



# Islamic Ethics as the Foundation for the Integration of Religion and Life in Hamka's Thought

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## Article Info

### Article history:

Received July 23, 2025

Revised July 30, 2025

Accepted August 3, 2025

### Keywords:

Hamka, Integration of Religion and Life, Islamic Ethics, Philosophy of Life

## Abstract

In the context of modern life that tends to separate religious values from the practice of daily life, the need arises for an approach that is able to bridge the two. Hamka is one of the Indonesian Islamic thinkers who offers an Islamic ethics approach as an integrative basis between religious teachings and the reality of human life. This study aims to examine how the concept of Islamic ethics in Hamka's thought can be the foundation of unification between spiritual values and social life. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with content analysis techniques on a number of Hamka's main works, such as: *Falsafah Hidup*, *Tasawuf Modern*, and *Lembaga Budi*. The findings of this study show that Hamka interprets Islamic ethics as a comprehensive value system that includes aspects of faith, morals, and society. Ethics acts as an applicative tool in translating Islamic principles into real actions in daily life. This result shows the importance of an ethical approach in building integration between religion and life, and opens up new space for the development of a philosophy of life in an Islamic perspective.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Hamka, as an Islamic intellectual figure in Indonesia, developed relevant thoughts regarding Islamic ethics and religious integration in daily life. Ethics in the Islamic context includes strong moral teachings, giving guidance to individuals in living social, political, and moral lives. This is in line with the thoughts of Haris and Sapari who identify challenges in Islamic religious education related to educational dualism and political pragmatism, which often marginalize religious values (Haris & Sapari, 2024).

The importance of integrating religion and science is also strongly emphasized in the academic literature, where there are opportunities to develop comprehensive scientific thinking and knowledge through interdisciplinary approaches. Chanifudin and Nuriyati

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showed that education that integrates science with religious values can make learning more meaningful and have a positive impact on students (Chanifudin & Nuriyati, 2020). Similarly, Fakhruddin et al. stated the importance of integrating religion with general subjects as part of education to eliminate polarization between science and religion (Fakhruddin et al., 2018).

In a broader context, Islamic ethics offer guidance for individuals in dealing with various aspects of life, including stress and trauma. Research by Hariandi et al. shows that religious provisions can help individuals cope with life problems by providing clear meaning and direction (Hariandi et al., 2024). This shows that moral teachings in Islam are not only related to spiritual situations but also have practical functions in daily life.

In the contemporary technological era, the moral challenges faced are increasingly complex. Azka and Jenuri explained that Islamic values are important in overcoming the negative impact of technological development, emphasizing the need for clear ethical guidance for individuals in interacting with new innovations (Azka & Jenuri, 2024). With an Islamic ethical framework, individuals can be wiser in using technology, and this also shows that religious values remain relevant in dealing with modern situations.

The integration of religious values is also not limited to formal education, but also needs to be applied in extracurricular activities. Research by Masloman et al. shows that religious extracurricular activities can be an effective platform to strengthen students' religious character, through habituation and exemplary approaches (Masloman et al., 2024). By presenting religious values in everyday life, both in the educational environment and in society, the younger generation can be honed to become individuals who have high morality.

Based on the aforementioned background, this paper seeks to delve deeper into the concept of Islamic ethics as formulated by Hamka, a prominent Muslim intellectual renowned not only for his works in exegesis and literature but also for his profound thoughts on moral and ethical values in Islam. Within this framework, the study focuses on exploring Hamka's understanding of Islamic ethics and identifying the key aspects that serve as the foundation for integrating religious teachings with the realities of human life. Furthermore, this study aims to examine the relevance of Hamka's ethical thought in addressing the challenges of modern life, which often tends to dichotomize religion and social reality. In an era marked by a crisis of values and moral disintegration, Hamka's ethical perspective offers a significant contribution in bridging spirituality with practical life. Therefore, this research is intended to: first, describe the concept of Islamic ethics as articulated in Hamka's works; second, analyze the role of Islamic ethics in his thought as a bridge between religious values and real-life experiences; and third, explain the relevance of Hamka's ethical framework in responding to the moral decline within contemporary society.

## **B. Method**

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with content analysis method to explore and understand Islamic ethical thinking in Buya Hamka's works. This approach was chosen because it is suitable to examine ideas, values, and concepts in the text in depth and contextually. Primary data sources in this research consist of Buya Hamka's main works that represent his views on ethics and life, including: *Falsafah Hidup*, *Tasawuf Modern*, *Lembaga Budi, Pribadi*. Some relevant parts of *Al-Azhar Tafsir*.

