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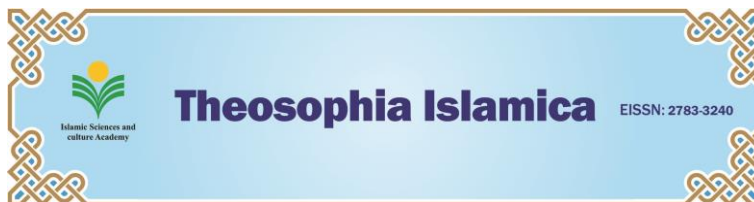
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Nature, Providence, and Human Autonomy in Kant's Critical Philosophy*

Mohsen Bagherzade Meshkibaf 

Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities and Social
Sciences, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran.
m.bagherzade@uok.ac.ir

Abstract

Kant's political philosophy is a realm of conflict between the traditional order, which is based on nature and its arrangement, and the civic order, which attempts to substitute the general will for the natural order. In fact, Kantian philosophy as a whole still finds itself partially trapped in a form of thought based on a natural-theological order, and consequently, witnesses its penetration into the theory of the state and the political sovereign. Nature, as an impenetrable element and a determinant of the roadmap in politics, manifests itself anew under the concept of the state—a presence that the individual, and even the aggregation of the general will, lacks the power to cast aside. This paper demonstrates the complex and multidimensional character that the term "nature" holds for

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Kant, analyzes the relationship between the idea of nature and Kant's political idea, and ultimately explains the weakness of Kant's political philosophy as it relates to his theory of nature.

Keywords

political philosophy, General Will, Natural Order, natural-theological, political sovereign,

Introduction

For Kant, nature can be viewed either as a regulative idea or as divine providence. Generally speaking, Kant desires to discover the natural laws of history in precisely the same manner that Kepler discovered the natural laws of the planets. When Kant speaks of the laws of nature in history, he does not mean that an actual mind or legislator called "nature" has prepared a plan that unfolds in history. Rather, if we wish to understand history, we must take refuge in an *idea*—which is nature itself—and we must consider it *as if* it pursues a purpose. Therefore, as Hannah Arendt states, history does not hold a central position in Kant's philosophy. In Kant, history is a part of nature. The subject of history is the human species, understood as a part of creation, even though humans are recognized as the ultimate purpose and the king of creation. What matters in history is not human individuals, nor historical figures, nor what humans do out of good or evil; rather, it is the secret trick (ruse) of nature that brings about the progress of the species and the development of all their capacities throughout the succession of generations... The process of history moves toward progress in culture (Arendt, 1992, p. 8).

Similarly, Allen Wood writes in *Kant's Ethical Thought*: "Kant's philosophy of history is naturalistic in the sense that he regards history as a branch of biology, but for Kant, biology can never be a pure science, and... the applicability of this science is compatible with reflective judgments" (Wood, 1999, p. 208). On the other hand, since the idea of republicanism is posited within nature, the entire political project seeks, in fact, to explain the nature of the state, the general will, and the manner of its realization.

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1. For further research on the relationship between nature and the idea, see Kant's essay *Perpetual Peace* (Kant, 1989 c, pp. 107-108).

1. Understanding History from the Perspective of Nature

Kant does not recognize "history" in the sense that developed in Europe after the year 1800; rather, he has a superficial meaning of it in mind, which nature does not simultaneously denote—instead, nature denotes providence or an idea. Aside from this, it is also important to note that the ultimate purpose of this idea or providence is a government that conforms to a pure republic. In what follows, we cite passages for the reader from Kant's political essays. In his essay titled *On the Common Saying: 'This May be True in Theory, but it Does Not Apply in Practice'* (which Kant likely wrote against philosophers like Burke and conservatives who believed that abstract forms of reason have no practical application in the external world), he writes:

Progress is not based on what we do or what methods we use. Rather, it is more observable in what human nature can do in and through us to force us to follow a course in which our choice is not involved. Therefore, we must attend to nature alone, or to providence (for the most perfect reason is required for this perfect goal to be fulfilled)... In other words, through the general coercion and stress created by nature or providence, people are forced into the decision to submit to the necessity prescribed by reason and enter into a civil constitution... or even be forced to submit to a cosmopolitan law (Kant, 1989 e, p. 90).

The first point is that nature and providence are synonymous for Kant. But the second point is more important, in that Kant believes providence operates without our willing it. Through the coercion that nature/providence creates, people are forced to submit to a civil constitution. Kant writes in the essay *Perpetual Peace*: "Perpetual peace is guaranteed by no authority other than the great art of nature itself. The mechanical process of nature clearly reveals a purposeful design for a harmony among men, even against their will and despite

their dissent. This design is a kind of fate" (Kant, 1989 c, p. 108). Therefore, the design of nature/providence does not care at all about human desire; rather, it is imposed upon man like fate. This fate moves toward creating a government that conforms to a pure republic or republicanism. For this reason, the author does not call Kant's desired government a "republic," because the form of government is not what matters to him (meaning it can be a monarchy, an aristocracy, or a republic); rather, its substance is what is important to him, and any form of government must bring itself closer to the substance of a republic¹. Kant writes in *The Metaphysics of Morals (The Doctrine of Right)*:

The forms and shapes of government are merely the alphabet of the original legislation in the civil state, and whichever of them is deemed preferable can endure and continue as the necessary mechanism of the constitution, in harmony with the established traditions of society. However, the spirit of the original contract implies a binding property in a constructive power to make the type of government fit and harmonize with the meaning of the original contract. Now, if this harmony is not possible all at once, this change must be introduced gradually, in such a way that the government, in terms of its consequences and effects, harmonizes with the only rightful type of constitution, namely republicanism, so that the original rational form replaces the old legal forms whose only goal was to make the people submissive. This rational form is the only form of government that makes freedom the principle and condition of obligatory action, that is, duty (Kant, 2015, pp. 203-204 / Persian Edition).

1. For Kant, changing the form of government is not important; it is the essence of the constitution that is of significance (Kant, 1989 b, p. 261).

The most important point in the above paragraph is freedom. Pure republicanism, through freedom, consolidates its institutions in Kant's view, and any government, whatever its form, must test itself against this touchstone and bring itself closer to this idea throughout history. Quentin Skinner, in the introduction to the translation of Kant's political writings, writes: For Kant, the French Revolution is an event that signifies man's moral progress and the creation of a republican state. And this is the only way that exists for progress and the full realization of morality (Kant, 1989 a, p. 37). The republican state, according to Kant, possesses these characteristics: "The civil constitution of every state must be republican... The republican constitution is founded upon three principles: first, the principle of freedom for all members of society; second, the principle of the dependence of all upon a single common legislation; third, the principle of the equality of the law for all" (Kant, 1989 c, p. 99).

Now we bring examples of how providence and nature in Kant's philosophy move toward establishing a law-governed social order. Kant writes in the essay *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*:

The greatest problem for the human species, to the solution of which nature drives it, is the achievement of a civil society which can administer justice universally. The highest purpose of nature, namely the development of all natural capacities for mankind, can only be achieved in society (Kant, 1989 a, p. 45)... The history of the human race as a whole can be regarded as the realization of a hidden plan of nature to bring about a politically perfect constitution, both internally and, for this purpose, externally, as the only possible state within which all natural capacities of mankind can be fully developed (Kant, 1989 a, p. 50). In the essay *Theory and Practice*, he also writes: "Among all the contracts by which a

large group of human beings concludes to form a society, the contract establishing a civil constitution has an exceptional nature" (Kant, 1989 e, p. 73).

Therefore, as we have explained, the ultimate purpose of providence/nature in Kant's philosophy is the creation of a law-governed government with the idea of republicanism. For it is in such a government (as we demonstrated in the *Critique of Judgment*) that individuals can achieve their happiness. This development, occurring throughout history and through the passage of multiple generations, can gradually approach the aforementioned idea rather than fully realize it, since ideas in Kant's philosophy are not capable of full realization. "For Kant history is a process which moves towards rationality... But since the creation of this republic and its constitution is an idea, it is not possible that we can realize it; we can only approach it. It seems that the French Revolution marks such an event for him. For its goal is precisely the establishment of a republican state. It is in this development of rationality that our rational nature is completely realized" (Kant, 1989, pp. 36-37).

Before reaching a conclusion, the necessity of the argument requires that we explain the meaning of an "idea" for Kant. Kant uses the three terms *idea*, *providence*, and *nature* largely in the same sense. Whether these terms denote the ideas of reason or divine providence, for Kant, knowing either of them in a constitutive manner is impossible; they possess only a regulative role, and their full realization is impossible. Kant generally states either that we can only approach these horizons or believes that they will be established in an unknown future. Kant writes regarding the ideas of reason in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: "But ideas are even further removed from objective reality than categories; for no appearance can be found in which they can be represented concretely. Ideas possess a type of

perfection which no possible empirical knowledge can attain. In them, reason possesses only a systematic unity, and it strives to bring the possible empirical unity closer to it, without ever being able to fully reach it" (Kant, 2015, p. 547 / Persian Edition).

2-5 An Examination of Kant's Doctrine of Right The *Groundwork*, as well as the *Critique of Judgment* and his other political essays (as has been shown), contain fundamental political terms that constitute, in fact, the beginning or prologue to the systematic development of Kantian thought toward writing a more important book in the field of the doctrine of right and the doctrine of politics titled *The Metaphysics of Morals*. In the first part of this book, Kant addresses the Doctrine of Right and subsequently enters the Doctrine of Virtue. In the aforementioned book, Kant introduces freedom—which forms the foundation and core of the human being in the *Groundwork* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*—into the juridical realm, and writes his doctrine of right with freedom at its center. Kant writes in *The Metaphysics of Morals*: "Freedom (independence from being constrained by another's choice), insofar as it can coexist with the freedom of every other in accordance with a universal law, is the only original right belonging to every man by virtue of his humanity" (Kant, 1991, p. 63). At the beginning of the section on the Doctrine of Virtue, concerning the distinction between right and ethics, Kant writes:

All legislation can be distinguished with respect to the incentive of action. That law which makes an action a duty and also makes this duty the incentive to the action is ethical. But that law which does not include the duty as the incentive in the law, and admits an incentive other than the idea of duty itself, is a juridical law (Kant, 1991, pp. 45-46)... All duties are either duties of right, that is, duties for which external legislation is possible, or duties of virtue, for which

external legislation is not possible (Kant, 1991, p. 64).

Therefore, the difference between the doctrine of right and the doctrine of virtue lies in the incentive for acting in accordance with the law. Thus, two types of legislation exist in Kant's philosophy: a law for which the mere duty can be the incentive for action, and a law for which the mere duty does not generate a sufficient incentive for action. The former case belongs to virtue, while the latter belongs to the domain of right. In other words, Kant wrote *The Metaphysics of Morals* with a view toward two dimensions of morality: external morality, which relates to the dimension of right, and internal morality, which pertains to the doctrine of virtue. Because the doctrines of right enjoy external constraint and because they possess external legislation, he calls these types of laws external laws. Kant divides these external laws into two parts: natural laws and positive laws. According to Kant, laws whose binding authority can be recognized a priori by reason without external legislation are natural laws; conversely, those laws which do not establish an obligation without external legislation are called positive laws (Kant, 1991, pp. 50-51).

The doctrine of right¹ in Kant's philosophy consists of "the sum of the laws for which an external legislation is possible; this is called the doctrine of right. If such a legislation actually exists, it is the doctrine of positive right" (Kant, 1991, p. 55). Moreover, right in his system means: "Right is the sum of the conditions under which the choice of one can be united with the choice of another in accordance with a universal law of freedom" (Kant, 1991, p. 56). Kant also explains the universal principle of right as follows: Act externally in such a

1. According to Kant, "all propositions of right, like those of ethics (which we explained in detail in the previous section), are a priori, since they are principles of reason" (Kant, 1991, pp. 71-72).

way that the free use of your choice can coexist with the freedom of everyone in accordance with a universal law (Kant, 1991, p. 56). The foundational concept in right is this very right to possess external freedom, and "the concept of right is derived from the concept of freedom in the mutual external relations of human beings" (Kant, 1989 e, p. 73).

