

## EXPLORING THE DIMENSIONS OF MURTADHA MUTHAHHARI'S ISLAMIC THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND ITS RELEVANCE TO FREEDOM LEARNING

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji pemikiran Murtadha Muthahhari yang relevan dengan merdeka belajar. Sistem merdeka belajar yang terjadi di Indonesia membutuhkan racikan secara komprehensif agar semua jenjang pendidikan dari tingkat anak usia dini hingga perguruan tinggi dapat melaksanakan proses pembelajaran, khususnya pada pendidikan Islam. Adapun metode yang penulis gunakan adalah metode library research dengan pendekatan secara deskriptif kualitatif. Pendekatan dengan menggambarkan secara utuh dan terinci tentang persoalan fenomena-fenomena aktual dan sosial yang terjadi dan di alami dan dilakukan oleh Muthahhari dalam hidup dan kehidupannya, serta didukung oleh beberapa data dari jurnal ilmiah. Hasil yang diperoleh dalam penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pemikiran Murtadha Muthahhari memiliki relevansi yang penting dalam merdeka belajar. Pendekatan otonom, kritis, dan terbuka yang dianutnya dapat memperkuat semangat pencarian pengetahuan yang bebas dan berkelanjutan dalam masyarakat Muslim. Dengan mengadopsi pemikiran Muthahhari, pendidikan dapat menjadi sarana untuk memperkuat keimanan dan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang Islam, sambil tetap terbuka dan menghargai berbagai pandangan dan pemikiran dalam dunia yang semakin kompleks  
Kata Kunci : Murthada Muthahhari, Pemimpin Islam, Merdeka Belajar

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**Abstract:** This research focuses on analyzing the works of Murtadha Muthahhari's thoughts that are relevant to freedom of learning. The independent learning system that occurs in Indonesia requires a comprehensive concoction so that all levels of education from early childhood to higher education can carry out the learning process, especially in Islamic education. The method that the author uses is the library research method with a qualitative descriptive approach. The approach by describing in full and in detail about the issue of actual and social phenomena that occur and are experienced and practiced by Muthahhari in his life and life, and supported by some data from the journal ilmiah. The results obtained in this study conclude that Murtadha Muthahhari's thought has an important relevance in independent learning. His autonomous, critical and open approach can strengthen the spirit of free and continuous search for knowledge in Muslim societies. By adopting Muthahhari's thinking, education can be a means to strengthen faith and a deeper understanding of Islam, while remaining open and appreciative of different views and thoughts in an increasingly complex world.

Keywords: : Murthada Muthahhari, Islamic Leader, Freedom Learning

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### Introduction

Looking at the development of contemporary modern Islamic thought, by experts, there are at least five groups of thought that tend to have a strong and major influence on the existence of Islamic thought in the current era until it has an impact on the process, namely through education, both in formal, informal and non-formal education systems (Rahmadi Agus Setiawan, Achmad Abdul Azis, Najib Kusnanto, Muhammad Haris, 2023). One of them is the group of thoughts that seeks to cling to traditions that have been established. For this group,

all the problems of the ummah have been thoroughly discussed by the predecessor scholars, so that our job now is only to restate what they have done, or at least analogize to their opinions (Farah, 2019). However, unlike the fundamentalists who reject modernity and limit tradition to the four khulafa' al-râshidîn. The traditional group instead extends the tradition to all salaf al-shâlih and does not reject the achievements of modernity (Haris, 2015). Because what is produced by modernity, science and technology, for them, is nothing more than what Muslims have achieved in the heyday of old (Nur, 2021). So much so, that they are still willing to "adopt" outside civilizations, but on the condition that they must first be Islamized (Jaenullah, Ferdian Utama, 2022). Therefore, their work - especially among the scholars - is the Islamization of all aspects of life. Starting from ethical issues to science and its epistemological basis that will be absorbed must be Islamized, so that all movements and actions of Muslims are Islamic (Ismail, Haris, Jumira, Budiyo, & Julaiha, 2021).