Meanwhile, secondary data sources include classical and contemporary Islamic ethical theory books, journal articles, dissertations, and previous research related to Hamka's thoughts.

The analysis technique is done through three stages:

1. Theme Categorization: Identifying the main themes related to Islamic ethics and the integration of religious values in life from Hamka's texts.
2. Meaning Interpretation: Interpreting the ethical content and philosophical

messages based on the historical and social context of Hamka's thought.

3. Critical Analysis: Connecting Hamka's ethical thinking with contemporary issues, as well as looking at his conceptual contribution to the integration of religion and life.

With this method, the research is expected to be able to fully and deeply capture how Islamic ethics becomes an integrative foundation in Buya Hamka's thought, as well as its relevance in answering the moral challenges of modern society.

## C. Results and Discussion

### 1. *The Concept of Islamic Ethics According to Hamka*

#### a) *Ethics as Universal and Transcendental Value*

Ethics as a universal and transcendental value refers to moral principles that are considered applicable to all human beings, beyond differences in culture, religion, and social background. In this context, ethics is not only a guideline in social interaction but also has an impact on the formation of individual and community character (Afifudin & Firdaus, 2023). As a value system, ethics serves to regulate human actions in order to achieve a harmonious and just life (Mauliddina et al., 2022). This concept is particularly relevant when we consider the views of Buya Hamka, an important figure in Islamic thought in Indonesia. Hamka emphasized that ethics should refer to the Qur'an and Islamic teachings, as well as pay attention to the local context and culture of the community (Mauliddina et al., 2022; Zakiah & Nursikin, 2024).

In his works, such as tafsir Al-Azhar, Hamka explored many aspects of ethics contained in the sacred text, encouraging his readers to understand and apply the principles in their daily lives (Anam & Kalsum, 2025; Shohib, 2025). For example, he emphasizes the importance of etiquette in entertaining and honoring guests, which are cultural values that are highly upheld in Islam and reflect personal qualities that value and respect others (Shohib, 2025). This shows how ethical values can be integrated into social practice, making them not only an abstract idea but also a guide for real action in society.

Buya Hamka also made significant contributions in the context of ethical education in Indonesia. He argued that education should include character building and moral values in accordance with Islamic teachings and local wisdom (Zakiah & Nursikin, 2024). Through this approach, Hamka showed that education does not only aim to transfer knowledge but also to form individuals who have high moral integrity and play an active role in society (Afifudin & Firdaus, 2023). In his view, a good education is one that is able to instill strong ethical values, so that individuals will be able to face moral challenges amidst the ever-changing and complex development of society (Afifudin & Firdaus, 2023).

Furthermore, ethics in Hamka's context is not separated from the challenges of the times, such as technological developments and rapid social changes. In this modern era, ethics must be able to synergize with technology, so as to produce a positive impact on individuals and society (Azka & Jenuri, 2024). Grounded in values rooted in religion and culture, Hamka suggests that ethics should be the bridge that connects technological progress and noble human values. This is in line with the need for education that is responsive and adaptive to the times, where ethics become the main guide in making decisions and acting (Azka & Jenuri, 2024).

#### b) *The Relationship of Ethics with Faith and Intellect*

The relationship between ethics, faith and reason is an important theme in philosophical thought, especially in the context of Islamic teachings. In this context, Buya Hamka plays a significant role with the view that reason, ethics and faith should be inseparable. Buya Hamka argued that reason is an important instrument for understanding religious teachings and applying ethical values in daily life (Kasmuri et al., 2023). He believed that a strong faith not only frees individuals from uncertainty, but also provides guidance to act in an

ethical manner.

The principle of ethics in Hamka's perspective is linked to faith as a moral foundation that gives direction to human actions. Ethics, in this case, becomes a reflection of religious teachings that demand adherents to fulfill high moral norms. The application of reason in understanding and applying religious teachings also shows the importance of using the ratio in assessing and deciding actions that are in accordance with ethical values (Kasmuri et al., 2023). In his view, reason and religion support each other, where a healthy mind serves to explore the deeper meaning of faith, and conversely, faith provides a moral framework to direct reason in decision making (Kasmuri et al., 2023).

The existence of ethics is also very important in a social context, where it helps individuals to interact with others fairly and responsibly. In this regard, Hamka emphasized that every action must be based on the principles of honesty, justice, and humanity, which are in line with the demands of Islamic law (Cahyono et al., 2023). These values should be used as a reference in decision-making, both in personal and professional contexts. Thus, the integration of ethics in faith and the use of reason is a necessity to achieve a harmonious life (Siswati et al., 2022).