One of the most important classifications carried out in the doctrine of right is the division of right into natural right and civil right. Of course, in Kant's view, social right also exists between these two parts of right. However, in Kantian thought, there is no contradiction between these two states, namely the state of nature and the social state; rather, both stand only in contrast to the civil state, because associations and groups can exist within the state of nature. Therefore, Kant places the state of nature and the social state within the domain of private right, whereas the civil state is placed within the domain of public right (Kant, 1991, p. 67). Thus, in explaining Kant's doctrine of right, we must first explain private right, which concerns individual property. Private right in Kant's philosophy relates above all to the right to a thing and the claim of ownership over it. This state is not a juridical state because distributive right does not exist within it—meaning there is no court of justice to distribute what is mine and what is yours. However, the social state receives an essential explanation in this section and can be considered one of the key parts of Kant's philosophy. We know that the scenario of political philosophy in the past was traditionally written such that following the state of nature, which is a state of war of all against all, a political or civil state defending the rights of persons is established via a contract concluded either among individuals themselves or between individuals and the government. Yet Kant performs a more complex task here by introducing the social state between these two, which he has adopted

from Achenwall¹. Of course, Achenwall sets it in contrast to the state of nature, but Kant opposes this classification; he places the civil state in contrast to the state of nature and introduces the social state, in a sense, between the two.

During the time Kant was teaching, Achenwall was one of the great professors of law in Germany and a figure who wrote several important books in this field. Kant used his books when he taught courses on law. Generally speaking, if we were to provide an introductory definition regarding Achenwall, it must be said that he was a thinker like Wolff, who collected and taught the body of past philosophical knowledge regarding right—though Wolff did so in philosophy and logic. In this section, which the author believes can be highly key, Kant disagrees with him and explains roughly three states, because he believes that even in the state of nature, a juridical relationship can be established among individuals, even if no guarantee has been created through a political society. Therefore, in this second state, rights exist, but they lack an external executive guarantee. The author believes that under the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment, Kant actually recognized a substance of civil society; therefore, the associations here are a prelude to the civil society that Hegel later introduces into his political thought, and Kant makes a second state appear between the two former states.

Thus, Kant proposes three stages; in the second stage, a type of community and interaction is at work. One of the reasons Kant utilizes an intermediate state is that, because he does not want to arrive at Hobbes's Leviathan, he is forced to conduct the argument differently and open up another stage. Consequently, Kant creates a complex architecture for his political theory.

1. For further study, see (Kant, 1991, p. 121).

In the condition of private right, there is a postulate based on which: "I am bound to leave what is another's in his possession only if every other person gives me an assurance that he will do the same and, based on the same principle, leave what is mine in my possession"¹ (Kant, 1991, p. 77). Therefore, it is clear that according to Kant, if only a single individual lived on the face of the earth, he could not acquire an external object as his property, and its acquisition would be impossible for him. For an obligatory relationship could not exist between him as a person and all external objects as things. Thus, determinately and formally, no one has a right to a thing; rather, what is called by this name is merely a right that someone has to a thing against another person, who also shares in common with others in a public manner (in the civil state). This sentence is the foundation of the intersubjective theory in the science of right, which dictates that two consciousnesses (self-consciousnesses) who possess an equal measure of right must always exist for right to have validity; yet despite such a condition, Kant still believes that a juridical state is not created, and we require an authority to adjudicate and settle claims. Kant writes: "In a state of nature, something external can be mine or yours only provisionally" (Kant, 1991, p. 77).

Thus, it is completely clear that the will of a single person alone, whether in the kingdom of ends (which was raised in the *Groundwork*) or in the current form that Kant demonstrates in the state of nature, is incapable of guaranteeing right. Hence, the transition to another state is mandatory. Under one of the important headings of the Doctrine of Right, namely "The Transition from What

1. Elsewhere Kant writes: No one is bound to refrain from encroaching on what belongs to another unless the other gives him a simultaneous guarantee that he will observe the same restraint toward him (Kant, 1991, p. 122).

is Mine or Yours in a State of Nature to What is Mine or Yours in a Juridical Condition Generally," Kant seeks to bring that very individual mentioned in the state of nature, with all his right and freedom, into the condition of public right, and this is what reason commands.

The will of a single person cannot serve as a binding law for everyone regarding external property, because that would violate freedom in accordance with universal laws. Therefore, only a will that is collectively powerful and binding can create such a guarantee for everyone. But the condition of being under an external legislation that also possesses power is the civil state. Therefore, it is only in a civil state that something external can be mine or yours (Kant, 1991, p. 77).

Therefore, if peace cannot be established among individuals in the state of nature, nor within the ethical condition demonstrated in the kingdom of ends, and if we cannot ensure that they do not violate one another's rights, we must enter into the civil condition. This is because Kant believes that "it is possible to have something external as one's own only in a juridical condition, under the authority of a public legislative power, that is, in a civil state" (Kant, 1991, pp. 77-78). Consequently, in order for Kant to discuss human autonomy—which we previously examined—alongside its full freedom within the political sphere, he must now present a solution. This solution must be formulated in such a way that people can fulfill their duties toward one another and maintain mutual trust. At this juncture of the discussion, Kant must enter politics and guarantee the protection of our rights within society through that domain. Hans Reiss and Quentin Skinner write in the introduction to *Kant's Political Writings*: "For Kant political theory is inevitably part of the metaphysics of morals. This is because politics deals with the question of what we ought to do

in a social and political context, or, in other words, it is concerned with establishing criteria by which we can regulate the conflict of mutual interests... and the theory of law is what can possess necessity and universality in the realm of politics, since the metaphysics of morals is all that the metaphysics of politics can sit upon" (Kant, 1989 b, p. 20).

2. The Meaning and Scope of State Power in Kant's Political Thought

In defining public right, Kant writes: "The sum of the laws which need to be commonly promulgated in order to bring about a juridical condition is called public right. Public right is therefore a system of laws for a nation, for a large number of people who are in mutual relations with one another and require a juridical condition that unites them under one will, that is, the formation of a constitution under which they can enjoy what is established as a right. This condition of individuals within a nation in relation to one another is called the civil state, and all individuals in a juridical condition in relation to their own members are called the state. Because of its form, by which all are united through their common interest in a juridical condition, the state is called a commonwealth (*res publica*)" (Kant, 1991, p. 311). Kant brings all of these discussions under the term political right or political science. Within the juridical condition, mirroring the scenario previously utilized by political philosophers such as Hobbes, Locke, Pufendorf, and even Grotius, Kant likewise believes within this political framework that people must separate themselves from wild, lawless freedom in accordance with a contract they conclude with one another, and enter into a state in order to acquire that freedom within a higher realm. In the state of nature, Kant believes that the violence of others makes it impossible to rely on anyone's contract or word. In such a condition, each individual considers his own arbitrary

conception to be correct and pays no heed to the opinion of anyone else. Moreover, because everyone acts according to their own arbitrary conception in the condition of natural right or in the condition of the kingdom of ends, an intersubjective relationship is not established among persons; such a state will result only in chaos. It is precisely within this state of turmoil that human beings take steps to form a political society so that their property may be secured.

Kant had previously stated that one must, by compulsion and based on the law of reason, exit the state of nature and enter the political condition. This matter is significant because Kant believes that it is not through experience that we become aware of human wickedness in a non-juridical condition. Rather, no matter how much individuals are defined by benevolent attributes, it is present a priori in reason that before the establishment of juridical conditions, individuals, nations, and states can never be secure from one another against violence (Kant, 1991, p. 123). Kant writes in the book *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*: "The proposition 'Man is evil' cannot mean anything else, in accordance with the aforementioned statement, than that he is conscious of the moral law and yet has made deviation from this law the maxim of his behavior" (Kant, 2019, p. 67 / Persian Edition). Hence, this condition drives man toward a state in which he can unite the general will of the people into a collective community that is simultaneously intended to preserve itself permanently; to achieve this goal, it must bring itself under the authority of a state (Kant, 1991, p. 136). For the state is formed to execute the laws that human beings have set for themselves¹. And the state

1. Kant believes: "The legislative power can belong only to the united will of the people, because all right must proceed from this united will, and it cannot do any wrong to anyone through its laws" (Kant, 1991, p. 125).

itself is nothing other than a union of a multitude of human beings possessing moral freedom under the laws of right (Kant, 1991, p. 125), and human beings are elevated to the status of citizens under this unifying force, which is nothing other than themselves; or as Kant says, "the members of such a society who are united for legislation, that is, the members of the state, are called citizens of the state" (Kant, 1991, p. 125).

The establishment of a state and, consequently, the elevation of individuals to the status of citizens require a constitution, regarding which Kant writes: "All forms of state are based on the idea of a constitution (which is a constitution of a republican nature) that is compatible with the natural rights of man" (Kant, 1989 d, p. 187). It is evident that for Kant, the constitution functions as an *idea*—a horizon toward which humanity must evolve. Since we have previously explained that human nature drives humanity toward the creation of a specific type of the rule of law, the constitution of every state must be pure republicanism.

Up to this point in the discussion, we have briefly reviewed the process of history's abstract movement in transitioning from the state of nature or the ethical-civil condition to the condition of public right, politics, or the juridical-civil state from Kant's perspective. Until now, despite the fact that Kant always regarded humanity's ultimate purpose to be cultivation, culture, and development toward the maturity of its capacities, and always referred this purpose to a civil state, we have not yet observed anything distinct or commensurate with Kant's claim and the human subject he introduced prior to this. That is to say, the author of these lines believes that Kant is an absolute failure in his political theory, and he was never able to create a political philosophy or a political doctrine that matches the boundless power of autonomy he granted to the human being. The reason for this is that Kant,

seemingly like Hobbes, Locke, and others, was unable to extricate himself from the pre-existing scenario of political philosophy; rather, the preservation of security remains his primary concern, and he wrote this book within that same historical framework, where the bulk of his effort is directed solely toward the preservation of property. Yet, before the author draws his fundamental conclusions, we must still bear with this interpretation until it reaches its end. From the moment Kant implements the state in theory, his political philosophy degenerates even further compared to before, and it bears no scent of the anthropology he once championed.

Kant envisions three powers within public right in the section on government, which he believes are derived from reason. Kant writes: "The three powers in a state, which arise from the concept of a commonwealth, are simply the three relations which are derived a priori by reason from the united will of the people" (Kant, 1991, p. 147). Despite Kant's claim that this united will brings about the formation of these three powers, he performs profoundly weakly in linking the two together, and his political philosophy lacks the capacity to achieve this. He writes that with respect to each of the powers regarding their rank and position, it can be said: "The will of the legislator in relation to what is mine and yours is irreproachable; the executive power in the person of the highest authority of the government is irresistible; and the verdict of the highest authority of the government is irreversible" (Kant, 1991, p. 127). This means that from the moment these three powers are established, the relationship between myself as a citizen and them is completely severed; their decision must be my decision, and no organic or holistic relationship exists between me and the institutions created through these powers. From this point onward, only force operates. Kant goes on to write:

From this it follows that the sovereign in a state has only rights

against his subjects and no duties (which he can be compelled to perform). Furthermore, if the organ of the sovereign, namely the ruler, acts contrary to the laws—for instance, in matters of taxation, recruitment of officials, and similar affairs in determining the duties of government contrary to justice—the subjects possess only the right to complain against these injustices, but not the right to oppose or resist (Kant, 1991, p. 130).

This quoted paragraph clearly demonstrates that the power of the people and their will holds no relation to political power. Kant may believe that the only thing that creates power is the will of the people, but he cannot advance this substance with a political philosophy that, like those of his predecessors, remains mechanical; he cannot establish a relationship between the individual, with their free will, and external institutions. John McCumber writes in an astonishing analysis of Kant:

The vast content of human life—inclinations, drives, customs, and institutions, and the like—is in Kantianism merely a set of empirical inclinations, all of which are non-moral and none better or worse than another... Consequently, when in *The Metaphysics of Morals* Kant commits to establishing political and social structures in detail (in the Doctrine of Right), the operating principle is the establishment of universal mutual coercion. When he turns to the individual level and concrete virtues, the principle is 'self-coercion'. Such coercion or force is necessary. We humans tend to pursue our individual benefit, inclinations that operate contrary to the moral law in determining our actions. The operative principle of civil society is opposition to such antisocial inclinations through legally established institutions... A society operating strictly on laws of coercion is a society whose laws and social arrangements cannot be affirmed by the individual. For those

laws are to that individual (as Hegel says) a restriction upon his arbitrariness. Therefore, there is no place in Kant's ethical theory for individual rationality to recognize or affirm such relations... That Kant's brilliant achievement in grounding morality upon pure abstract emptiness must arrive here is truly tragic (McCumber, 2014, pp. 170-172).