This tendency can be found in the thoughts of Seyyed Hussein Nasr, Murthada Muthahhari, Naquib al-Attas and Ismael Faruqi. Husein Nasr, for example, always emphasizes the importance of revisiting the legacy of classical Islamic scientific treasures such as those built by al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi, Ibn Arabi and others (Larijani, 2022). In facing the spiritual crisis of modern society, Nasr offers the Sufism tradition which he believes will be able to convey them to the rediscovery of their humanity. The attitude of "respecting" the heritage of one's own tradition plus the necessity of "adaptation" of incoming external traditions is also evident in the thoughts of al-Attas and al-Faruqi, who are known for their science Islamization project (Mirsepassi, 2018). Western science and civilization must be Islamized first before being used by Muslim communities, because the basis and source of Western thought are not in accordance with Islam (un-Islamic) (Hamka, 2022). When associated with the existing education system in Indonesia, of course there are some patterns and traditions must be adapted and actually synergize with the development of the existing education curriculum in Indonesia (Kristianto, Susetyo, Utama, Fitriano, & Jannah, 2023).

Education is one of the main pillars in the development of a nation (Muhammad Yusuf, 2022). Through education, the younger generation can be equipped with the knowledge, skills and values needed to face the challenges of the times and contribute to advancing society (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). In this increasingly dynamic and complex era, the challenge for the education system is how to create an environment that inspires independence, creativity and innovation in the learning process (Dahlan, Suyatno, & Zuhary, 2021). In the midst of incessant efforts to improve the quality of education, the concept of "freedom of learning" has emerged as an approach that attracts attention (Burhanuddin et al., 2021). Freedom of learning emphasizes on empowering students to take an active role in their learning process (Rosyidi, 2020). This concept provides freedom for students to choose, explore, and seek knowledge according to their interests and talents. Freedom of learning is teaches not only about what to learn, but also about how to learn in the most effective and meaningful way.

In the context of Islamic education, the thought leadership of Murtadha Muthahhari, a prominent intellectual from Iran, has dimensions that are relevant to the concept of independent learning (Supriani, Supriyadi, Arifin, & Ruswandi, 2022). Muthahhari is a figure who is persistent in translating Islamic messages into modern language and updating Islamic thought to remain relevant to the times. His progressive thinking teaches the importance of critical thinking, being open to differences, and appreciating cultural diversity.

In the current research, we will explore the dimensions of Murtadha Muthahhari's Islamic thought leadership relevant to the concept of independent learning. We will understand how his views on Islamic thought reform, self-reliance-based education and creativity can contribute significantly to creating an educational environment that integrates Islamic values with the spirit of freedom of learning (Turner, 2021). By doing so, it is hoped that the next generation can grow into individuals who have intellectual sensitivity, inclusive attitudes, and readiness to face the changing world that is increasingly dynamic. That way, it is hoped that the next generation can grow into individuals who have intellectual sensitivity, inclusive attitudes, and readiness to face the changing world that is increasingly dynamic (Rahman, Ruswandi, & Erihadiana, 2021). By digging deeper into Muthahhari's thought leadership and connecting it with the concept of independent learning, we hope that this scientific work can be an important foothold for the development of a more inclusive, competitive, and global-minded education, in line with the progressive and inclusive spirit of Islam.

## Method

The research that the author uses is using the literature study methodology. This type of research uses descriptive qualitative. Always used to analyze events, phenomena, or social settings of a particular situation and condition. According to Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, qualitative descriptive research is directed to describe and illustrate existing phenomena, both natural and human-made, which prioritize characteristics, quality, interrelationships between activities (Firmansyah & Dede, 2022). This type of descriptive qualitative research interprets and analyzes existing data along with the current situation. This research also tries to reveal the

attitudes, contradictions, relationships and views that occur in a respondent's scope, namely about Muthahhari's thought leadership and its relevance to independent learning (Efendi & Sesmiarni, 2022). In relation to this paper, the author uses is to collect accurate data about Murtadha Mutahhari's Islamic thoughts, which are contained in his works, or which have been written by experts about his Islamic thought, then the author evaluates, describes his works and analyzes them until they are relevant to the concept of independent learning, so that it can be known and found the substance of Muthahhari's Islamic thought that he has initiated and constructed.