The importance of reason in the context of ethics and faith is also seen in contemporary thinking, where new challenges such as technological developments and their social impacts emerge. For example, ethics in the use of digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI) requires individuals to consider the moral implications of the technology used, in line with religious and ethical values (Cahyono et al., 2023). In this context, Hamka would encourage people to use their minds in assessing the benefits and risks of such technologies, as well as adhere to ethical values to guide their actions.

#### *c) The Function of Ethics in Shaping Muslim Personality*

The function of ethics in shaping Muslim personality is a fundamental aspect of Islamic teachings, which is reinforced by the thoughts of Buya Hamka, a widely recognized Muslim scholar. Ethics acts as a behavioral guideline that shapes individual character, with the ultimate goal of presenting a person with noble character, in accordance with Islamic values (Saifurrahman, 2016). In this context, ethics not only serves to control actions but also to encourage every Muslim to think and act in accordance with religious teachings, so that ethics becomes a primary need in the process of personality formation (Rahman et al., 2024).

Hamka emphasized that the formation of Muslim personality is a continuous process that must involve good tarbiyah (education) (Darmawan, 2024). In his view, the personality formed through Islamic tarbiyah will include morals colored by the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Thus, Islamic ethics does not only talk about prohibitions or commands, but also summarizes noble values such as honesty, responsibility, and compassion, which are necessary to live life well in a social and spiritual context (Darmawan, 2024). This is in accordance with the view that character education must include strong ethical aspects to form a solid and responsible generation in the future (Fatmah, 2018).

In addition, ethics serves as a bridge in strengthening harmonious social relations. In a heterogeneous society, ethics based on Islamic universal values provide guidance for individuals to interact well, respect each other, and foster noble relationships (Mariam et al., 2023). Hamka taught that the integration of ethical values in daily life will create a better community, where each individual has an awareness of their social responsibility (Alimuddin et al., 2023). Thus, ethics is not only a personal issue, but also a collective one that affects the quality of life of society as a whole.

Moreover, the importance of ethics in today's context cannot be separated from the challenges of the times, especially in the digital era. Character education based on Islamic ethics can help the younger generation to face social challenges caused by fast-changing technology and information (Hasnah et al., 2023). Good ethical guidance will support the development of *ulul albab* characters, who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have high morality and

are able to make good decisions (Triyono & Mediawati, 2023). Thus, ethics becomes a solution in answering moral problems that arise in contemporary society.

## **2. Integration of Religion and Life in Hamka's Thought**

### *a) Ethics in Social Life: Justice, Simplicity, Honesty*

Ethics in social life includes important values such as justice, simplicity, and honesty, all of which play a role in shaping interactions between individuals in society. In the context of the thought of Buya Hamka, an influential Muslim scholar, these ethics are not only moral guidelines for individuals, but also pillars for a harmonious social order.

Justice is a fundamental ethical value emphasized in Hamka's thought. He argues that justice should be the basis of every action and decision, both in the context of individuals and in society as a whole. Justice in Islam does not only include legal aspects, but also includes social justice, where every individual gets their rights without any discrimination. Hamka consistently links justice to the teachings of the Qur'an which emphasizes the need to treat others equally, which in turn can reduce tension and conflict in society (Sari, 2020; , (Ardhianti, et al., 2024).

Hamka also emphasized that in implementing justice, one must be ready to uphold the truth even if it is painful. This suggests that justice demands the courage to speak and act in accordance with moral principles, which is the essence of an ethical life (Sari, 2020).

Simplicity is also an important theme in Hamka's teachings. In modern society, which is often trapped in materialism, Hamka invites people to apply the principle of simple living. Simplicity is not just about reducing consumption, but also about a way of thinking and acting with full awareness of spiritual and social values. By living simply, individuals can focus more on the meaning of life and relationships with others (Funay, 2020; , (Lubis et al., 2024).

Simplicity has a positive impact on strengthening community values, because individuals who live simply tend to be better able to maintain harmonious social relationships. This is in line with the teachings of Pancasila, which encourages the development of tolerance, mutual cooperation, and mutual respect, which are the essence of a balanced and fair social life (Ardhianti et al., 2024; , (Lubis et al., 2024).

Honesty is another ethical value that Hamka strongly emphasizes. According to him, honesty is a prerequisite for creating healthy and trusting relationships in society. Without honesty, interpersonal and social relationships can be prone to conflict and loss. Hamka saw honesty as the foundation of moral goodness-he argued that honest individuals not only benefit themselves but will also bring good to others around them (Sari, 2020; , Manasikana & Tunggal, 2023).

