

Contemporary Issues in

ISLAMIC COMMUNICATION

Editor

Mohd Yusof Hussain



IIUM Press

International Islamic University Malaysia

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Moving from Secular to Islamic Code of Journalism Ethics

ZETI AZREEN AHMAD

Ethical philosophical thought, in the formulating of codes of moral or ethical behaviour has always been a necessary feature of human culture. It began during the times of the Greeks and Romans when philosophers such as Aristotle (384-322 BC) discussed how we are to live and die in very clear forms. Medieval philosophers were concerned with whether it is always wrong to kill and when going to war is justifiable.

In the nineteenth century utilitarian philosophers wrote on the proper means of satisfying desires and obtaining pleasures. In the middle of the twentieth century scholars and practitioners were developing codes of ethics in a number of professions, such as medical ethics, business ethics, environmental ethics and bio-ethics.

This chapter discusses the need to develop and apply an Islamic code of journalism ethics for Muslim journalists.

Ethics

Ethics, along with logic, metaphysics, and epistemology is one of the main branches of philosophy. Moral philosophers view the general study of goodness and right actions as the main concern of ethics.

The word “ethics” is sometimes used interchangeably with “morality,” i.e., the evaluation of human conduct, and how human beings ought to behave particularly in relation to another.

The word is also sometimes used in a narrower sense to mean the moral principles of a particular tradition, religion or group.

In Islam the word use for ethics is *akhlaq*. According to the Encyclopedia of Islam (1979), the study of ethics in Islam reached its maturity in the eleventh century.