Since the external object holds no importance for Kant, he does not articulate an important theory regarding objective factors either, because all empirical factors are, in his view, non-moral. Consequently, the external human being solely pursues their own inclinations, and the state stands in opposition to these matters. Thus, a mutual coercion is created, and because this society must hold human beings together purely by virtue of coercion, it is clear that institutions cannot have an organic relationship with human beings. If they did, force would not be required to compel obedience to them. Force is required precisely when there is no relationship between the people and the institutions. Therefore, because Kant was unable to introduce that autonomous human being from his ethical texts and from the *Critique of Judgment* here, and give him personality in political relations through his free will, the conclusion of his political philosophy is disastrous. To confirm our view, Kant goes on to write:

There is also no rightful resistance by the people against the supreme legislative authority of the state; for the realization of such a rightful condition is possible only through the people's submission to the universal legislative will. Hence, there is absolutely no right to sedition, let alone a right to rebellion... and an attack with intent on the life of the sovereign is condemned to death as treason (Kant, 1991, p. 131).

Kant has created a complete severance and by no means seeks to grant any right to the human being within the public sphere.

Consequently, he has stripped humanity even of the right to resistance, which Hobbes and Locke had permitted under specific conditions, and has elevated the power of the sovereign to such an extent that he cannot be subjected to judgment. Therefore, even altering the status quo is not in our hands, but is rather the monarch's prerogative. Kant writes: "A change in a (defective) constitution, which may be necessary at times, can therefore be brought about only by the sovereign himself through reform, but not by the people, and consequently not by revolution... The people can only voice their opposition through their delegates" (Kant, 1991, p. 133). Kant thus abandons human beings to the arbitrary will of the monarch. Whenever the ruler feels a change is necessary, change will occur; otherwise, the people must not engage in any affirmative activity—rather, only a negative activity is recognized for them. In the essay *Theory and Practice*, after condemning resistance on the grounds that it results in a state of lawlessness, Kant grants human beings only a single freedom, namely the freedom of the pen, and identifies it as the unique palladium and safeguard of the people's rights (Kant, 1989 e, p. 85). Concerning the problem Kant has with affirmative resistance, Frederick Beiser writes:

There are two problems with resistance. First of all, the problem of the onset of anarchy. If we generalize the postulate that we all have a right to riot, we have allowed for a state of complete anarchy or lawlessness. But Kant rejected such a thing not because of this outcome, but because he thought that such a thing is self-defeating or a contradiction. For the generalized principle regarding the right to riot is formed in such a way that there must be a law that under certain conditions there is lawlessness. 2- Another problem arising from the generalization of the right to riot is the division of sovereignty. If the people have the right to revolution, they have

the right to judge and coerce the sovereign. But if they have such a right, they are an authority superior to him. In such a situation, the people possess a power beyond the sovereign, which is absurd (Beiser, 1992, p. 45).

It is clear that because Kant was unable to explain the relationship between the personal will and the general will in political relations, he was forced to create such a severance so that no one (except the sovereign) would slide into arbitrariness. Kant believes that rebellion against a constitution is not a reform but its complete destruction; therefore, in his view, no revolution occurred in France from this perspective either. Regarding the French Revolution, Kant writes: "From the standpoint of the constitution, no revolution occurred in France" (Kant, 1989, p. 261). Aside from this, he also believes that the revolution of that country is not fit for imitation due to the costs it entailed. In the essay *An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?*, Kant writes: "The revolution which we have seen taking place in our day may succeed or it may fail. It may be so filled with misery and atrocities that no right-thinking man would ever decide to make the same experiment at such a cost, even if he could hope to carry it out successfully at the second attempt" (Kant, 1989 d, p. 182). Therefore, obedience to the sovereign and respecting his right in governance under all circumstances are among the requirements of his philosophy. For instance, in a striking paragraph, Kant grants this highly unjust right to a deposed monarch: "A dethroned monarch (who has survived the upheaval) cannot be called to account for his previous actions, let alone punished, provided he returns to the status of an ordinary citizen and prefers peace to chaos for the sake of his own tranquility and that of the state. But if he chooses the path of fighting the people, he cannot be opposed, because the people's rebellion against him was contrary to justice" (Kant, 1991,

p. 133). In addition, Kant attributes three other rights to the sovereign. He writes that the three rights of levying taxes (whether voluntary or forced) from the people, managing the state economy, property, and the police to direct the people, as well as the right of inspection, belong to the sovereign. For to preserve his power through the right of inspection, he must prevent any society or gathering from convening to deliberate on improving society, unless the police deem such an assembly advisable (Kant, 1991, pp. 135-136).

In this part of the preceding discussion, the author has demonstrated that in Kant's political theory, because man is viewed as evil and solely in pursuit of his personal benefit in both social and non-social states, a master must be chosen for him to keep him within his limits inside society. "Man is an animal that needs a master because he abuses his freedom" (Kant, 1989 a, p. 46). Thus, the free will of the autonomous human being in Kant's philosophy does not enter into politics, an outcome that stems from numerous reasons which the author will now proceed to explain. I begin my analysis with this quote from Hannah Arendt:

[Kant] was looking for a solution to a problem: how to reconcile the problem of the organization of the state with his moral philosophy, that is, with the *Critique of Practical Reason*. And the astonishing thing was that he knew his moral philosophy could not help him here; therefore, he refrained from moralizing and understood that the problem is how to force man to be a good citizen, even if he is not a morally good person, and that a good constitution is not to be expected from morality, but rather, conversely, a good moral condition of the people is to be expected under a good constitution (Arendt, 1992, pp. 16-17).

Therefore, Kant knew that for certain reasons, the foundations of his moral philosophy could not assist him in political science;

consequently, he seeks to create a good citizen within legal conditions. It is precisely here that the author perceives Kant's downfall, for a political philosophy severed from the core of freedom found in Kant's critical philosophy has no choice but to fall captive to the self-interested ideas of utilitarian philosophers. Charles Taylor writes regarding this case: "Thus, although Kant begins with a radically novel conception of morality, his political theory, however, is disappointingly conventional. This theory does not take us much further beyond utilitarianism, and this is because the chief problem in this theory remains the reconciliation of individual wills" (Taylor, 2000, p. 151).

The author of these lines identifies the reason for Kant's failure in politics, as well as his descent into a purely utilitarian¹ view of governance, in the fact that his philosophy derived all its power from its complete abstractness. Because it failed to establish a relationship and forge a link between this abstraction and concrete reality anywhere, whenever it discusses experience and enters concreteness, it finds its hands tied in advance from utilizing that profound freedom. And the primary reason for this failure in Kant's moral philosophy is that, by examining Kant's ethics, the author arrives at his downfall in politics.

Conclusion

The concept of the idea of republicanism holds a central role in this paper. The author believes that the idea of republicanism in Kant's philosophy derives its semantic validity not only from the framework of transcendence in Kant's philosophy, but also functions as the

1. According to this model, society is understood atomistically as a collection of individuals, each pursuing their own satisfaction (Walton, 1984, p. 246).

architect of the roadmap in Kant's moral philosophy, philosophy of right, and politics. The idea of republicanism, based on divine providence, effectively becomes the locus of Kant's practical thought regarding the manner of its realization. Kant's political philosophy is a realm of conflict between the traditional order, which is based on nature and its arrangement, and the civic order, which attempts to substitute the general will for the natural order. In fact, Kantian philosophy as a whole still finds itself partially trapped in a form of thought based on a natural-theological order, and consequently, witnesses its penetration into the theory of the state and the political sovereign. Nature, as an impenetrable element and a determinant of the roadmap in politics, manifests itself anew under the concept of the state—a presence that the individual, and even the aggregation of the general will, lacks the power to cast aside. Indeed, Kant does not succeed in replacing the power of the natural order—which derives its character from divine providence—with a second nature that is the product of the human general will.

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Mathematics, Philosophy, and Divine Unity: Comparative Approaches in Islamic and Western Thought*

Bijan Davvaz 

Professor, Department of Mathematical Sciences, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran.
davvaz@yazd.ac.ir

Abstract

Beyond its foundational role as an exact science and a practical tool for measurement, mathematics has long served as an essential language for describing the profound order and harmony inherent in the universe. This structural order—manifested through numbers, geometric shapes, and proportional ratios—was historically regarded by philosophers and theologians as a direct reflection of divine wisdom and cosmic design. Utilizing an analytical-comparative methodology based on original historical and philosophical sources, this article thoroughly examines the deep-seated relationship between religion and mathematics across ancient Greece, India, the Islamic world, and Western philosophy. The findings reveal that foundational mathematical concepts—ranging from Pythagorean number mysticism to Al-Khwarizmi's groundbreaking algebra and the sophisticated geometric theories of Khayyam and Tusi—were pursued not merely to solve scientific problems, but as spiritual

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tools for comprehending divine rationality. Moreover, the insights of contemporary thinkers like Allameh Tabataba'i and Hassanzadeh Amoli demonstrate that this perspective remains vibrant within monotheistic thought today. By adopting a non-teleological framework, this study highlights how differing metaphysical assumptions shaped mathematical interpretations across cultures, ultimately proving that the bond between religion and mathematics is intrinsic, rooted in order, truth, and unity.

Keywords

religion, history, mysticism, numbers, principle of existence.

1. Introduction

From the first creation story of human thought, the issue of the order of the world and its relationship to the origin of man's mind has been raised. When man looked at the stars or drew geometric shapes in the sand, he was unconsciously searching for law and meaning. This search emerged in the course of history as two great currents: one was religion, which saw the order and purpose of existence in the divine will. And the other was mathematics, which sought order in the quantitative and numerical forms of the world. In ancient civilizations, religion and mathematics were inseparable. In Egypt and Babylon, measuring the earth and time, calculating the movement of celestial bodies, and building pyramids were all part of religious rituals. In India, mathematics was tied to astronomy and the Vedic religion, and in Greece, the Pythagoreans considered numbers sacred. In Islamic civilization, mathematicians such as Avicenna, Al-Khwarizmi, Biruni, Khayyam, and Tusi also saw mathematics as a way to understand the order of creation.

The purpose of this article is to examine this historical and epistemological connection to show how mathematical knowledge has served the divine understanding of the world and how Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers throughout history have explained this connection. This paper adopts a comparative, non-teleological approach to examine how religious and metaphysical assumptions shaped the philosophical understanding of mathematics across different intellectual traditions.

It is important to note that scholarly interpretations of the relationship between mathematics and philosophy can vary significantly across cultural and historical contexts. This paper acknowledges two distinct perspectives reflected in prior peer reviews: one emphasizing Western, non-Islamic philosophical

traditions, and the other focusing on Islamic intellectual frameworks and their integration of mathematics with divine unity. By explicitly situating the analysis within a comparative and non-teleological framework, the study seeks to address these divergent viewpoints, demonstrating how mathematical thought can be understood both within Islamic philosophical traditions and in dialogue with Western philosophical developments, without privileging a single historical or cultural lens.

2. The concept of religion and mathematics and the possibility of linking them

Religion, in its broadest sense, is a system of beliefs and values that gives meaning to existence and guides man towards a truth beyond matter. Mathematics, in its most basic definition, is a science that deals with general and abstract concepts such as number, quantity, proportion, form, and order. Both fields, although different in terms of method, share the same search for order and truth. In the Islamic philosophical tradition, the concept of "order" has always been a sign of "reason" and ultimately "the wise creator." The noble verse: "Indeed, We have created everything in precise measure." (Quran 54:49). It clearly indicates the existence of a measurable and precise structure in the universe. This concept of measure and destiny is the very foundation of mathematics. In fact, by analyzing proportions and measurements, the mathematician approaches the same thing that the theologian reaches by contemplating creation: divine law and wisdom. In the *Timaeus*, Plato sees the universe as a mathematical and harmonious structure that God created based on number and proportion. He says: "God is a geometer." This statement is not a metaphor but a philosophical truth; because the divine intellect has organized the universe by means of number, form, and measure. In the

Islamic world, theologians and philosophers such as Avicenna and al-Farabi also believed that the science of mathematics is an intermediary between natural science and divine science; because it begins with the tangible but ends with the intelligible. Mulla Sadra writes in *Asfar Arba'ah*: "Mathematics is the science of order and proportion, and this order and proportion is a manifestation of divine beauty." Therefore, it can be said that the connection between religion and mathematics is not at the level of application, but rather in the depth of ontology and epistemology. Both are in search of "order in unity" and "unity in plurality"; that is, the same principle that is known in Islamic philosophy as numerical monotheism and in mysticism as the manifestation of the name "al-Hakim".