In a broader scope, honesty in communication is a very important aspect of interacting in the current digital era. With more and more information circulating, honesty must always be prioritized to avoid the spread of misleading information, which can harm individuals and society (Lubis et al., 2024; , Zonyfar et al., 2022). Therefore, the application of honesty in daily life, both in verbal and non-verbal communication, is important to create a more ethical and constructive social environment.

### *b) Ethics in Education: Shaping the Plenary Human (Insan Kamil)*

Ethics in education plays a crucial role in shaping a complete human being, or insan kamil, who is an individual who has a balance between knowledge, morality, and social skills. In the context of Buya Hamka's thinking, education can not only be seen as a process of knowledge transfer, but also as an effort to instill ethical values that will shape students' character and personality (Dira et al., 2024; Zakiah & Nursikin, 2024).

#### **1) The Relationship between Ethics and Education**

Buya Hamka believed that education should uphold ethics, where the teaching-learning process should not be separated from moral values. For example, Hamka stated the

importance of the ethics of seeking knowledge, which refers to an attitude of humility, curiosity, and sincerity of intention in pursuing knowledge. In Surah Al-Kahfi verses 60-73, there are lessons about patience and wickedness, which are relevant to the educational process that prioritizes honesty and perseverance in learning (Dira et al., 2024). Through this understanding, students are expected to understand that the main purpose of education is not just to get a degree or grade, but to become an individual who is beneficial to society.

## 2) Character Education

Character education is the main focus in Hamka's thinking. Education should be able to produce people who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals. Hamka believed that education should provide a strong foundation for students to lead an ethical life. This is in line with the concept of education according to Islam, which views that the mission of education is to perfect human morals, as stated in the teachings of the prophet Muhammad SAW (Maryam, 2019). Thus, ethical education serves to build superior character in students, so that they are able to interact socially well and have high moral awareness (Zuliani et al., 2023).

## 3) Social Skills

Furthermore, good ethical education should also include the development of social skills. Hamka emphasized that a *kamil* person is an individual who not only has good knowledge and morals, but is also able to apply these traits in interacting with others. This means that education is required to facilitate communication skills, empathy and cooperation in all forms of social interaction. A good education will encourage students to have an awareness of their social responsibilities and understand their role in building a harmonious and just society (Suprayitno & Moefad, 2024).

### c) *Ethics and Modernity: Hamka's Critique of Moral Secularism*

Ethics in the context of modernity is a complex subject that requires in-depth understanding, especially when it comes to the challenges faced by the global community. In the midst of modernity, which often provides space for secularism, criticism from figures such as Buya Hamka becomes very relevant. In his view, secularism and materialism have the potential to erode moral values that should be the foundation of humanity's social behavior (Aldin, 2024).

#### a) *Ethics and Modernity*

In this modern era, ethics is often interpreted in various contexts that can lead to moral relativism. In this context, ethics is no longer an absolute norm, but is often adapted to the pragmatic needs of individuals or groups. Every society is faced with values that emphasize utilitarianism, where every action is judged by the results produced, without considering the morality behind the decision. Buya Hamka argued that an educational model that prioritizes results alone will give birth to individuals who tend to ignore ethics and moral values in facing various challenges in everyday life (Rahim & Bachtiar, 2023).

#### b) *Hamka's Criticism of Moral Secularism*

Hamka explicitly criticized secularism for degrading religious values in everyday life. He argued that secularism, by removing the spiritual aspect, creates a condition where individuals lose the true purpose of life. In his view, there is no meaningful life without a spiritual dimension underlying all actions. All aspects of life, whether political, economic or social, should be built on ethical values that reflect religious teachings (Ulfa & Efrina, 2024).

Buya Hamka also highlighted the danger of liberalism in thought that could lead to the neglect of ethics in society. He feared that a society overly influenced by absolute freedom would lose the moral signposts necessary to form healthy social interactions. Free expression without ethical constraints can result in social conflict and disintegration (Aldin, 2024).

#### c) *The Role of Education in Ethics*

In line with these thoughts, education plays an important role in instilling strong ethical values in the younger generation. Education that is implemented in accordance with Islamic principles, as practiced by Hamka, serves to build the character and morality of students. In education, Hamka emphasizes on the integration of knowledge, skills, and ethics, so that individuals are not only intellectually intelligent but also have strong moral and spiritual values (Raffin et al., 2024).

In this case, education should serve as an agent of transformation that is able to equip generations with a comprehensive understanding of ethical values in a modern context. An approach that connects the teachings of religiosity with social ethics will help individuals to understand their role in maintaining moral order amidst modernization (Raffin et al., 2024. )

### **3. *Synthesis: Ethics as a Bridge between Religion and Life***

#### *a) Argument that Ethics is a Practical Medium for the Application of Islamic Teachings*

In the Islamic context, ethics serves as a practical foundation for individuals in applying religious teachings, including in the business world. In the Islamic ethical system, there are principles that not only regulate the relationship between individuals, but also the relationship between individuals and God and their social environment. This study aims to emphasize the importance of ethics as a medium for applying Islamic teachings based on relevant literature.

