Rethinking the origin of moral "Must": A conceptual analysis of Kant and 'Adliyah Theologians

Fakhteh Mahini [a] [*], Department of Educational Sciences, Boushehr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran
Davood Yahyaei [b], Department of Educational Sciences, Boushehr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran
Mohammad Mahdi Angalian [c], Department of Educational Sciences, Boushehr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran

Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyse the origin of morals, with respect to reality and theology, from the viewpoint of Kant theory of morals and Adliyah theologians. Real or unreal origin of moral "musts" and its relationship with religion can be studied ontologically. This survey, which was conducted through a conceptual and deductive analysis method, shows that according to Kant and 'Adliyah theologians, "musts" stem from the fact that Kant believes that "reason" explores both moral laws and makes them necessary. 'Adliyah theologians suggest that reason is just able to explore moral laws which have become necessary by God to reach the ultimate perfection. The Adliyah theologians' opinion in the origin of morals is an innovation in the topic of morals. This research therefore sets precedence in the exploration of the Adliyah theologians' opinion on morals and also recommend further research in this regard.
.

Keywords: must, realism, indicative, imperative, Kant, Adliyah theologians, reason, morals;

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Fakhteh Mahini, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, Boushehr Branch, Islamic Azad University, Boushehr, Iran. E-mail address: fmahini80@gmail.com / Tel.: +98-917-773-4781.

1. Introduction

According to some observers, moral concepts are "beings" and external realities that reason understands. If so, moral issues would be considered as indications, and ethics will be classified among descriptive sciences. However, according to some others, these concepts are not resulting from external realities but are imperatives derived from individual or social reason, and have a divine origin. Thus, ethics would be among normative sciences (Ahmadpour, 2013). Therefore, moral requirements and predicates are divided into two groups according to their being real: realist and anti-realist. A number of moral philosophers and Islamic theologians consider these requirements as imperative, anti-realist, assumed or nominal. Many of them consider them as realist, indicative and exploratory. Among anti-realist views, theories such as sentimentalism, idealism, socialism, contractualism, and divine command can be mentioned. As for realist views, we can cite theories such as hedonism, utilitarianism, conscienism, sentimentalism, fatalism, eduaemonism and Kantianism (Sharifi, 2009). In this area, several questions arise: Do moral propositions base on "musts"? Are they real or unreal (indicative or imperative)? Does reason understands these propositions? Are they imperative or intuitive? Can we get "musts" from "beings"? This paper attempts to express the concept of "must" in its ontological aspects and thereby respond to such questions, since the main purpose of normative morality is to guide people to decide and recognize the requirements of voluntary actions in different situations. Knowledge of the origin of "musts" can show the relationship of the individual in its different ontological aspects including the relationship with God, himself, others and world.

The Kant theory has been applied to several studies and most researchers have compared Kant's theory of morals with other theories of morals such as the Cultural Relativism, Ethical Egoism, Divine Command Theory, and Virtue Ethics among others. These theories are the most recognized moral theories of all time. The Kant theory of morals, which is one of the theories under discussion for this research, is however, the most popular of all the theories of morals. The research would also introduce the concept of the Adliyah theologians' opinion of morals and its origin. Before this research, no research has explained the Adliyah theologians' opinion of morals. The Adliyah theologians' opinion of morals has never been compared side by side to the theory of Kant. This study therefore sets precedence in the application of Adliyah theologians' opinion in the subject of morals, in comparison with the application of Kant theory to the subject of morals. The aim of the research is to explore moral propositions based on the concept of must, moral propositions based on the concept of must, reality and theology from the perspective of Kant and Adliyah.

2. Methodology

The researcher used conceptual analysis to analyze the meaning of "must". The conceptual analysis gives a clear definition of the meaning of a concept, explains exactly its relationship to other concepts, and plays a crucial role in determining the social behavior of people (Short, 2009). The concept of "must" can be addressed in three ways: semantic, ontological and epistemological aspects. On the ontological aspect, which is the subject of this paper, we will discuss the real or anti-real (indicative or imperative) character of "musts" from the point of view of Kant and 'Adliyah theologians to discover their origin. Accordingly, we can determine the relationship between the "must" and "reality" (being) and "religion" (theology). We express deductively the topics discussed by Kant and 'Adliyah theologians concerning the epistemology of "must" in two premises and one conclusion. To perform this research, we used all texts in the field of moral philosophy