To maintain a coherent theoretical framework throughout the paper, this study consistently emphasizes the interrelation of number, order, and unity as central to understanding the philosophical and religious significance of mathematics. Each section integrates this perspective, demonstrating how mathematical concepts are not merely abstract tools, but instruments reflecting broader metaphysical and theological principles.

3. The view of ancient Greek philosophers

3.1. Pythagoras and number as the principle of existence

Pythagoras (6th century BC) may be considered the first thinker to express the relationship between religion and mathematics in a philosophical way. He believed that number was not simply a means of measurement but the "essence of things". In his view, number was the source of order, harmony and beauty. The Pythagoreans had a form of numerical mysticism in which numbers were considered sacred, especially the number 10, which symbolized perfection.

The Pythagoreans considered music, astronomy and geometry to be ways of discovering the harmony of the world. This view actually considered mathematics a form of intellectual worship, because discovering harmonious proportions was attuning to cosmic reason. This idea was later continued in Plato's philosophy as the theory of "geometrical proportions in the soul and the world.

3.2. Plato: The geometric world

Plato (427–347 BC) inscribed the following over the entrance to his Academy: "Let no one who does not know geometry enter." For him, geometry is the language of God and the material world is a picture of the ideal world in which everything is shaped by mathematical proportions. In the *Timaeus*, Plato explains the formation of the universe based on five regular solids (tetrahedron, hexahedron, octahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedron), and sees this structure as a sign of the rational order of creation.

Plato says: "God created the world on the basis of number so that order and harmony might be established in it." This view later inspired Christian theologians such as Augustine and reached the Islamic world through translations of his works.

3.3. Aristotle: Mathematics between sense and reason

Aristotle (384–322 BC), although he disagreed with Plato on the issue of analogy, emphasized the importance of mathematics as a science between the sensible and the intelligible. He wrote in *Metaphysics* that mathematics frees reason from the sensible and leads to a level of understanding of order that is a prelude to understanding the final cause (i.e., God). For him, God is the prime mover of cosmic order, and mathematics is a way to understand the order of celestial motions.

4. The view of western philosophers and mathematicians

Throughout history, several mathematicians have regarded mathematics not merely as a science of numbers and forms but as a profound means to understand divine order and the wisdom of God. Isaac Newton was not alone in this conviction; many of his predecessors and successors shared a similar view that the structure of mathematics reflected the structure of creation itself.

1) Galileo (1564-1642)

He is known to have said: “The book of the world is written in the language of mathematics.” He means what Allameh Tabataba’i says about order and balance in creation: the world can be measured and described mathematically. Galileo considered science a tool for discovering the natural order, not a substitute for religion.

Galilei emphasized the essential role of mathematics in understanding the universe, stating that philosophy is written in the “grand book” of the universe, which cannot be understood unless one first learns the language of mathematics (Galilei 1623, 183).

2) Blaise Pascal (1623–1662)

The French mathematician and philosopher considered both mathematics to be the highest tool of reason and faith to be essential. He believed that mathematics trains reason, but reason alone is not enough and faith illuminates the path of the heart. Blaise Pascal, both a mathematician and a Christian philosopher, viewed mathematics as a means to approach—but not to replace—faith. In *Pensées*, Pascal distinguished between the “God of philosophers” and the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” asserting that while reason and mathematics could guide one toward faith, only the heart could truly perceive God (Pascal, 1995, pp. 122–23).

Similarity with Allameh's thinking and mysticism: Mathematics is the path of reason, but intuition and faith are also essential.

3) Albert Einstein (1879-1955)

Einstein regarded mathematics as the essential tool for understanding the universe. He believed that the laws of physics, particularly those revealed through his theory of relativity, expressed the precise order and harmony of nature (Einstein 1987, p. 13). Regarding religion, Einstein did not believe in a personal God who intervenes in human affairs. Instead, he aligned more closely with Spinoza's concept of God, viewing divinity in terms of the orderly structure of the universe rather than in supernatural intervention. He famously stated, "I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the orderly harmony of what exists, not in a God who concerns himself with fates and actions of human beings" (Einstein 1930, pp. 36-40).

In Einstein's perspective, mathematics serves as the language of nature, a means to uncover the underlying laws and rational order of the cosmos. This understanding of universal order, however, was distinct from religious faith in a personal deity.

4) Kurt Gödel (1906-1978)

The great mathematician and logician Gödel believed that mathematical truths have an independent and eternal existence. He believed that this numerical and logical order in the world was a sign of absolute reason and order, which is similar to the Islamic philosophical and mystical view.

Gödel strongly believed in mathematical realism (Platonism), meaning that mathematical truths exist independently of human minds. He argued that numbers and mathematical principles are real entities that can be discovered rather than invented. His Incompleteness Theorems demonstrated inherent limitations in formal

systems, showing that not all truths in mathematics can be formally proven (Gödel, 1931, pp. 173–198). Regarding religion and metaphysics, Gödel held complex philosophical and theological views. He believed in the existence of God and an underlying rational order in the universe. Notably, he developed a formal ontological proof for God's existence, using logical and mathematical reasoning (Dawson, 1997, p. 142). For Gödel, mathematics reflected the rational and stable order of the universe, which was consistent with his belief in a logically structured cosmos created by God. He expressed his religious-philosophical ideas primarily through mathematics and logic, rather than through personal or mystical religious experience (Dawson, 1997, p. 145).

5) Roger Bacon (1219–1292)

He considered mathematics to study the laws of nature and interpret reason. In the dimly lit halls of a 13th-century English monastery, a young scholar named Roger Bacon bent over his manuscripts, quill in hand, pondering the mysteries of the universe. For him, numbers and geometric forms were not mere abstractions; they were the language in which God Himself had written the cosmos. He believed that to understand the natural world through mathematics was to peer into the mind of the Creator (Bacon, 1267; Lindberg, 1992, p. 145). Bacon urged his contemporaries to look beyond blind acceptance and to observe, measure, and calculate, for he held that empirical investigation, guided by mathematical reasoning, could illuminate the hidden order of creation. To study arithmetic, geometry, or optics was, in his view, a deeply spiritual endeavor, a way to honor the divine wisdom embedded in nature. Mathematics, therefore, was not merely a tool for solving worldly problems; it was a sacred key to unlocking the patterns by which God governed the universe (Lindberg, 1992, p. 148).

6) Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543)

Copernicus presented the heliocentric theory with precise

mathematical calculations. He regarded mathematics as the essential tool for understanding the structure of the cosmos. Through careful astronomical calculations and geometric reasoning, he demonstrated that the planets, including Earth, revolve around the Sun, rather than the Sun revolving around the Earth (Copernicus, 1543; Gingerich, 2004, p. 57). For Copernicus, the precise order of planetary motion reflected the wisdom and harmony of God's creation. Studying mathematics and astronomy was, therefore, not merely a scientific pursuit but a way to uncover the divine laws governing the universe. Despite potential conflicts with the Church's traditional geocentric view, Copernicus emphasized that scientific investigation and religious faith could coexist, as both sought understanding of God's creation (Gingerich, 2004, p. 60).

7) **Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz** (1646–1716)

Leibniz believed that God created the world based on logic and mathematics. He viewed mathematics as a fundamental tool for understanding the universe and its divine order. He believed that the cosmos was created in perfect harmony by God, and that mathematical principles provide the language through which humans can comprehend this rational design (Leibniz, 1710; Rescher, 1991, p. 45). Leibniz introduced the Principle of Sufficient Reason, asserting that nothing occurs without a reason, and developed the concept of pre-established harmony, according to which mind, body, and nature are perfectly coordinated from the outset. This framework demonstrated, for Leibniz, the wisdom and rationality of God's creation (Garber, 1995, p. 78). For him, studying mathematics and logic was not merely an intellectual exercise but a way to uncover the rational and divine structure of reality, bringing humans closer to an understanding of God's order in the universe (Rescher, 2000, p. 52).

8) Johannes Kepler (1571–1630)

Johannes Kepler believed that God had created the universe according to mathematical harmony. For him, studying the laws of planetary motion was equivalent to reading the “language of God” inscribed in the cosmos. He wrote that geometry is one of the eternal patterns of God and that mathematical beauty reveals divine design (Kepler, 1997, p. 85).

9) René Descartes (1596–1650)

René Descartes, the founder of analytical geometry, argued that the certainty and clarity of mathematical reasoning reflected God’s perfection. In *Meditations on First Philosophy*, he explained that mathematical truth depends on the existence of a benevolent and non-deceptive God, who endowed human reason with the capacity to discern truth through logic and mathematics (Descartes, 1996, pp. 45–47).

10) Isaac Newton (1642–1727)

Isaac Newton’s views on mathematics and religion were both fascinating and distinctive. He was not only a prominent mathematician and physicist but also deeply religious. Newton believed that the universe was created by God with order and regularity, and that natural laws, such as the laws of motion and gravity, reflected divine will. He considered mathematics to be the primary tool for discovering this order (Westfall 1993, p. 301). He maintained that God was the ultimate cause of all things, and that the laws of physics demonstrated divine wisdom and providence (Dobbs, 1975, p.123). For Newton, the study of mathematics and natural sciences was not only a scientific endeavor but also a form of rational worship, as understanding the laws of the universe allowed humans to perceive God’s greatness and wisdom (Hall, 1992, p. 45).

In other words, Newton regarded mathematics as a means to

comprehend God and divine order, and he believed that understanding natural laws deepened one's appreciation of faith and religion.

11) Leonhard Euler (1707–1783)

Leonhard Euler, one of the most prolific mathematicians in history, was also deeply religious. In *Letters to a German Princess*, he argued that the harmony of mathematical laws in nature testified to divine wisdom. Euler wrote that “the study of mathematics is the study of the works of God,” linking the pursuit of science directly with faith (Euler 1795, 14).

12) Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777–1855)

Although Carl Friedrich Gauss rarely discussed religion in his public writings, his private letters show that he perceived the beauty and order of mathematics as manifestations of divine reason. For Gauss, mathematical harmony was not a human invention but a reflection of the rational structure embedded in creation (Dunnington, 2004, p. 278).

From Kepler to Newton, and from Descartes to Euler and Gauss, these thinkers perceived mathematics as a sacred language—a bridge between human intellect and divine truth. To them, mathematical discovery was not merely an intellectual pursuit but a form of devotion: a rational act of deciphering the laws through which God governs the universe.

Thus, both Muslim and non-Muslim scientists believed in the importance of order, number, and mathematics in understanding the world, but Muslims attribute this order directly to the wisdom and existence of God, while non-Muslims often attribute it to universal reason, the laws of nature, or cosmic harmony. Mathematics in the modern West, after *Rennes*, as an independent scientific analysis, but

many Western philosophers still consider it a tool for understanding the order of the world and divine thought:

5. The perspective of Indian and Eastern thinkers

Mathematics in ancient India was more than a tool for calculation; it was a means of understanding the natural and spiritual laws of the world. The texts of the Vedas and the Shalva Sutras show that geometry and numbers were used in religious rituals and astronomical calculations (Joseph, 2011), and mathematical concepts were seen as tools for understanding the cosmic order.

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Theosophia Islamica

5.1. Sacred numbers and ratios

In Samkhya and Yoga philosophy, numbers and ratios are cosmic symbols. Specific ratios, such as the golden ratio, are interpreted as reflecting the order of the universe and the harmony between its components. Accurate astronomical and calendrical calculations had not only practical applications, but were also tied to religious rituals and the timing of sacred occasions (Sarasvati Amma, 1999, pp. 20-60).

5.2 . Mathematics and astronomy

Ancient Indian astronomy determined the movements of the planets and the sun based on precise mathematical calculations. These calculations were used in religious calendars and rituals, and showed that understanding the order of the universe required mathematical tools. Thus, mathematics in ancient India was naturally intertwined with religion and philosophy.

5.3 . Spiritual analysis

Numbers were seen not only as a means of counting but also as spiritual symbols and a means of understanding the levels of existence.

This view later influenced Islamic thought and Eastern mystical philosophy, paving the way for the development of mathematical and theological thought in the Islamic world.

6. The relationship between mysticism and numbers in the works of Ibn Arabi and Suhrawardi

In Islamic mysticism, number and ratios are not only quantitative concepts but also symbols of existential levels and the manifestation of divine unity in plurality:

1) Number as a symbol of existence

In the works of Ibn Arabi, especially in *Al-Futuhāt Al-Makkiyyah* and *Fusūs Al-Hikam*, number is a symbol of the levels of manifestation of truth. He says:

“Al-Wahid la yasadr anhu illa al-Wahid”

(Nothing emanates from the One except the One)

However, since the unity of truth is manifested in various mirrors, plurality arises; this plurality appears in the form of numbers.

