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**ABSTRACT**

**Sexual Ethics in Islam and the West**

*اخلاق جنسى در اسلام و جهان غرب*

This book presents a comparative analysis of Islamic and Western views on sexual ethics. It is a posthumous collection of independent articles which appeared in 1965 in the journal *Maktab al-Islam*, published by Murtaza Mutahhari’s official publishing house, Sadra. This abstract is based on the twenty fourth edition.

Mutahhari debates Islam and modern Western views (mainly those of Russel and Durant) about *Akhlaq-i Jinsi*. *Akhlaq* translates as “good manners, behaviour; ethics; moral”, while *Jins* translates as “sex; quality, type; gender”. He offers a short historical perspective through criticism of ancient Western thinkers and Christian, Jew and Buddhist gender models. He criticises modern Western sexual ethics because of their substitution of sex for love and for their focus on self-worship, unlimited freedom, materialism, sexual promiscuity, and the objectification of women. However, Mutahhari openly appropriates some Western ideas, particularly those introduced by natural sciences and psychology. He re-interprets the Islamic gender code and argues that men and women in society should follow their natural potential concerning work and social activities, while their legitimate sexual instincts should be confined to family and subordinated to love and *‘Iffat* (modesty, chastity). In effect, he argues against the traditional theoretical confinement of women to the private sphere, implying that ethics is not normative but is linked to historical understandings.

Overall, the language indicates that this book is intended for a general readership. It is a helpful source for contemporary Islamic thought in a field that has implications for several important issues: modernity, democracy, gender roles, and women’s rights.

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