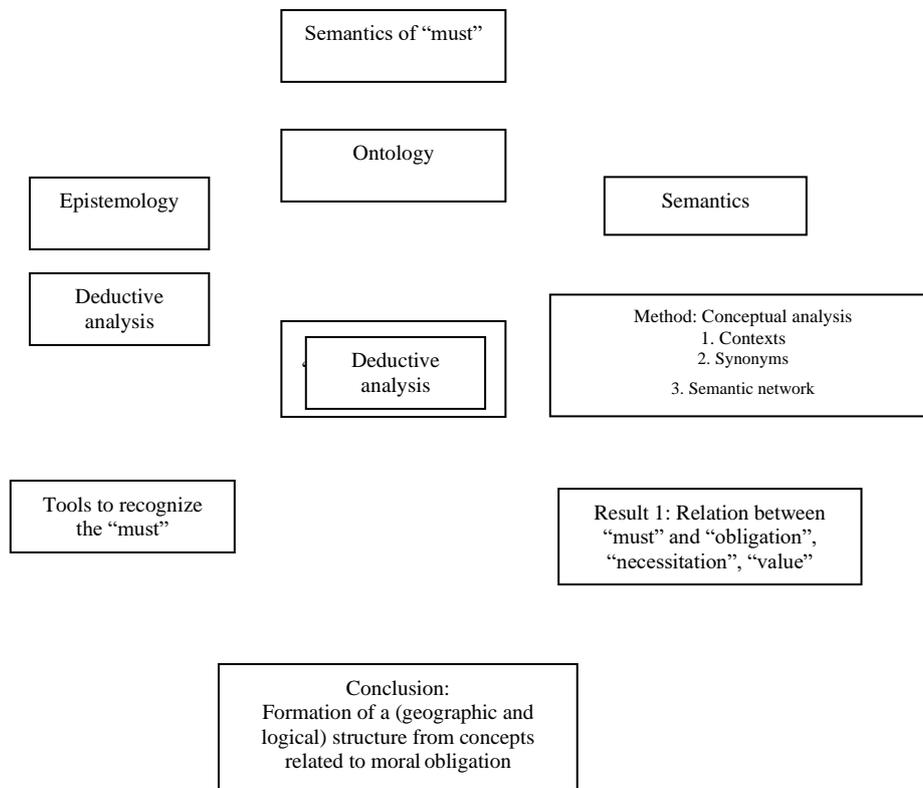in the opinion of Kant and 'Adliyah theologians. We made sampling from all published and computerized texts.

Fig. 1. Methodology

3. Results

3.1 Origin of moral "musts": Relation between "must" and "reality"

The best-known classification of moral concepts and predicates is descriptive (real) and non-descriptive (anti-real). Adepts of descriptive or cognitive theories believe that moral sentences report from real world and are indicative; adepts of non-descriptive theories suggest that moral sentences do not report the outside world of man (Javadi, 1996). The relation between "beings" and "musts" is one of the most fundamental aspects of these moral sentences. The question that arises: what is the origin of propositions that contain "must" or those, which are obligatory? (Hezavei, 2001).

The relation between "must" and "being" can be verified in three aspects: (1) is there a semantic relation between the two predicates? (2) Are the two predicates interchangeable, given that one is normative and subject to "must" and the other is realistic which announces the realization of a thing in the world? (3) Is there a logical connection between these two predicates and are they deduced from one another? Given the triple relation between "must" and "being", logical deduction of "must" from "being" has historically been the most

discussed topic. Most adepts of non-descriptive theories believe in the existence of a logical gap between "must" and "being", while the followers of descriptive theories do not affirm this gap (Javadi, 1996).

Although men settle their personal affairs according to "must" and "must not", moral predicates are not just limited to these cases but also contain "being" and "not being". Therefore, ethics experts give a theoretical report from "being" and "not being" and issue a moral instruction about "must" and "must not" (Javadi Amoli, 2012). On the one hand, some believe that moral "must" and "must not" are independent from "being" and "not being" and consider them as imperative and elementary derivatives of "must" and "must not". In other words, any science including ethics takes its "theories" from its own "necessities"; all "theoretical musts" result in an imperative "must". On the other hand, some people do believe that "must" and "must not" are entirely unrelated with "being" and "not being"; we can draw an analogy which is a permitted with two premises: "being" and "must", and to derive a result based on "must" (Javadi Amoli, 2012; Motahari, 1984). The analytical study performed in the same way by Frankena on the structure of normative philosophies of education removes the logical problem of relation between "being" and "must". In practical analogy, premises contain not only predicates based on "being", but also those based on "must"; thus, it is possible to deduce predicates based on "must" from all the above predicates, and the justification of result of each deduction may be sought in their logical and realistic premises (Bagheri, 2010).