## **Finding and Discussion**

### **Murtadha Mutahhari (History, Career, Leadership, and Thought)**

Murtadha Mutahhari was born on February 2, 1919 in Fariman, Khurasan, Iran. His father's name is Muhammad Hussein Mutahhari, (Sanusi Anwar, 2021) an adherent of the Shi'a school of Itsna Ashariyah Ushuliya'. He studied theology with his father, then he learned to read, write, juz amma, and Arabic literature at the Fariman madrasa until the age of 12 (Sabara, 2022). As time rolled on, little Muthahhari was a teenager and even an adult, his desire to develop his academic career emerged. Muthahhari headed to Hawzah Masyhad with the aim of continuing his religious studies there, in 1932 (Sabara, 2022). Hawzah Masyhad is one of the centers of Shi'a religious education, in addition to Hawzah Qom (Iran); and Hawzah Najaf and Karbala in Iraq. Muthahhari showed intelligence and seriousness in learning. He was very sympathetic to the knowledge of philosophy and Irfan, especially after getting acquainted and witnessing firsthand the personality and depth of knowledge of one of the great Iranian philosophers, named Mirza Mehdi Syahidi Razavi, based on that then Muthahhari decided to study with him (Bagir Haidar, 2002).

Then in 1936, Muthahhari emigrated from Hawzah Masyhad to Hawzah Qum, with the aim of continuing his studies, this was done for several reasons, including: first, his teacher, Mirza Mehdi Syahidi Razavi, died. Second, the decline experienced by Hawzah Masyhad Third, the pressure of King Reza Khan's government on Islamic institutions because it was considered to disturb the stability of the state. (Haidar Bagir, 2020: 9) Nevertheless, Muthahhari felt a very deep impression in Masyhad, while studying and pursuing the fields of theology, philosophy, and Irfan (Algar, 2002). In 1937, Muthahhari resided in Qom (Jamaludiin Rahmat, 1995: 7) then he studied with Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Thabathaba'i who taught a variety of philosophical thoughts, ranging from the philosophy of Aristotle to Sartre. Thabathaba'i is the greatest Mufasssir, Theosophist, and Philosopher of the 20th century. Sayyid Husein Nasr who as a student of Thabathaba'i, said that Allamah Thabathaba'i has the advantages and virtues as a Shaykh in the field of shariah and esoteric sciences, as well as a leading philosopher (Sayyed Husein, 1993) In addition to studying philosophy to Thabathaba'i, Muthahhari also learned it from Ayatollah Al-Astiyani, and Shaykh Mahdi Al-Mazandarani (Muthahhari Murtadha, 2004).

In 1941M/1361M, Muthahhari continued his wanderings again to Isfaham to study Nahjul Balaghah by Imam Ali bin Abi Talib. He also read the book of philosophy Syarh-i Manzumah by Mulla Hadi Sabzewari, under the guidance of his spiritual teacher, Imam Khomeini, Muthahhari is known as a commentator on the book Syarh-i Mazmumah. Then the following year, 1942M/1362 AH. In the city of Burujur, Muthahhari studied the science of Akhlaq from his teachers, Ayatollah Sayyid Hussein Burujerdi and Shaykh Ali Al-Syirazi Al- Ishfahani (Muthahhari Murtadha, 1993).

