

# A Reflection on the New Theory “Moral Taint”

Mohammad Niazi\*

---

## Abstract

This paper seeks to critically explain and examine the concept of “moral taint” for the first time in Persian. One has moral taint when his moral character forms a negative state without his involvement in its formation. While the term of “moral taint” is recently coined, its referent has been discussed in previous works. To explain this term in more detail, the current paper aims to compare it with moral luck and metaphysical sin. Moreover, it discusses certain potential consequences of moral taint such as shame, regret, moral responsibility, and compensation. It argues for the view that the theory of moral taint is not sufficiently coherent and the account given for it is faced with a number of problems. Reflection on this concept shows that moral taint, which can be characterized as a scandal, is more a social fact than an ethical one. Although its proponents justifiably intended to bear in mind crimes against humanity and to learn from these crimes, good intentions do not make the idea right.

## Keywords

Moral taint, collective responsibility, metaphysical sin, shame, compensation, moral luck.

---

\* PhD graduate, Criminal Law and Criminology, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. | [hammad.niazi@ut.ac.ir](mailto:hammad.niazi@ut.ac.ir)