Opinion of 'Adliyah theologians – Just like there are concepts such as "good" and "evil", or "damages" and "interests" in the field of experimental sciences namely the nature, the same concepts exist also in the field of metaphysical sciences such as ethics. It is true to say that man "must" do what" is" helpful for his life.

"Must" has different meanings in theoretical and practical sciences. In speculative philosophy "must" is an absolute thing. But in practical philosophy, this absolute thing must be done. However, considering that man is self-determined, he may violate "musts". Therefore, "must" in practical philosophy is violable, but non-violable in theoretical philosophy. In other words, the difference is that the predicates of theoretical philosophy are indicative and explorative, which denote reality, and they can be true or false. These predicates are imperative in practical philosophy and, indeed, there is no proposition that is true or false (Javadi Amoli, 2012). These predicates produce no science or knowledge, they are fake and of two types. Either they merely express emotions, passions and desires of an individual and a group, or they denote objective and real things and are originated from an external abstraction. Imperative predicates of the second type are indicative and indicate real things, although they are apparently different (Abulghasemzadeh, 2005). Another argument is that the sense of "must" is related to the necessity-in-relation-to-something-else (Moalemi, 2009) resulting from "being": optional attributes and conducts of man are realities evaluated according to their effect on arbitrary perfection. Arbitrary actions are desirable and valuable, based on their effect on attaining arbitrary perfection, and are necessary to get to the arbitrary perfection ("musts"). Therefore, the need for some voluntary conducts and attributes to get to human perfection is a necessity-in-relation-to-something-else. Since the latter is an objective reality, it follows that moral necessity ("must") is also an objective reality (Misbah 2006).

'Adliyah theologians (Shiites and Mu'tazilah) consider the divine will and religious morality as explorer of correct ethical system. They believe that reason alone can only explore morality in general; while reason

cannot understand the complicated relations between acts, attributes and results. Therefore, man needs Revelation (Mo'allemi, 2006).

Opinion of Kant - Moral systems are of two types: experience-based systems and reason-based systems. Moral principles in experimental systems are obtained a posteriori by senses, and they are deprived of necessity and certainty: they are probable and unnecessary; but in systems based on reason, moral principles are derived from the fit between human conduct and rational laws; for example: "We must not lie", is a principle that requires an absolute necessity and can not be obtained from the experience (Kant, 2009). The principle of obligation must be looked for not in the nature of man or in situations that dominate the human world, but must be sought by prior experience in the concepts of reason (Kant, 1970). Reason has two aspects: one is theoretical and enables man to know theoretical problems including mathematics, logics and metaphysics; and one that is a practice in the service of good will. "Practical knowledge tries to discover the meaning of the relation between "will" and "practice" by which the subject itself ["must"] or the countersubject ["must not"] will materialize (Kant, 2005:98). Opinion is the content of moral laws, and nobody can govern the opinions of individuals, as opposed to social and practical laws that politically govern the behavior of citizens. For the same reason, moral laws are objective and have a noumenal existence; they are like the mathematical facts that are not created in the mind of any legislator. What a legislator does is to discover these laws and to express its decision to put them into practice. Since moral laws are real, they can not be infringed by anyone, and the individual can only discover them by reason. It is through these laws that God commands "good" and forbids "evil". Moral laws and instructions are practical necessities (Kant, 2009). These necessities, once recognized by reason, will be established in the form of practical instructions to require the individual to put them into practice. So sometimes the reason is capable of discerning moral judgments and duties, and is therefore "explorer"; sometimes it makes laws in the human society, and is therefore "legislator" (Kant, 2004).

3.2. Relation between "must" and "theology"

Opinion of 'Adliyah theologians - Morality in its relation to religion is construed as a way to legalize the conduct of people within the society (Motahari 1992 -. 1994) Faith in God and His worship is the highest degree of all moral criteria, because to maintain a society we will require a morality which is representative in all respects; it is simply possible by religion and spirituality. The ultimate goal of all heavenly religions is monotheism that helps man reach the ultimate perfection, and the way to access it can be found only by observing the divine commands (Tabâtabâi, 2007). Moral law cannot be originated by mankind; because of scientific limitation, competition, and opportunistic conduct of people, moral law is imperfect naturally and creates a point of disagreement; therefore, performance is not guaranteed and order and social justice will not be well established. Primacy of reason over feeling requires a specific regulation imposing "must" and "must not" concepts in individual and social life. Perfect knowledge of this expedient depends on the perfect knowledge of man and its characters. To this end, knowing good and evil acts will not be enough to motivate man to perform their obligations: God sends orders (Golpayegani Rabbani, 2006). So we can conclude this way: "Moral "musts" (arbitrary and valuable actions) are required to achieve perfection"; "Monotheism is the human perfection, and man will be perfect when performing the divine commands." "Accordingly, moral "musts" mean implementing the divine commands."