Islamic business ethics are taken from the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which are the main guidelines for Muslims in behaving properly in economic transactions. As explained by Hafiya and Faraby, the implementation of strong ethical practices can improve the reputation of the organization, as well as oppose moral violations that often occur in the business world (Hafiya & Faraby, 2024). Research by Rianti shows that the practice of Islamic business ethics in marketplace transactions still needs to be improved, indicating that many business people do not fully understand and apply Islamic values in their commercial activities (Rianti, 2021). This shows the need for education and awareness of the importance of ethics as part of the success of a blessed business.

Hamka also emphasized that ethics has an important role in shaping the character of individual Muslims. Ethics as an integral part of Islamic teachings requires everyone to not only think about material gain, but also about how their actions impact the lives of others and society as a whole. Research by Julvianita et al. shows how the application of Islamic ethical principles can guide traders in running their business honestly and responsibly (Julvianita et al., 2023). This is in line with Hamka's view that moral action in business is a manifestation of individual spiritual and social commitment.

#### *b) Hamka's Position in Contemporary Discourse on the Integration of Islam and Life*

Hamka, or Haji Abdul Malik bin Abdul Karim Amrullah, is one of the most influential Islamic scholars in the Malay world, renowned for his contributions in various disciplines, including theology, philosophy, and literature. In contemporary discourse, Hamka's position can be understood through his integration of Islamic values and daily life, which he explained through his writings and his efforts in education and da'wah.

One of Hamka's main ideas is the importance of applying Islamic values in social and economic life. In this context, he emphasized that Islam should not only be a ritual aspect of the individual, but also a guide in social and economic life, especially in facing modern challenges. Qadri explained that Hamka encouraged the application of Islamic principles in the economy, emphasizing that justice and ethics should be prioritized in economic management (Qadri, 2024). In addition, Hamka believed that morality in economics is essential for creating a prosperous and just society.

In Hamka's view, da'wah is inseparable from efforts to return society to the full values of Islam, where he emphasized the importance of amar ma'ruf nahi munkar. This is in line with the thoughts of Hidayat et al. who identified that Hamka felt that there was a decline in the application of Islamic values among the community, which required the scholars to be more

active in educating the people (Hidayat et al., 2023). Thus, Hamka's concern for social conditions and its application in da'wah shows how he saw the need for divine integration in the social aspects of human life.

In the context of education, Hamka is also an inspiration for many Islamic educational institutions. Research by Selvia et al. shows that the Al-Azhar Islamic educational institution founded by Hamka reflects the values of morals, ethics, and nationalism, all of which are part of the comprehensive education he promotes (Selvia et al., 2023). Hamka believed that education is not only about the transfer of knowledge, but also about the formation of good character in accordance with Islamic teachings. This is also reinforced by the findings in research by Ibrahim et al, which highlighted the importance of integrating Islamic ethics in the education curriculum to create an ethical and civilized society (Ibrahim et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Hamka is seen as a bridge between Islamic mysticism and the practical application of daily life. According to Aljunied, Hamka's writings on Sufism show spiritual depth integrated with practical understanding of society, allowing readers to understand how spirituality can be applied in a modern context (Aljunied, 2016). This shows that Hamka did not only focus on the ritual aspects of religion, but also encouraged the application of spiritual values in social and business interactions.

#### D. Conclusion

Buya Hamka's thoughts on Islamic ethics show that ethics is not just a norm of behavior, but a comprehensive value system that integrates the spiritual, rational, and social aspects of human life. Hamka viewed ethics as a practical bridge between religious teachings and the reality of daily life, making it a philosophical foundation to unite faith, reason, and charity in forming a complete Muslim personality. Ethics in Hamka's view includes universal values such as honesty, justice, and modesty, which are not only personally important, but also essential for social harmony. He also emphasized that ethical education must be able to give birth to a perfect human being who is intellectually intelligent, spiritually strong, and morally tough. In facing the challenges of modernity, Hamka strongly criticized moral secularism that separates religious values from public life. He offers an Islamic ethical approach as a solution that is able to maintain noble values in the midst of globalization, liberalism, and moral relativism. Overall, this article concludes that Hamka's Islamic ethical thinking is very relevant to be used as a foundation in building a civilized modern society, as well as in formulating education and policies that favor spiritual and human values.

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