge and headed the scientific movement that lasted to the ends of fourteenth Hijri century when the aggressive movement to this city returned to this generous city.

Thus, this holy city deserves centers and specialized journals that search its heritage and history, what happen on its earth along centuries, and its hidden contents appear to people.

Karbala heritage journal interests:

Karbala heritage journal horizon is as large as the heritage and its different hidden contents such as sciences and various arts that this city nobles care about; including jurisprudence, Usul and speech, Men and Hadith, grammar , morphology, rhetoric, arithmetic, astronomy, and other fields that cannot be all mentioned.

Due to the great connection and total linkage between the sciences and their progress and political, economic, and social historical events, the scientific studies took care about this city

Thus, on the base of the prophet progeny's (p.b.u.t.) instructions that ordered us to keep heritage, Imam Ja'afer Al Sadiq(p.b.u.h.) said to Al - Mufedhel bin Omer " Write and tell your brothers science and let your books be a heritage to your son ". Accordingly, the general secretary of Al - Abbas holy shrine initiated establishing specialized heritage centers. Karbala heritage center is one of them. So, the quarterly enhanced Karbala heritage journal is set out. It has passed through constant steps that covered many aspects of this huge holy city heritage by studies, and enhanced scientific researches.

Why Karbala heritage?

Care and interest with holy Karbala city heritage require two significant points:

General starting point: heritage of this city is just like our other heritage which is still in need for more accurate scientific studies.

The Journal Message

All praise is due to God, creator of the worlds, Prayer and peace be upon his prophets and messengers, particularly our master and prophet Mohammed and his progeny.

Talking about the heritage importance, necessity to take care with it and surviving its study became axiom that its mentioning is not desirable. The nation that does not care about its heritage, does not honor its ascendants, and does not study their good deeds definitely will not honor its ascendants, does not study their good deeds will not have a future among other nations.

What differentiates our heritage is two matters:

First: richness and comprehensibility.

Second: shortage of the studies that care and search its hidden contents to show. At the time that we find out other nations seek for any materialistic or spiritual matters any spiritual that connect them with their heritage, manifest it, and establish museums to dignify and glorify it. We find out nations have a default in this field.

Many scholars spent their lives to serve science and society but nobody could know their names as well as survive their manuscripts, showing them to the generations, or holding a conference or symposium that tackles their theories, opinions, and thoughts.

pedic scholars.

We extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all our esteemed researchers for the considerable effort they have invested in presenting their studies in this rigorous scholarly form. We likewise express our sincere thanks to the Editorial Board and to the reviewers who contributed to the evaluation and enrichment of these studies.

We ask Almighty Allah to accept this work as sincerely devoted to His noble countenance and to make it beneficial to students of knowledge and researchers.

Our final supplication is: Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and may blessings and peace be upon the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers.

Dr. Iḥsān ‘Alī al-Ghurayfī

Director, Karbala Heritage Center

second approaches the poem as a cultural system; and the third explores its celebratory dimension.

These are followed by a study of thematic performance poetry in Karbala poetry, focusing on selected works by al-Kaf'amī and Ibn Musā'id.

Three further studies shed light on his work Muḥāsabat al-Nafs al-Lawwāma wa-Tanbīh al-Rūḥ al-Nawwāma (The Self-Reproaching Soul's Self-Examination and the Awakening of the Slumbering Soul). The first offers an analytical reading of the features of imagery and the poetics of prose in al-Kaf'amī's text in this work; the second presents a textual study of its informativeness; and the third, written in English, examines Shaykh al-Kaf'amī's approach to the foundations of Islamic ethics as reflected in this work.

Another study is devoted to Qur'anic evidence in Shaykh al-Kaf'amī's work al-Maqām al-Asnā fī Tafsīr al-Asmā' al-Ḥusnā, examining its foundations and methodological procedures. A further study investigates Shaykh al-Kaf'amī's efforts in abridging scholarly works and selecting material from them.

As we place this special issue before you, we hope that it will constitute a valuable addition to the Islamic scholarly library and open new avenues for researchers and students of our rich intellectual heritage, which has been shaped by generations of encyclo-

behind a written legacy that continues to resonate with life and knowledge, foremost among which are his enduring works and numerous abridgements. The number of books he authored, compiled, and classified reached thirty, while the works he abridged amounted to twenty-seven. This rich scholarly output inspired us to devote a special issue to his legacy, particularly because of the diversity of his intellectual contributions, which offer fertile ground for scholarly inquiry. His corpus brings together Qur'anic exegesis, supplications and their interpretation, linguistic studies, the sciences of rhetoric, ceremonial and celebratory poetry, as well as his remarkable skill in abridging and refining extensive scholarly works. These achievements have made his intellectual personality a subject of considerable interest to researchers across a wide range of disciplines.

In this issue, we have sought to shed light on some of these distinguished aspects of his intellectual legacy. Accordingly, the nine studies included in this issue employ diverse methodologies and complementary perspectives, collectively offering a comprehensive portrait of the intellectual world of this exceptional scholar.

Three studies focus on an important dimension of his al-Ghadīriyya poem. The first examines its structure and content,

**In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful
Editorial**

Praise be to Allah, to whom belongs all that is in the heavens, who revealed the verses, dispelled afflictions, and by whose grace righteous deeds are brought to completion. We praise Him for all that has passed and all that is yet to come, and we draw nearer to Him through supplication and prayers upon the best of those who have traversed the earth and the open plains, the master of masters, praised by the Lord of all beings, Abū al-Qāsim Muḥammad, and upon his infallible Household, possessors of manifest miracles and radiant acts of grace. They are those from whom Allah has removed all impurity and whom He has purified with a thorough purification.

It is a pleasure for the Editorial Board of the peer-reviewed journal Turāth al-Karbala to present to our esteemed readers this special issue, which we have dedicated to commemorating one of the distinguished figures of Islamic thought and literature: the eminent scholar and researcher Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan al-‘Āmilī al-Kaf‘amī (d. 905 AH). He was the author of remarkable encyclopedic works that brought together the authenticity of jurisprudential and theological thought, the elegance of literary expression, and the depth of rhetorical allusions. He left

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In the Name of Allah
The Most Gracious The Most Merciful
But We wanted to be gracious to those abased in the land
And to make them leaders and inheritors
(Al-Qasas-5)





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