Opinion of Kant – Morality does not require religion, that is to say, man does not need the concept of "God" to recognize its obligation; and then the final stimulus of a moral act is the very obligation and not the obedience to God's commandments (Copleston, 1981). God created man as the representative of the highest

good and the ultimate goal, and purely to achieve moral perfection which is achieved a priori by reason. The reason inseparably connects moral perfection to the sense of obligation (Kant, 1990). Religion is to confirm all duties as divine commandments; it does not confirm the divine commandments as an obligation but as the moral law of each free will. We can hope for the greatest good simply by complying with a complete moral will and the All-Powerful. So everything depends on obligation, and it is through the consideration of the greatest good that moral law can become the ultimate goal and the purpose of practical reason (Kant, 2005). Man lives a moral life only when his moral judgments do not become a tool to achieve something else. This view is different from what is mentioned in other religions where moral deeds will be rewarded and the non-respect of them will deserve punishment (Malekian, 2000). The individual also has requirements before God that must be met. If these requirements are met by force, their performance must not be considered ideal and only an external duty is accomplished. But when they are met by an inner obligation, it must be said that God that must be met. If these requirements are met by force, their performance must not be considered ideal and only an external duty is accomplished. But when they are met by an inner obligation, it must be said that they are met in a correct way. So if an act is done by self-interest and according to moral principles and obligations, it will be a moral and also a religious act (Avani, 2011).

3.3 Major differences between Kant's theory and Adliyah theologians'' opinion of morals

This research analyzed the origin of morals from the viewpoint of Kant theory of morals and Adliyah theologians. The analysis was run under two tenets of morality. The first tenet centred on the "Relation between must and reality" and the second tenet centred on the "Relations between must and theology". From the first tenet of analysis, this research found out that Kant's theory believes moral laws are real; however, they cannot be infringed on humans. Kant believes humans are free will agents that would act morally based on their goodwill. Kantians believe that morals are discovered by reason and once humans see a practical necessity, they would act accordingly. Reason is the main component of the Kant theory. The Adliyah theologians however believed that reason is not enough to make man act morally upright. According to the Adliyah theologians, reason cannot explore or understand the complicated relations between acts, attributes and results. Therefore, man needs Revelation to understand these complexities.

From the second tenet of analysis, this research found out that whereas Adliyah theologians believe that men's believe in God influences man to act morally upright, the Kantians believe that morality does not require religion. The Adliyans believe that moral perfection cannot originate from man since man would always act based on their own interest, coupled with the limitations of science. The Adliyans believe that the acknowledgement of God, through monotheism, brings men to a mutual ground, where they share the same moral values, hence bringing men to moral perfection. The Kantians argue that moral uprightness is an obligation that men perceive and act upon which does not have to be the obedience to God's commands. Kantians believe that man's will to act morally is what matters. When men act morally upright as a tool to achieve something (God's mercy, to receive reward from God, to avoid punishment), that is not real morality, but only an external exhibition of morality. Morality according to Kartians, stem from an internal obligation to act in the best interest of all people involved, not by self-interest or in a bid to look morally upright.

Conclusion

This research sought to explore moral propositions based on the concept of must, reality and theology from the perspective of Kant and Adliyah. This research set the precedence in exploring the Adliyah theologians'

theory of morals. The innovation of the Adliyah theologians' theory of morals however, is one that needs to be explored further.

Kant differentiates to a great extent between moral laws and social and practical laws. He believes in moral objectivism, and considers a noumenal entity for moral laws, such as math facts that no legislator can conceive. Reason explores moral concepts and predicates and, from these, it establishes general laws. The reason explores and establishes "musts". In addition, divine commandments comply with those of the reason; therefore, although religion is consistent with morality, it is not its origin.

According to 'Adliyah theologians, "musts" are imperative commandments based on practical reason; they indicate objective things and consider themselves as real just like indicative commandments. Also, since the necessity-in-relation-to-something-else is real and the content of "musts", the latter shall also be real: attaining monotheism, which is the ultimate goal of religion, is only possible by observing God's commandments; therefore, God establishes "musts", and reason explores them.

Most countries established their laws and constitutions based on their religious believes, even though most of these countries make provisions for freedom of religion. This means that even though morality is an obligation that men take upon themselves, the origin of morality for majority of people is religion. This means that the Adliyans are right to some extent, in that they believe that although religion is the origin of morals, man must explore the morals through reason. The Adliyan opinion is therefore an extention of the Kantian theory, to include the concept of God as the origin of morals. This topic however needs to be further explored.