Number one (1) → Divine Essence (absolute, unique and indivisible existence)

Number two (2) → First manifestation; the emergence of the relationship between the Creator and the creature (the first intellect)

Number three (3) → The relationship between unity and plurality; that is, the world of example

Number four (4) → A symbol of the four elements and material balance

And the number ten (10) is the end of the complete cycle of

manifestation (because the return to the one is at a higher level).

Ibn Arabi says:

“Every number testifies to the one, and every multiplicity returns to him.”

That is, every number testifies to the oneness, and every multiplicity returns to him. In his view, numbers are the symbolic language of the universe; for this reason, in theoretical mysticism, numerical analysis (for example, the ratio of divine names and the levels of existence) is a tool for understanding monotheism. In the thought of Ibn Arabi and his commentators, the levels of existence begin with “one” and are manifested in numerical levels up to “ten.” These numbers are a symbol of the levels of intellect, soul, nature, and matter. In his book, Suhrawardi considers existence to be levels of the lights of Cairo and Nazla, and he attributes a mathematical order and sequence to these levels (Suhrawardi, 1978). He writes:

“The whole light is above the light, To the light of lights.”

(Every light has a light above it to reach the light of lights)

This series of lights can be expressed in both logical and numerical structures

Light of lights → real unit

Abstract lights → rational order (like the ranks of natural numbers)

Contemplated and descending lights → material multiplicities (the tangible world)

In Suhrawardi’s mysticism, the relationship between lights is like geometric and numerical relationships; he even sometimes uses

the expression “light proportion” which is very similar to the concept of proportion in mathematics.

Consequently, in both schools (Ibn Arabi and Suhrawardi), number and relationship are a code of the series of existence — and mathematical order is a reflection of the light and divine order.

2) Number in poetry and mysticism

Maulvi, Attar and Hallaj have repeatedly used number to express the code of unity

Numbers went and the numberless remained its companion

Numbers were a role and that meeting It remained

In their view, mathematics is not the antithesis of mysticism, but its coded language; because every ratio and proportion in the world is a sign of divine balance and justice.

Rumi and numerical poetry

In his Masnavi, Rumi repeatedly considers number as a code of monotheism

These numbers reminded him of Ahad

Because they came from Ahad, they went forth

That is, numbers (plurality) are actually a reminder of Ahad (unity), because they came from Him.

Or in another place he says:

One by one passed until it became countless

That one remained and in him remained Ahad

Rumi says that a human being who seeks must pass through number (plurality) to reach "numerosity" which is divine unity. He

considers number as an allegory of the steps of the journey and path

In the Quran, mysticism, and Islamic philosophy, number and order are not merely computational concepts, but rather a sign of God's presence in the structure of the world. In the view of Allamah Tabataba'i, mathematics is the language of God's intellect in creation. In the view of Ibn Arabi and Rumi, mathematics is the melody of God's unity in plurality, and both come together in one truth. The world is a "divine numerical book", the intellect reads it, the heart sees it.

7. Islamic philosophy and mathematics

7.1. Ibn Sina and rational analysis

Ibn Sina (980–1037) considered mathematics to be a means of connecting the sensible and the intelligible. He explains that mathematics, with its abstract concepts, is a means of understanding the laws of the world and ultimately of knowing God (Ibn Sina, 1320, p. 56). In his view, the mathematician approaches the order of creation by analyzing numerical and geometric laws.

7.1.1. Reason and mathematics

In his philosophy, Ibn Sina considers reason to be the main tool for understanding the world. He believes that mathematics and geometry are abstract expressions of reason for understanding beings and the order of the universe. Mathematics is a means of understanding the natural and divine order, because reason discovers the truth of beings through concepts and relationships (Ibn Sina, 1027, pp. 11-12).

7.1.2. Relationship with religion

Ibn Sina distinguishes between reason and revelation, but considers them complementary.

Reason: to understand the cause and natural laws and the order of the world.

Revelation and religion: to guide man to morality and ultimate happiness and to understand the sublime truths that reason alone may not be able to reach.

Thus, mathematics is not only a rational science, but also a tool for understanding the signs of divine order in the world. He considers the order and proportion of beings to be a sign of God's wisdom.

7.1.3. Mathematics and natural philosophy

Avicenna used geometry and mathematics in natural philosophy (physics and metaphysics) to explain the proportions and relationships in the movement and formation of the world. He believed that the mathematical order in the universe was a sign of active reason (aql fayyil) and divine wisdom.

7.2. Omar Khayyam (1048-1141)

Reason, mathematics, and religion can have different combinations and lead humans to a precise understanding of the world and divine wisdom.

Mathematics and astronomy	→	tools for understanding the divine order in the world.
Calendar and timing	→	practical and religious needs of man.

7.2.1. Mathematics and astronomy

Omar Khayyam considered mathematics to be an accurate tool for astronomical calculations and calendaring. He reformed the Jalali calendar based on accurate astronomical calculations, which indicated

the cosmic order and the need for mathematical calculations to understand the order of the world. This reform of the calendar was both scientifically accurate and important for adjusting the times of religious worship and ceremonies (Rashed, 2000, pp. 87-90).

7.2.2. Geometry and algebra

In algebra and solving cubic equations, Khayyam showed that mathematics is a rational tool for understanding the structure and order of the world. Using geometric methods, he showed that every mathematical problem has a logical and orderly solution that can help us understand the world.

7.2.3. Philosophy and worldview

In his Rubaiyat, Khayyam addresses the theme of order, the transience of the world, and the unity of existence, which is in line with Islamic mystical and philosophical views. He saw mathematics as a tool for rational understanding of the order of the world and connecting humans to divine wisdom.

7.3. Khwaja Nasiruddin Tusi (1201-1274)

Tusi considered mathematics to be the key to understanding astronomy and natural philosophy. In (Tusi, 1981; Tusi, 1986), he showed that the mathematical and celestial order reflected divine wisdom. He regarded mathematics as an essential tool for understanding the order and harmony of the universe. He believed that mathematical and geometric studies were not merely practical sciences but also means of intellectual and spiritual insight, allowing humans to perceive the wisdom and power of God (Tusi, 1990; Nasr, 1993, p. 112). Tusi's work in astronomy, particularly at the Maragheh observatory, demonstrated

that the motions of planets and stars could be described through precise mathematical laws, reflecting divine order. For him, the study of mathematics and natural sciences constituted a form of scientific worship, as uncovering the laws of creation brought humans closer to understanding God's greatness (Dallal, 1999, p. 87). In Tusi's philosophy, reason and religion were harmonized: mathematics served as a bridge between intellectual inquiry and spiritual knowledge, emphasizing that the pursuit of knowledge could deepen both scientific understanding and religious insight (Nasr, 1993, p. 114).

7.4. Jamshid Ghiyasuddin Kashani (1380-1436)

Ghiyas-ud-Din Kashani was a pioneer in geometry and algebra. Kashani analyzed quadratic and cubic equations and considered mathematics as a tool for understanding the divine order.

7.5. Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870–950)

Abu Nasr al-Farabi, the renowned Islamic philosopher, addressed the relationship between mathematics and religion in his philosophical works. Although his approach is primarily philosophical and rational, rather than empirical, he regarded mathematics as a key tool for understanding the ordered structure of the universe, which reflects divine wisdom (Farabi, 2001a, pp.152–155). Farabi argued that mathematics provides the rational means to apprehend cosmic order and harmony. He believed that the universe follows a logical arrangement that can be comprehended through mathematical sciences such as arithmetic and geometry. This logical order, according to Farabi, mirrors the wisdom of God, and thus, mathematical knowledge facilitates a deeper understanding of the divine (Farabi, 1982, pp. 78–81). Moreover, Farabi emphasized the educational role of mathematics. He considered

the study of mathematics essential for cultivating rational thought and philosophical reasoning, which are necessary for grasping religious principles and divine wisdom. Mathematics, therefore, is not merely a scientific discipline but also a moral and spiritual tool that strengthens intellectual faculties and religious understanding (Gutas, 1998, pp. 212–215). In his works on happiness (Farabi, 1995) and philosophical doctrines (Farabi, 2001b), Farabi further maintained that knowledge of numbers, geometry, and astronomy enables humans to comprehend the principles of creation and divine order, thereby deepening one's belief in the unity and wisdom of God (Farabi, 1995, pp. 45–49).

In summary, Farabi viewed mathematics not only as a scientific endeavor but as a complementary path to religion, providing rational insight into the divine order of the universe and assisting in the intellectual and spiritual development of human beings.

8. Muslim mathematicians and the application of religion

8.1. Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi (780-845)

Al-Khwarizmi was the founder of algebra and algorithms. His works on the calculation of khums, zakat, and astronomical problems show that mathematics in Islamic civilization was tied to religion and the practical affairs of society (Bergern, 1986, p. 45).

8.2. Abu Raihan Biruni (973–1048)

Abu Rayhan -Biruni regarded mathematics and astronomy as essential tools for understanding the order of the universe and the laws of nature. He demonstrated that studying mathematics and astronomy was not only a scientific pursuit but also a philosophical and spiritual path toward comprehending God's wisdom and power (Biruni, 1946; Nasr, 1993, p. 125). For Biruni, the study of mathematics and natural

sciences allowed humans to perceive the precise order of the cosmos and the harmony among created entities, reflecting the governance of the universe by a wise and just God. He emphasized that such studies are compatible with religion and philosophy, guiding humans toward deeper reflection on creation and the Creator (Nasr, 1993, p. 127).

8.3. Ibn Haytham (965-1040)

In optics and geometry, Ibn Haytham considered mathematical analysis a means of understanding the divine order (Ibn Haytham, 1989).

8.4. Allameh Hassanzadeh Amoli

In the contemporary era, Hassanzadeh Amoli also considers mathematics as a means to discover divine wisdom and links the rational analysis of the order of the world with religious teachings (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1983, pp. 212-14).

9. The role of religion in the emergence and development of Islamic mathematics

In the history of Islamic civilization, religion was not only not an obstacle to the growth of science, but was one of its main drivers, especially in mathematics.

9.1. Religious motivations

- 1) Calculations of the direction of the Qibla and prayer times required spherical astronomy and trigonometry.
- 2) The lunar calendar and the month of Ramadan led to the development of astronomical calculations.
- 3) Jurisprudential issues such as inheritance, wills, and zakat led to the formation of the science of algebra (in the works of Al-Khwarizmi).

9.2. Mathematics as worship

Scholars such as Abu Rayhan al-Biruni and Nasir al-Din al-Tusi believed that understanding the order of the universe was a form of worship, because through understanding order, man came to know the Creator of order.

In the introduction to *Tahrir al-Euclid*, Tusi wrote:

“The science of geometry guides the soul towards truth, for reason finds peace in its order.”

9.3. Art and sacred geometry

- 1) In Islamic architecture, geometry is not just a decoration, but also a manifestation of monotheism in matter.
- 2) The repetitive and symmetrical patterns in mosques express unity in plurality.
- 3) Specific numbers (4, 8, 12) often symbolize the levels of the universe or divine attributes.

10. Analysis of contemporary mystics and sages

10.1. Allamah Tabataba'i's commentary on mathematical order in the verses of the Quran

Allama Tabataba'i (1281–1381 AH) believes in his commentary on *Al-Mizan* that understanding the order of the world is not possible without rational and mathematical understanding. He considers mathematics as a tool for analyzing order and creation and believes that number and ratio are manifestations of divine unity and wisdom (Tabataba'i, 1983, p. 45).

Another view is superficially different from the previous one—one intuitive and the other rational-interpretive—but deep down,

both point to the same truth: that the world is built on order, number, and proportion, and that this order is a sign of divine monotheism. In his commentary on al-Mizan, Allama Tabataba'i repeatedly emphasizes that the Quran refers to a "precise and calculated order" in the universe. He sees order not as a coincidence but as a sign of divine wisdom, and he sees the human intellect as capable of understanding this order.

Verses related to order and measure

One of the axes of Allamah's commentary is the noble verse: Indeed, we have created everything with a measure. (Quran, 54: 49).

In his commentary on this verse, Allamah says: What is meant by "Qadr" is a specific system that is present in all beings; this system is the law of proportion and balance that the intellect understands mathematically. In fact, in his view, "Qadr" = the numerical and mathematical law of creation. For this reason, any small change in this system causes corruption of the whole (a close reference to the concept of "cosmic constants" in modern science).