In 1946M/1366H, he studied Kifayah Al Ushul, a book of law by Akhun Khorasani under the guidance of Imam Khomeini. The study of philosophy continues to flow, so that Muthahhari together with other Iranian Islamic thinkers and scientists, such as; Ayatollah Montezari, Hajj Aqa Reza Shadr and Hajj Aqa Mehdi Ha'eri, studying and pursuing the book Al-Asfar Al-Arba'ah as the magnun opus of Mulla Shadra's work. In the same year, 1946, Muthahhari studied the philosophy of Materialism from books and pamphlets in Persian made by the Tudeh party such as Taqi Arani's work and studied the philosophy of Materialism from his teacher, Thabathaba'i, through a regular discussion every Thursday (Sanusi Anwar, 2021). In 1950M/1370H, Muthahhari studied, analyzed, and criticized the philosophical thought of Marxism materialism, after he read and thoroughly studied George Pulizer's work entitled, Introduction to Philosophy, in the same year, Muthahhari studied the book of Islamic philosophy of Ibn Sina through his teacher Thabathaba'i (Rastan, Sastan, n.d.). ) In the field of fiqh and ushul fiqh as the main subject in shari'ah knowledge, Muthahhari studied and was directly guided by several famous scholars such as; Ayatollah Burujerdi in Qom (Abdullah Beik: 102) Ayatollah Hujjat Kuhkamari, Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Damad, Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Reza Gulpayagani, and Ayatollah Haji Sayyid Shadr Al-Din Shadr. Because of his pious, intelligent, and diligent personality in studying and thinking very seriously, to then spawn modern ideas that are brilliant, so that at the end of his studies, Muthahhari was named "Ayatullah" in the presence of great scholars such as Ayatollah Shadr, Ayatollah Muhammad Muhaqqiq, and Ayatollah Muhammad Hujjat. (Kartanegara Mulyadhi, 2007).

After embedding a strong foundation of Irfan knowledge from his teacher, Allahummarham Mirza Mehdi Syahidi Razavi, Muthahhari, again deepened his Irfan knowledge so as to reach the peak of Irfan knowledge, to another great teacher, namely; Ayatullah Al-Uzhma Ruhullah Khomeini. In addition, because Imam Khomeini is also a Marja-i Taqlid, then Muthahhari also while diving drinking water, utilizing this golden opportunity to gain knowledge of fiqh and ushul fiqh from Imam Khomeini, as well as actively attending philosophy lectures held by the leader of the Iranian Islamic Revolution (Muthahhari Murtadha, 2004). In addition to reading, listening, and studying George Pulizer's work entitled, *Introduction to Philosophy*, revolving around Marxist philosophical thought, Muthahhari also deepened his knowledge horizons by devouring until mastering the works of the minds of Modern philosophers, and experts in various scientific disciplines of world caliber, among others, such as; Will Durrant, Sigmund Freud, Bertrand Russel, Albert Einstein, Erich Fromm, Alexis Carrel, Charles Darwin, and Immanuel Kant. And the field of philosophy, in particular, Muthahhari is very popular as a critic of Western philosophy, (especially Marxism Materialism, pen.) Then in 1952M/1372H, Muthahhari left for Tehran and found his soul mate there, in short, he married the daughter of an Iranian cleric named Ayatullah Ruhani (Algar, 2002).

In 1953M/1373H, Muthahhari founded a religious school called *Madrasa-yi Marvi* with the subject he taught was philosophy. He also taught a variety of knowledge including; philosophy, logic, theology, and fiqh. at the faculty of Theology and Islamic Sciences, University of Tehran. Through the University, he became the Head of the Philosophy Department, as well as a lecturer, until he reached the academic peak, which is a professor of philosophy. Muthahhari became a regular writer in the philosophy journal *Al-Hikmah*, he conveyed various ideas and brilliant thoughts. His writings are much favored by the public, thus making him famous (Bagir Haidar, 2005).

In the academic world, Muthahhari is one of the great teachers, critics, and preachers, mujahid and brave mujtahid born from the earth of Iran, with the breadth and depth of knowledge he has, used for the benefit of the ummah and society, and the country. He is very active in teaching, especially to his students and the community, as well as expressing his critical thoughts through his writings and works in various scientific disciplines that he has mastered, especially modern Islamic thoughts that have been published through the media. Both print and electronic media. In the political field, under the leadership of Imam Khomeini as the great Leader of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, Muthahhari joined together actively to try to overthrow the tyrannical rule of the Pahlevi regime. But fate willed otherwise, he was arrested and imprisoned in 1963M/1383H, then in 1971M/1391H, he plunged into politics again by planning political ideology at the *Al-Jawad* mosque. To take various policies, he sought the advice of Imam Khomeini (Nasution Harun, 1973). In 1965M/1385H, Muthahhari established an Islamic educational institution, which was named, *Husainiyah Irsyad*. This organization recruits and gathers the younger generation who received secular education and then cultivated and educated to return to loyalty to Islam. Long before this organization was established, Muthahhari had joined the Organization under the supervision of Mahdi Bazargan and Ayatollah Taleqani. This organization organizes various lectures to their members such as doctors, and engineers. Muthahhari has also been involved with the organization *Jam'iyah Ulama Militant*'.