References

Abulghasemzadeh, M. (2005) . Nature of ethical predicates from the perspective of Professor Javadi Amoli. *Journal of Porch of Thought. 46, 100-112.*

Ahmadpoor, M. (2013). *Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy (ISCA)*. http://www.dte.ir/portal/home.

Atrak, h. (2009). Explanation and Analysis of Kant's Concept of Duty. *Journal of Critique & Theory* 56, 36-61.

Avani, Sh. (2011). Kantian ethics Duty-oriented or obligation-oriented. *Speech at the Iranian Philosophical Society*, http://www.ipso.ir.

Bagheri, Kh. (2010). *Approaches and research methods in the philosophy of education*. Tehran: Institute of Social and Cultural Studies.

Barrow, R. (2012). *An Introduction to Moral Philosophy and Moral Education*. translated by Zibaklam Mofrad, F., Tehran: Hafeez.

Copleston, F. (1981). *Kant*. Translated by Bozorgmehr, M., Tehran: Sharif University.

Great Islamic Encyclopedia (2015). *Must*, http://www.cgie.org.ir;

Haeri Yazdi, M. (2005). *Exploration of practical reason: moral philosophy.* Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy.

Hezavei, M. R. 2001, Beliefs, infrastructure of "musts" (2*). Journal of Growth of Islamic Education Quarterly*, 46, 27-31.

Javadi Amoli, A. (2002). *Philosophy of human rights*. Qom: Asra Publication Center.

Javadi Amoli, A. (2005a). *Rights and obligations in Islam*. Qom: Asra Publication Center.

Javadi Amoli, A. (2005b). Rights and obligations according to Islamic teachings. *Journal of Pasdar-e-Islam.* 285- 6, http://www.hawzah.net.

Mahini F., Yahyaei D. & Angalian M. M. (2020). Rethinking the origin of moral "Must": A conceptual analysis of Kant and 'Adliyah Theologians. *International journal of Current innovations in Interdisciplinary Scientific Studies. 4*(2), 28-35.

Kant, I. (1990). *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Enayat, H. & Gheisari, A., Tehran: Khwarizmi.

Kant, I. (1997). *Cririque of Practical Reason*. Translated and Edited by Gregor, M., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kant, I. (2004b). *The Doctrine of virtue: Part 2 0f the Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Sanei Darrebidy, M., Tehran: Nagsh-o-Negar.

Kant, I. (2005). *The Critique of Practical Reason*. Translated by Rahmati, E., Tehran: Noorolsaqalayn.

Kant, I. (2009). *A Lecture on Ethics*. Translated by Sanei Darrebidy, M., Tehran: Nagsh-o-Negar.

Kant. I. (2004a). *The Metaphysics of Morals (The Doctrine of Right)*. Translated by Sanei Darrebidy, M., Tehran: Nagsh-o-Negar.

Korsgaard, C. (2000). Aristotle and Kant on the Source of Value. Translated by Javadi, M., *Organon Journal*. 16, 95-120;

Mesbah Yazdi, M. T. (1987). *Teaching Philosophy*. Tehran: IDO.

Mesbah Yazdi, M. T. (2006). *Islamic legal theory*. Qom: Imam Khomeini Educational and Research Institute (rah).

Mo'allemi, H. (2006). Ethics. *Journal of Qabasat*. 39 & 40, 93-108.

Mo'allemi, H. (2009). Necessary in-relation and in-relation-to-something-else, content of Moral "Must". *Journal of Qabasat*. 53, 139-156.

Omid, M. (1998). Must & must not, goodness & badness. *Journal of Kheradnameh Sadra*. 12, 43-59.

Rabbani Golpayegani, A. (2005). Philosophy of Obligation in 'Adliyah theologians view (1). *Journal of Islamic theology*. 56, 13-22.

Rabbani Golpayegani, A. (2006). Philosophy of Obligation in 'Adliyah theologians view (2). *Journal of Islamic theology*. 57, 5-20;

Scruton, R. (1996). *Kant*. translated by Ali Paya. Tehran: Tarh-e no.

Short, E. C. (2009). *Forms of curriculum Inquiry*. Translated by Mehrmohammadi et al. Tehran: SAMT.

Sullivan, R. J. (2010). *Introduction to Kant's Ethics*. translated by Fouladvand, E., Tehran: Tarh-e no.

Tabatabai M. H. (1983). *Principles of Philosophy and Realism Method*. Tehran: Sadra.