Verses related to balance and equilibrium

In the interpretation of the verse: "And the heavens He raised and set the balance" (Quran: 55:7).

Allamah says: Balance means measurement, balance and precise order in the relationships of existence, and this balance is what reason abstracts mathematical and physical principles from. According to him, the divine balance in the Quran is what appears in science in the form of laws and ratios. Therefore: Both knowledge and faith are united in the interpretation of "balance". Science says that ratios are precise, faith says that this precision is from the wisdom of

God. Allamah Tabataba'i points out in places in Quranic exegesis and Principles of Philosophy that the world is like a "mathematical book" whose verses are read to reason. Every being in this book is in a specific relationship with other beings; And these ratios are the same numerical and structural relationships that the empirical and mathematical sciences describe. According to Allama: the world is the diagram of a divine equation, and the rational human being is the interpreter of this equation. The result in one sentence: in mysticism, number is the code for the presence of God; in Allama's philosophy, it is the proof of the existence of God.

Mysticism and philosophy appear to have two different languages. Mysticism is the language of the heart and intuition. Philosophy is the language of reason and proof. But both seek to understand the same truth. That the world is built on ratios, measurements, and precise order, and this order is a reflection of divine wisdom and unity. In mathematics, this order is expressed in the form of numbers and relationships; in religion, in the form of quantity and measure; and in mysticism, in the form of manifestation and levels of existence.

Number and order are signs of God's presence in the structure of the world. In the mystic's view, mathematics is the song of monotheism; in Allama's view, it is the proof of monotheism.

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, are signs for those endowed with understanding" (Quran, 3: 190).

It says that the amazing order in phenomena indicates the existence of a rational principle, and the human intellect can reach monotheism by contemplating this order.

Allamah says in his commentary:

The alternating order of night and day indicates the precise proportion of celestial movements. Every temporal and spatial relationship in the universe is numerical, and the intellect understands the divine order from it, and concludes that the number in creation is a sign of its rationality; and this rationality is the proof of the existence of the divine intellect behind the system of the universe. In his works, including Quranic exegesis and Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism, Allamah Tabataba'i considers reason to be one of the divine arguments and considers it a tool for understanding the order of the world and discovering the truth (Tabataba'i, 1987, p. 52). Reason operates in two ways:

- 1) Understanding axioms, such as mathematical principles including equality and non-contradiction
- 2) Deducing arguments to discover the relationships between beings

Mathematics for Allamah is not only a tool for calculation, but also a mirror of the order of existence that guides human reason to recognize absolute truths. He also considers mathematical concepts to be related to external realities and believes that the human mind abstracts mathematical concepts from the quantity and quantity in beings (Tabataba'i, 1987, p. 115).

10.2. Hassanzadeh Amoli

Hassanzadeh Amoli's work on the relationship between religion, mathematics, and the order of the world is also noteworthy. In his works, especially in his mathematical treatises and seminary courses, he has pointed out the importance of mathematics in understanding the

evolutionary order of the world. For example, in a treatise published in 1983, he examined mathematical and geometric issues and showed how these sciences can give humans a better understanding of the structure and order of the world. Also, in his seminary courses, which he taught in 111 sessions at the Qom Seminary, he addressed topics such as Qiblahology, equinoxes and waning moons, and other issues related to mathematics and astronomy. He believed that mathematics, especially in areas related to seminary, is essential for every religious scholar and can be a suitable tool for a more accurate understanding of verses and narrations related to time, Qiblah, and crescent. In this regard, Allameh Hassanzadeh Amoli believed that mathematics and natural sciences, along with philosophy and mysticism, can help humans achieve a deeper understanding of the divine order and the origin of existence. By combining these sciences, he attempted to present a comprehensive and harmonious picture of the world in which religion, reason, intuition, and science simultaneously serve the understanding of truth. Hassanzadeh Amoli, from a philosophical and mystical perspective, considers mathematics as a language for expressing truth and the order of existence. He believes that mathematical analysis facilitates human understanding of the laws of creation and divine verses, and mathematics is considered a form of rational worship (Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1983).

To strengthen contemporary relevance, the paper incorporates insights from modern Islamic thinkers, particularly Allameh Hassanzadeh Amoli. His analyses are used to illustrate how classical Islamic metaphysical and mathematical thought continues to inform current interpretations of unity, order, and divine manifestation within mathematical reasoning.

11. Adaptive analysis

The table below shows an example of matching views:

Philosopher/ Mathematician	Period	Key Perspective
Pythagoras	Ancient Greece	Sacred numbers, cosmic order
Plato	Ancient Greece	The geometric world, the language of God
Aristotle	Ancient Greece	Mathematics, the mediator between reason and the tangible
Al-Khwarizmi	Islam	Islam: Al-Jabr, a practical and religious tool
Ibn Sina	Islam	Mathematics, the medium between the tangible and the reasonable
Khayyam	Islam	Analyzing equations, discovering hidden order
Tusi	Islam	Analyzing equations, discovering hidden order
Allameh Tabataba'i	Contemporary	Mathematics, a tool for understanding order and unity
Hassanzadeh Amoli	Contemporary	Mathematics, a means of understanding truth and rational worship
Leibniz	Modern West	The world was created based on logic and mathematics
Copernicus	Modern west	Mathematical calculations to understand cosmic laws
Johannes Kepler	1571–1630	Saw mathematical harmony as divine order; believed studying the heavens reveals God's geometric plan

Philosopher/ Mathematician	Period	Key Perspective
René Descartes	1596–1650	Considered mathematics the model of clear and certain knowledge grounded in God's perfection
Blaise Pascal	1623–1662	Valued reason and mathematics but held that faith transcends rational proof; "the heart has its reasons."
Isaac Newton	1642–1727	Viewed mathematical laws as expressions of divine governance; studying nature was a form of worship

The comparative discussion now systematically examines the views of Plato, Ibn Arabi, Leibniz, and Mulla Sadra. While Plato's philosophy emphasizes the ontological reality of mathematical forms as a reflection of cosmic order, Ibn Arabi interprets numerical and geometrical patterns as expressions of divine unity, linking the structure of mathematics directly to the manifestation of the Absolute. Leibniz's perspective highlights the pre-established harmony and rationality embedded in the universe through mathematical logic, whereas Mulla Sadra integrates metaphysical concepts such as the primacy of existence and the gradation of being to interpret mathematical structures as signs of the divine order.

12. Conclusion

Historical and philosophical analysis shows that the connection between religion and mathematics is intrinsic and fundamental. In ancient Greece, mathematics was presented as the language of God; in India, it was a tool for understanding cosmic order and religious rituals; in the Islamic world, mathematicians and philosophers considered mathematics as a means of understanding divine wisdom;

and in the modern West, mathematics remains the language of nature and a tool for understanding the order of the world.

The main conclusion is that although the approaches and applications have been different, the common axis of all these ideas is the "search for order, unity and truth". Therefore, mathematics is not only an abstract and instrumental science, but also a tool for realizing reason and faith and understanding the wisdom of creation.

The conclusion moves beyond a descriptive summary, highlighting that mathematics in Islamic thought functions as a tool to express and confirm divine unity (tawhid). By juxtaposing Islamic and Western philosophical frameworks, the paper shows that while Western traditions may emphasize abstract mathematical realism, Islamic perspectives integrate mathematics as a means of perceiving the inherent order of creation and its connection to the divine. This analytical synthesis underscores the paper's contribution to understanding the interplay between mathematics, metaphysics, and theology across different intellectual traditions.

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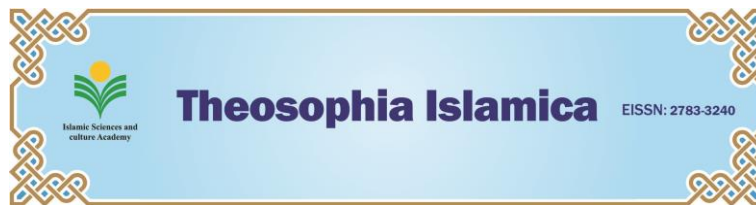
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The Journey of Science Path: Wisdom, Cognitive Power, and the Epistemological Integration of Artificial Intelligence*

Kenan Peker 

Professor, Department of Business Administration, Production and Marketing Management Division,
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Furat University, Iraq.
profkenanpeker@gmail.com

Abstract

This study constructs a comprehensive epistemological and ontological framework, termed the "Munzur Path of Science," to bridge the conceptual and systemic divide between *culture* and *wisdom*, and between *ilm* (sacred or holistic knowledge) and modern *science*. Drawing on classical Eastern philosophy and Sufi intellectual heritage, and contemporary systems theory, we outline an eleven-stage lifelong intellectual career that guides the individual toward the paradigm of the Perfected Human (*Insān-i Kāmil*).

We deconstruct this journey through five foundational dimensions of human life: *Biography*, *Bibliography*, *Biomimicry*, *Biometric Analysis*, and *Biopower*. Furthermore, this paper addresses the modern technological landscape by positioning Cognitive Power as the ultimate

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layer of Managerial Competence in the era of pervasive Artificial Intelligence (AI). We argue that Natural Intelligence (NI) must not yield to artificial networks; rather, through rigorous mental cultivation, it must guide and ethicalize technological tools to generate high socioeconomic added value and ensure that human leadership remains sovereign.

Keywords

Munzur Path of Science, Ilm, Cognitive Power, Insān-i Kāmil, Artificial Intelligence, Biopower, Epistemic Synthesis.

1. Introduction

1.1. The Dialectic of Culture and Wisdom

The geopolitical and intellectual history of human thought has often been bifurcated by cultural and geographical delineations (Bayly, 2023). It is widely asserted that "*the West is the homeland of culture, while the East is the homeland of wisdom.*" However, this paper posits that **Reason** operates as the universal, singular force capable of navigating the path from culture to wisdom. This transition is governed by the universal ethical axiom: "*The best of people is the one who is most beneficial to others.*"

West culture is material operational where east culture is wisdom such as spiritual ontological (Silova et al., 2020). The best culture is universal reason wisdom (Hikmah Irfan). The human journey involves the systemic discovery, transmission, and transformation of local cultures into global intellectual wealth (knowledge) (Ikram et al., 2024). Concurrently, it demands the engineering of lasting, culturally grounded solutions to complex social crises. Within this matrix, reason functions not merely as an analytical apparatus, but as a vital, driving life force a form of **bio-power and bioenergy** that guides humanity through the complex fusion of historical cultural heritage and enlightened contemporary understanding.

Despite this innate capacity, modern discourse suffers from deep conceptual confusion regarding the definitions and boundaries of the *Wise Person*, *Ilm* (holistic/sacred knowledge), *Science*, *Scientist*, *Knowledgeable*, *Intellectual*, and *Scholar of Ilm (Ilim Erbabı)*. This semantic fragmentation causes individuals to form opinions without acquiring true, validated knowledge. Consequently, while academic institutions frequently discuss transforming knowledge into high socioeconomic added value, the practical opportunity to capture this

value is routinely lost due to a lack of structural integration (Pee and Vululleh, 2020).

1.2. Epistemological Disintegration vs. The Science Continuum

To understand this current fragmentation, we reflect on the profound statement attributed to Imam Ali: "*Knowledge was a single point, but the ignorant multiplied it.*" This insight underscores how modern academic specialization has isolated disciplines from one another. By over-fractionalizing knowledge, contemporary frameworks have neglected crucial foundational fields like Folklore Studies and localized cultural roots. Modern disciplinary fragmentation is like leaves broken branches without a trunk that need systemic disconnect for the core unified tree of ILM that Roots in cultural folklore, reaching to the heavens (Bronner, 2025).

The potential to generate knowledge from deep roots to the heavens and to convert it into high added value remains stunted (Zohar et al., 2000). The contemporary "Tree of Science," though branching and flourishing outwardly, lacks a unified internal structure. As a result, the artificial distinction drawn between *ilm* (holistic, inner, and ethical understanding) and *science* (empirical, outer, and quantifiable methodology) divides what should be seen as an unbroken continuum of human comprehension. This study asserts that empirical science and sacred *ilm* are not contradictory; they are complementary dimensions of a unified epistemic spectrum.

2. Literature Review and Study Objectives

The west is the homeland of culture where East is wisdom (Stark, 2023). Reason, on the other hand is the only power id biopower, bioenergy with understanding that the best of people is the one who is beneficial to human in the march from culture to wisdom, which is expressed as

the discovery, transfer, transformation of cultures into cultural riches (knowledge) (Khusnial, and Zailani, 2024).

