

Research Journal of Islamic Philosophy and  
Theology of Shahid Beheshti University  
No.38/Spring 2014

### **Survey and Critique of the Doctrine of the Mean**

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#### **Abstract**

The doctrine of the mean is a version of the virtue ethics theories which were originally introduced by Plato and Aristotle. This theory because of its compatibility with Islamic texts is the most prevalent theory of ethics among Islamic scholars. Farabi, Miskawayh, Avicenna, Nasir al-Din Tusi, Mullsadra and others have been influenced by this theory. The principle of the mean constitute the core of this doctrine and is the basis upon which the moral virtue is defined as moderation and all moral virtues are considered as the desirable middle between the two extremes excess and deficiency. The practical implication of this theory is respect for

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moderation in all actions and emotions. The doctrine of the mean, beside its strong points such as simplicity and public acceptance, suffer some weak points such as internal inconsistency, ambiguity in the concept of the mean itself, the issue of the difficulty of determining the mean, defects in resolving ethical conflicts and its failure to be applicable to all virtues and vices. The present article examines the doctrine of the mean based on the criteria for evaluating moral theories.

**Key Terms:** *Ethics, the Doctrine of the Mean, Moderation, the desired middle, virtues and vices, Aristotle.*

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