In 1969M/1389H, Muthahhari together with Ayatollah Zanjani and Allamah Thabathaba'i issued a strong statement condemning American and Israeli aggression against Palestine and Muthahhari actively raised funds for Palestinian refugees. For the political movements carried out by Muthahhari along with the ayatollahs, the government considered their political activities dangerous for the stability of power. So in 1972M/1392H, the *Husainiyah Irsyad* organization and the *Al-Jawad* mosque were banned from activity and Muthahhari was imprisoned again. Then when out of prison, some time later, Muthahhari was given the mandate by Imam Khomeini to organize the *Ulama Mujahidin*' community as well as the leader of the revolutionary council (Iran, pen.) Under his leadership as chairman of the revolutionary council, the Iranian Islamic Revolution succeeded in overthrowing the Pahlevi government, Muthahhari still remains loyal to be a servant of Imam Khomeini. Muthahhari also continued to give his dedication to the people and his country. For this reason, he continued to lead the *Revolutionary Council*' (Nasr Seyyed Hossein, 1993).

At the end of his life, there was a group of rebels who called himself the *Furqan Group*, unhappy even very hostile to Muthahhari and the teachings of thought that developed, then they planned the assassination of him. And the assassination plan was successfully implemented, right on Tuesday night May 1, 1979M/1399H. On Wednesday, May 2, 1979, the Iranian state mourned. The radio broadcasters announced the martyrdom of Muthahhari accompanied by reading some excerpts from his writings. He was laid to rest in the hospital. His body was taken to be prayed at Tehran University, then to Qom, then buried next to Shaykh Abdul Karim Ha'iri Yazdi, and Sayyidah Fatimah Al-Ma'shumah (Rakhmat, Jalaluddin, 1995).

When we listen to a little story of Murtadha Muthahhari's life journey in pursuing a career, both in the academic and political fields as previously described, it can be understood, that Muthahhari, is one of the intelligent and genius people that Allah entrusted on this earth. Because of his expertise and intelligence in mastering various fields of knowledge and thought, especially modern Islamic thought, so many achievements and honorary titles pinned on him. By listening to the breadth and depth of the sea of knowledge and thought that Muthahhari has, it is impossible to discuss in this limited paper. Therefore, the author is only able to capture the substance of the thoughts contained therein, then will try to discuss the substance or essence of his thought. As far as the author's knowledge from the results of reading, and the author's review of Muthahhari's thoughts, which are contained in his monumental works, there are at least three classifications of thoughts and ideas contained therein, namely, thoughts about philosophy (Islam), theology, and Sufism.

### **Murtadha Muthahhari's Thought Relevance to Freedom of Learning**

Murtadha Muthahhari was an Iranian Muslim scholar and philosopher who lived in the 20th century. He is known as a figure of Islamic thought and also one of the founders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. One of the important concepts in his thought is "Freedom of Learning" or "Independence of Thought" in the Islamic context. In the context of the independent learning curriculum, it is based on an approach that gives students the freedom to take an active role in the learning process, including the selection of materials, methods, and learning styles that suit their interests and talents. Theoretical studies to support the development of an independent learning curriculum include several relevant educational approaches and theories. It is important to note that an independent learning curriculum should be developed by considering educational principles and theories that are appropriate to the context and needs of students. By integrating various relevant approaches and theories, the independent learning curriculum can be an effective means to improve the quality of learning, motivate students, and form independent, creative, and critical thinking individuals.