The study supports the bridge between Ilim (ILM) and modern science as Human-i Perfect model. The conception of the perfect man in the Alevi-Bektashi Tradition and its social response described. Examines gradual maturation processes such as “Four Doors and Forty Makams” in Alevi-Bektashi thought and its transformation into social/individual wisdom. It provides a historical basis for the 11 stage lifelong intellectual career model constructed in this study unique. Compares the concept of the Perfect Man with the technological human (Homo Deus) models offered by digital anthropology. Against the risk of technology mechanizing human beings, it is an excellent reference to carry the moral and spiritual guidance of the Perfect Human into the digital age (Latzer, 2026).

It deals with Michel Foucault’s Biopower theory. It helps you reconcile how people manage their own physical, mental and vital energy (biopower) in their intellectual career with systems theory (Fauziah, 2026). Artificial Intelligence and its impacts on humans as rational beings scope; examines the threats of technology and data analytics (biometric analysis) on human ontology and how they transform the rational /biographical essence of human beings at a philosophical (epistemological and axiological) level.

Pahari et al. (2025) compares the human brain’s power of holistic comprehension (science), ethical reasoning and creativity with the data processing speed of artificial intelligence. It provides biological and cognitive evidence as to why leadership should remain in humans (Natural Intelligence).

In this study, synthesis of Eastern wisdom and western rationality explain as epistemological integration & systems theory.

The stages of the perfect human (Insan-I Kamil, 11 stages) described self - actualization & homo deus criticism as the moral and spiritual against digitalization. Biopower & Biometrics Foucault Theory & biopolitics self-control and sovereignty in the age of technological surveillance explained as **Biography, Bibliography, Biomimicry, Biometric Analysis, and Biopower** within the framework of the *Munzur Path of Science*. Cognitive power (NI vs AI) explained as cognitive offloading & cognitive psychology ethical management of artificial intelligence and human leadership.

3. The Munzur Science Path

3.1. The 11-Stage Lifelong Career Toward the Perfected Human

This study establishes a systematic roadmap for advancing toward the **Perfected Human (*Insān-i Kāmil*)**, a lifelong intellectual and spiritual progression that remains independent of one's chronological age. This continuum is built upon eleven sequential, evolutionary stages of cognitive and spiritual maturity:

1. **Faith (*Iman*):** The foundational baseline of baseline trust, ontological security, and core purpose.
2. **Islam (*Submission/Order*):** The structural alignment of behaviour with universal ethical laws.
3. **Sincerity (*Ikhlas*):** The purification of intent, ensuring actions are free from external corruption.
4. **Reason (*Aql*):** The activation of logical inquiry and analytical evaluation.
5. **Thought (*Fikr*):** The structured process of deep mental reflection and hypothesis generation.
6. **Logic (*Mantiq*):** The operational verification of thoughts

through formal cognitive structures.

7. **Intelligence (Zaka):** The dynamic capacity to process complex datasets and adapt to changing environments.
8. **Judgment (Muhakeme):** The ethical and pragmatic capacity to weigh alternatives and predict long-term outcomes.
9. **Ilm (Holistic Knowledge):** The integration of empirical science with moral and philosophical truth. Reaching this ninth stage marks the transition into a true **Scholar of Ilm**.
10. **Wisdom (Hikmah):** The practical application of *ilm* to solve human challenges and restore societal equilibrium.
11. **Enlightened Insight (Irfan):** The highest state of experiential, trans-rational awareness and unity of knowledge.

This path mirrors the classical stages of transformation articulated by Rumi: "*I was raw, I cooked, I burned.*" It redefines intellectual growth not as a static academic job, but as an existential, lifelong career structured around five essential bio-components of human experience.

4. The 21-Step Wise Person Matrix: The First Five Bio-Components

The broader trajectory toward becoming a Wise Person is organized as a strict **21-step matrix**. The first five steps form the vital foundation, providing the principles and methodology needed to transform the self:

[1. Biography] —► [2. Bibliography] —► [3. Biomimicry] —►
[4. Biometric Analysis] —► [5. Biopower]

(Lived Exp.) (Intellectual Debt) (Nature's Design)
(Quantifiable Impact) (Ethical Lead)

I. Biography (Lived Experience and Narrative Identity)

The individual must critically evaluate their own life narrative, recognizing how their personal history, cultural background, and geographic origins shape their worldview (Flake and Lubin, 2024). This stage involves transforming personal lived experience into a conscious starting point for scientific inquiry.

II. Bibliography (Intellectual Debt and Literary Literacy)

An exhaustive commitment to reading, writing, and analyzing the recorded knowledge of humanity. The scholar mappings their intellectual debt by mastering existing texts, thereby ensuring that their future publications build directly upon validated theoretical foundations.

III. Biomimicry (Inspiration from Natural Systems)

The systematic observation of nature as the ultimate laboratory of optimal design. The researcher looks to biological systems to solve complex mechanical, organizational, and social problems, recognizing that nature has spent millennia optimizing efficiency and balance.

IV. Biometric Analysis (Quantifiable Contribution and Impact Metrics)

The transition from qualitative thought to empirical verification. The scholar must subject their work to rigorous mathematical and biometric testing, measuring their exact scientific contributions through clear, verifiable impact indicators.

V. Biopower (Ethical Leadership and Systemic Influence)

The culmination of the first five stages, where individual knowledge transforms into leadership capacity shown in Table 1. Here, biopower

is redefined as the deployment of an individual's internal intellectual and ethical energy to humanize systems, motivate communities, and direct organizational progress (Fleming, 2022).

Table 1. The culmination of the first five stages of Biopower

5. The Era of Artificial Intelligence: Cultivating Cognitive Power

In the contemporary landscape, professional and academic development is traditionally driven by three pillars: **Managerial Competence, Subject-Matter Expertise, and Technological Proficiency (TP)** (Karanja and Malone, 2022). However, the explosive rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automated neural networks has disrupted this triad. The movement from traditional architecture to cognitive centric future requires technological proficiency, subject matter expertise, and managerial competence for automated AI Systems, Automated Data Processing, and Human Cognitive Power (Lead).

As AI systems become highly capable of automating routine technical tasks and processing massive datasets, Subject-Matter Expertise and basic Technological Proficiency are rapidly becoming commoditized (Pandey et al., 2026). Consequently, this study emphasizes that the ultimate modern differentiator is **Cognitive Power** the ultimate cognitive architecture that serves as the root of true Managerial Competence.

When evaluating global competitiveness, nations and organizations are broadly divided into two categories. These categories are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. The categories of global competitiveness, nations and organizations

Historical and economic data demonstrates that leadership and managerial competence consistently take precedence over raw

technological tools. Therefore, the primary objective of modern educational institutions must be the systematic cultivation of human Cognitive Power.

6. The Sovereignty of Natural Intelligence over Artificial Intelligence

This paper presents a definitive stance on the relationship between human thought and machine automation: **Natural Intelligence (NI) must never yield sovereignty to Artificial Intelligence (AI).**

Human Natural Intelligence is processes ILM, Hikmah, and Irfan that open on exercises conscious Brain Gymnastics (Irshad, 2023). For ethical sovereignty Artificial Intelligence can be used Computational Automation, and Derivate Pattern Recognition.

Individuals must approach advanced AI technologies with the core confidence that the creators and engineers of these computational models are human beings not fundamentally different from themselves (Kidd and Birhane, 2023). AI possesses neither *ilm* (holistic knowledge) nor *hikmah* (wisdom); it is a derivative reflection of human pattern recognition.

To maintain this natural edge, individuals must commit to continuous, deliberate mental exercise **brain gymnastics**. By pushing past lazy thinking, resisting passive information consumption, and working through the rigorous stages of the Munzur Path of Science, human intellect can confidently guide the technological landscape. Empowered by ethical purpose, natural intellect ensures that the technological future serves to humanize society rather than devalue it.

7. Discussion

The present study proposes the “Munzur Path of Science” as an

integrative epistemological framework that seeks to reconnect scientific knowledge, cultural experience, ethical reasoning, and wisdom. Its central contribution is the argument that the fragmentation of contemporary knowledge into increasingly specialized disciplines has created a separation between empirical science, philosophical reflection, cultural memory, and ethical responsibility. This argument is consistent with broader discussions on the historical and cultural organization of knowledge, which emphasize that knowledge production is shaped by social, cultural, and intellectual contexts rather than occurring independently of them (Bayly, 2023). In this respect, the proposed framework extends existing discussions by bringing together empirical science and the concepts of *ilm*, *hikmah*, and *irfan* within a single developmental model.

The eleven-stage developmental pathway proposed in this study, progressing from Faith, Reason, Thought, Logic, Intelligence, and Judgment toward *Ilm*, Wisdom, and *Irfan*, conceptualizes intellectual development as a lifelong process rather than merely a sequence of academic qualifications. This perspective is compatible with humanistic approaches to intellectual and personal development, while extending them through the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the *Insān-i Kāmil* tradition. Recent discussions comparing the *Insān-i Kāmil* with contemporary technological and transhumanist ideals such as *Homo Deus* similarly emphasize the importance of preserving moral and spiritual dimensions of human development in the digital age (Latzer, 2026). The present model therefore reinterprets the *Insān-i Kāmil* as an individual capable of combining scientific competence, ethical judgment, cultural awareness, and social responsibility.

The five components of Biography, Bibliography, Biomimicry, Biometric Analysis, and Biopower provide a complementary structure for operationalizing this intellectual journey. Biography emphasizes

the influence of lived experience, cultural background, and personal identity on knowledge production, consistent with contemporary discussions of cultural identity and positionality in scientific fields (Flake and Lubin, 2024). In this regard, the proposed interpretation of Biopower is related to Foucauldian perspectives on the relationship between power, knowledge, and the management of human capacities, while extending this discussion toward ethical leadership and social benefit (Fleming, 2022).

The framework also contributes to current discussions concerning the relationship between Natural Intelligence (NI) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Although AI systems can process extensive datasets and identify complex patterns, computational capacity should not be equated with wisdom, ethical judgment, or holistic understanding. This distinction is particularly important given concerns that AI systems may influence or distort human beliefs and decision-making processes (Kidd and Birhane, 2023). Furthermore, physiological and cognitive comparisons between the human brain and AI indicate that human cognition involves complex processes of learning, interpretation, creativity, and holistic understanding that cannot be reduced to computational speed alone (Pahari et al., 2025). Accordingly, the concept of Cognitive Power proposed in this study emphasizes the preservation of human critical thinking, creativity, judgment, and ethical decision-making. In this context, AI should primarily function as a tool for cognitive augmentation rather than as a substitute for human responsibility.

The proposed framework is also relevant to current debates concerning the role of universities in transforming knowledge into social and economic value. Although university industry and university society partnerships increasingly emphasize innovation and practical impact, the transformation of knowledge into societal value

requires institutional coordination, interdisciplinary cooperation, and effective knowledge transfer mechanisms (Karanja and Malone, 2022). The Munzur Path of Science contributes to this discussion by connecting lived experience, accumulated knowledge, natural inspiration, empirical evaluation, and ethical leadership within a single conceptual pathway. In addition, its emphasis on folklore and local cultural knowledge suggests that knowledge production should not be limited to formal academic institutions. Cultural memory and local experience can provide important foundations to produce scientifically validated and socially valuable knowledge (Bronner, 2025).

Nevertheless, the proposed framework remains primarily conceptual and requires empirical validation. Future research should develop measurable indicators for Cognitive Power and investigate the relationship between the eleven stages and the five bio-components across different educational, cultural, and professional contexts. In addition, the culturally specific concepts of *ilm*, *hikmah*, *irfan*, and *Insān-i Kāmil* should be examined through intercultural and comparative research. These limitations notwithstanding, the Munzur Path of Science provides a theoretical framework for reconnecting knowledge with ethical responsibility and for positioning human judgment and wisdom at the center of the rapidly evolving relationship between Natural Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence.

Despite the conceptual confusion surrounding terms such as “Wise Person,” “*Ilm*” (sacred knowledge), “Science,” “Scientist,” “Knowledgeable,” “Intellectual,” and “Scholar of *Ilm*” (*Ilim Erbabı*) human beings have always chosen to listen, speak, read, write, imagine, explore, design, and create (Brown, 2025). Yet all too often, people form opinions without acquiring true knowledge. Though there is frequent discussion about transforming knowledge into added value, the opportunity to achieve high added value is often missed (Rauch,

2021).