The concept of Freedom of Learning or Freedom of Thought refers to the idea that Islam encourages its people to think freely, develop knowledge, and understand their own religion. Muthahhari argues that solid belief and faith will not grow from imitation without deep understanding. Therefore, he encouraged Muslims to learn and understand their religious teachings in a critical and independent manner. In the context of "Freedom to Learn," Muthahhari rejects a dogmatic approach to religious understanding. He believed that beliefs based on blind imitation or being taken for granted without questioning would only result in superficial beliefs. She wanted Muslims to dare to ask questions, seek a deeper understanding, and have a mind that is open to the changing times. However, it is important to remember that Murtadha Muthahhari's thinking remains within the confines of valid Islamic teachings. Although he encourages independence of thought, in the context of religion, this does not mean denying religious values, but rather understanding and finding the reasons behind these Islamic teachings.

In the context of the relevance to freedom of learning today, this concept still has important meaning. In the era of information and wide access to various knowledge, it is important for Muslims to have a critical approach in understanding their religious teachings. This will help strengthen beliefs that are more solid and relevant to today's times. However, at the same time, understanding must be grounded in authentic and authoritative sources in Islam so as not to deviate from the teachings of the religion. It is also important to remember that every thought or concept in Islam can be debated and interpreted in different ways by various Muslim thought leaders. So, Muthahhari's understanding of Merdeka Belajar is one of the points of view in the tradition of Islamic thought that needs to be studied further to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Freedom of learning is an educational concept that emphasizes individual freedom to seek knowledge and understand the meaning of life through an active and autonomous learning process. Here are some of Murtadha Muthahhari's thoughts that are relevant in independent learning:

1. **Emphasis on Knowledge and Learning**  
Muthahhari strongly emphasizes the importance of knowledge in Islam and regards learning as a continuous process. He believes that seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim, and there is no limit in terms of the type of knowledge that can be sought. This thinking is in line with the spirit of independent learning that values the freedom to seek and acquire knowledge freely.
2. **Critical Thinking and Rationality**  
Muthahhari emphasizes the importance of critical thinking and rationality in approaching religious understanding. He argues that religion and science do not contradict each other, but should complement each other. This reflects the spirit of free learning, where individuals are expected to use their common sense to evaluate and understand the knowledge gained.
3. **Autonomy and Personal Responsibility**

In his thought, Muthahhari emphasizes that individuals have a personal responsibility to seek truth and understand religious teachings. In the context of independent learning, this means that each individual has autonomy in their learning process and is responsible for their own choices and judgments in seeking knowledge.

#### 4. Openness to Other Cultures and Thoughts

Muthahhari also emphasizes openness to other cultures and thoughts as a way to enrich understanding of religion and the world in general. This open attitude is in line with the spirit of freedom of learning, where individuals are expected to learn from various perspectives and views.

Overall, Murtadha Muthahhari's thoughts can make a significant contribution in understanding and applying the concept of freedom of learning in the context of Islamic Education. His autonomous and critical approach to knowledge and religion encourages Muslim learners to seek a deeper and broader understanding, while remaining open to various views and thoughts.

### Conclusion

Murthada Muthahhari as one of the architects of the new consciousness scholars and contemporary philosophers from Iran who is also known as an Islamic Revolutionary Ideologue in the country. Muthahhari's activities in contact with the world of education began with the direct guidance of his father, Muhammad Hussein Muthahhari, who is also known as one of the most respected scholars in Iran. The breadth and depth of knowledge that Muthahhari has, spawned his brilliant ideas and thoughts in various aspects of scientific disciplines, especially in modern Islamic thought. From the overall Islamic thought, there are at least three dimensions of Islamic thought carried by Muthahhari, which include the dimensions of philosophical thought (Islam), Islamic theology and Sufism (tasawwuf) in Islam.

Muthahhari's thinking provides a view that seeking knowledge is the duty of every Muslim, and learning must continue throughout life. In freedom of learning, individuals are given the freedom to seek and acquire knowledge freely, use critical thinking and rationality to understand religion and the world, and take personal responsibility for their learning process. In addition, openness to other cultures and thoughts opens up opportunities for learners to enrich their understanding from various perspectives. Muthahhari's thought also teaches the importance of uniting religion and science, so that there is no conflict between the two. The spirit of independent learning in the Islamic context can create learners who are active, critical and more open to new knowledge and thoughts, thus enabling continuous intellectual growth and development.

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