Moreover, when considering Imam Ali's statement, "Knowledge was a single point, but the ignorant multiplied it," it becomes clear that Folklore Studies is being neglected (Ali, 2024). The potential to generate knowledge from roots to the heavens and to convert it into high added value remains fragmented, as the Tree of Science, though branching and flourishing, lacks a unified structure (Ahmad, 2025). As a result, the distinction often drawn between ilm and science tends to divide what should be seen as a continuum of human understanding.

8. Conclusion: A Vision for a Poverty-Free World

In alignment with Rumi's expression "I was raw, I cooked, I burned" the journey of the wise is here articulated as an eleven-stage life process culminating in the ideal of the Perfected Human. This path, referred to as the "Munzur Path of Science," is framed as a lifelong intellectual and spiritual career toward wisdom, structured around five essential components of a human life:

- Biography (the person's lived experience),
- Bibliography (what they read and write),
- Biomimicry (what inspires them),
- Biometric Analysis (what they contribute), and
- Biopower (their leadership and influence).

These components form the first five stages in the 21-step path to becoming a Wise Person. Each is described in detail as a necessary phase in the transformation of the self. The study provides the foundational principles and methodology for advancing through the first five stages Biography, Bibliography, Biomimicry, Biometric Analysis, and Biopower within the framework of the Munzur Path of

Science.

The journey of science and *ilm* is not an isolated pursuit of academic prestige; it is a vital mission to uplift humanity. By transforming raw local folklore into structured knowledge and passing that knowledge through the 21-step Wise Person framework, the Scholar of Ilm builds a bridge between empirical science and deep spiritual wisdom.

When implemented through cooperative **Civil-University Alliances** and managed through dedicated regional hubs like Civil Society Relations Centres, this model changes how we solve systemic problems. It shifts our focus from short-term fixes to self-sustaining production and circular economies. Ultimately, the Munzur Path of Science offers a clear roadmap to cultivate the Cognitive Power needed to direct advanced technologies, ensuring we build a world where intellectual wealth eliminates structural poverty and no individual is left behind.

9. Highlights

"The West is the homeland of culture; the East, of wisdom."

Reason, however, regardless of East or West stands as the singular force on the path from culture to wisdom, where "the best of people is the one who is most beneficial to others". This journey involves the discovery, transmission, and transformation of cultures into intellectual wealth (knowledge), as well as the development of lasting, culturally grounded solutions to social problems. In this process, reason functions as a vital power *bio-power*, *bio-energy* guiding us through the fusion of cultural heritage and enlightened understanding.

This study focuses on the journey toward becoming the

Perfected Human (Insan-ı Kamil) regardless of one's age or stage in life through the foundational concepts of Faith, Islam, Sincerity (*Ikhlas*), Reason, Thought, Logic, Intelligence, Judgment, *Ilm*, Wisdom (*Hikmah*), and Enlightened Insight (*Irfan*). It proposes that as an individual progresses through these stages while engaging in scientific inquiry, they ultimately reach the ninth stage: becoming a true *Scholar of Ilm*.

In general terms, professional development is understood to comprise three key components: **Managerial Competence**, **Subject-Matter Expertise**, and **Technological Proficiency (TP)**. Given the rapid proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its applications across a wide range of fields, this study places particular emphasis on the principles and methodology required to cultivate what is here termed “**Cognitive Power**” the foundation of *Managerial Competence*.

As AI technologies become increasingly capable of performing tasks across many professions, it is projected that soon, the most critical distinguishing factor will be *human managerial capacity*. Thus, the primary objective becomes the cultivation of *Cognitive Power*. When global competitiveness is assessed in terms of nations that produce advanced technologies and those that demonstrate strong leadership capacities, it becomes evident that *leadership competence consistently takes precedence*. With this in mind, the argument is made that **Natural Intelligence** must not yield to Artificial Intelligence. Instead, individuals are encouraged to approach AI with the confidence that the creators of these systems are not fundamentally different from themselves.

Through sustained **mental exercise**, *brain gymnastics* individuals are called to contribute meaningfully to their own development, their communities, their nations, and to humanity as a whole. This vision affirms that natural intellect, empowered by

confidence and ethical purpose, can not only coexist with but also guide and humanize the technological future.

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Futures Studies of Social Narratives in Cognitive Governance: The Embodied Representation of Narratives in the Nexus of Language, Memory, and Social Policy*

Mehri Firoozalizadeh¹

Mohammad-Hadi Ghasemi²

1. Assistant Professor, Department of English Language, Faculty of Humanities, Tolou-e-Mehr University, Qom, Iran (**Corresponding Author**).

alizadeh.mehri@gmail.com

2. Ph.D. in Futures Studies, Supreme National Defense University, Tehran, Iran.

mh.ghasemi110@ut.ac.ir

Abstract

Narrative is not merely a tool for transmitting experience; rather, it constitutes a cognitive, neurocognitive, social, and cultural mechanism through which human beings construct meaning from their world, identity, and embodied experiences. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach and employing a meta-synthesis methodology, the present study examines the relationship among social narratives, episodic memory, mental spaces, embodied meaning, and cognitive governance, while also analyzing the consequences of the unheard narratives of people in forming social depression. The findings demonstrate that narratives emerge from the interaction of neural networks, episodic

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memory, and conceptualization processes. During the hearing or retelling of narratives, sensory-motor, visual, parietal, and temporal areas of the brain are activated. From this perspective, narrative is not merely the linguistic representation of experience, but rather the neural and mental reconstruction of embodied reality. The article further argues that the gap between the grand narratives of governance and the counter narratives of ordinary people leads to feelings of being unheard, socially forgotten, and deprived of meaning and belonging. Such conditions may foster collective depression, social distrust, and the expansion of cognitive fragmentation within society. Under these circumstances, cognitive governance requires the capacity to hear, analyze, and represent social narratives within policymaking processes.

The study subsequently adopts a futures-oriented perspective to investigate emerging trends in the relationship among technology, media, narrative, and governance. The results indicate that, with the expansion of artificial intelligence, algorithmic media, virtual reality, and cognitive big data, narratives will become the primary arena for shaping social perception and governing the mind. Thus, societies lacking mechanisms for “hearing the narratives of the people” will face intensified cognitive polarization, erosion of social capital, crises of meaning, and increased collective psychological disorders.

Keywords

Cognitive Governance, Futures Studies, Cognitive Narratives, Embodiment, Episodic Memory.

Introduction

Narrative is one of the most fundamental cognitive and social mechanisms through which human beings attribute meaning to the world, represent embodied experiences, and construct both individual and collective identity. From the earliest stages of social life, humans have transmitted their experiences, fears, hopes, and knowledge through stories and narratives. Archaeological evidence suggests that cave paintings, petroglyphs, and oral rituals constituted some of the earliest forms of storytelling in human societies (Gottschall, 2012).

Within Iranian culture as well, storytelling has long been an inseparable aspect of everyday life—from coffeehouse recitations and readings of the *Shahnameh* to folk tales, lullabies, and family narratives passed down through generations (Azar, 2008). These narratives were not merely forms of entertainment or channels for transmitting information; rather, they provided a foundation for empathy, experience transmission, emotional regulation, and the preservation of social cohesion.

Research in cognitive science and cognitive linguistics demonstrates that narrative is not simply a linguistic structure, but an embodied mental process emerging from the interaction of memory, perception, emotion, and embodied experience (Barsalou, 1999). According to the theory of embodied meaning, human conceptual structures arise through bodily interaction with the environment, and meaning is constructed through sensory-motor experience rather than existing as a pre-formed abstraction or concept within the mind (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

Accordingly, every individual may be understood as the narrator of his or her own bodily experience—a subject who

experiences and narrates the world through a network of sensory perceptions, episodic memories, and mental representations.

Studies in cognitive neuroscience have further shown that, during the listening to or retelling of narratives, the same neural networks involved in the actual experience of events become activated. Research by Speer et al. (2009) demonstrates that while reading or hearing stories, sensory-motor, and emotional areas of the brain are dynamically engaged, as though the individual were personally undergoing the narrated event. From this perspective, narrative is not merely the transmission of words, but the neural and mental reconstruction of experience.

Beyond their individual function, narratives also play a significant role in shaping social reality and collective memory. Grand narratives within societies organize power, identity, and meaning, whereas counter narratives represent the experiences and less-heard voices of ordinary people (Lyotard, 1984). When a gap emerges between the grand narratives of governance and the counter narratives of the people, feelings of exclusion, invisibility, and social insignificance are intensified. Such conditions may weaken social trust, diminish the sense of belonging, and contribute to the emergence of social depression. As Benjamin (1999) argued, modern human is living within a condition of “poverty of experience,” wherein real experiences lose their capacity to be narrated and heard.

In recent decades, the concept of *cognitive governance* has emerged as a significant approach within governance studies and cognitive science. Within this framework, policymaking is not limited to the management of material resources; rather, it also involves the governance of perception, meaning, attention, and social narratives (Bevir, 2011). From this perspective, the ability of governing systems to

hear and comprehend the narratives of the people constitutes an essential mechanism for preserving social capital and collective mental health. A society in which people's narratives are systematically ignored may gradually develop feelings of powerlessness, social isolation, and collective depression.

Simultaneously, technological evolution and the rise of digital media, artificial intelligence, and cognitive algorithms have transformed narratives into the principal arena for shaping public opinion. The future of societies will increasingly depend on their capacity to understand, analyze, and manage social narratives. Under such conditions, futures studies in cognitive governance may provide a framework for analyzing emerging trends related to narrative, collective mental health, and transformations in social perception.

Accordingly, the present study adopts an interdisciplinary approach and employs a meta-synthesis methodology to explain the relationship among social narratives, episodic memory, mental spaces, and cognitive governance. It seeks to demonstrate how the recognition—or silencing—of people's narratives can influence collective mental health and contribute to the emergence of social depression. Furthermore, from a futures-oriented perspective, the study examines the implications of future cognitive and media transformations for the relationship between governance, narrative, and collective psychological well-being. Beyond their historical and cultural significance, narratives also play a crucial role in shaping collective images of the future. Contemporary futures studies increasingly recognize that societies do not merely respond to objective conditions; rather, they act according to the stories they tell about possible, probable, and preferable futures (Bell, 1997; Inayatullah, 2008). Within Narrative Foresight approaches, narratives function as

cognitive infrastructures through which societies imagine alternative futures, construct expectations, and coordinate collective action. Consequently, the study of narratives is not only a matter of understanding past experiences and present perceptions, but also a means of exploring how future social realities are envisioned and enacted. From this perspective, the future of cognitive governance depends significantly on the capacity of governance systems to understand, interpret, and engage with the narratives through which citizens construct meaning and anticipate the future.

Review of Literature and Theoretical Foundations

Review of the Literature

The study of narrative, memory, and embodied experience has, in recent decades, become one of the major interdisciplinary fields within cognitive science, psychology, cognitive linguistics, neuroscience, and even governance studies. Researchers have gradually moved beyond the traditional understanding of narrative as merely a literary structure and have increasingly approached it as a cognitive, social, and neurobiological mechanism for organizing experience, constructing identity, and shaping social reality. One of the earliest and most influential theoretical movements in this field is the “embodied mind” approach in cognitive science. Speer, Reynolds, Swallow, and Zacks (2009) demonstrated that during the reading or listening of narratives, the sensory-motor, and spatial areas of the brain turn to be activated in such a way that the brain neurally simulates the narrative experience. Likewise, Feldman (2006), in the Neural Theory of Language, argues that language and narrative comprehension are grounded in the neural simulation of experiences within the sensory-motor networks of the brain. These findings indicate that narrative is not merely a linguistic

act, but also a neurobiological and embodied experience. Within memory studies, the relationship among episodic memory, narrative, and social identity has also received considerable scholarly attention. Tulving (1972) conceptualized episodic memory as a type of long-term memory that stores personal experiences together with their temporal and spatial contexts. More recent studies demonstrate that individual memory and collective memory are profoundly intertwined through the process of narration. The research conducted by Thomsen, Fivush, Coman, Hirst, Luminet, & Pillemer (2025) indicates that individual memories, collective memories, and narratives enable both individuals and societies to reconstruct the past and imagine the future. Likewise, Lopez, Van Alphen, and Carmona (2025) emphasize that narratives serve as instruments for reproducing collective memory and reconstructing social identity, continuously being redefined within the context of social and political transformations.

In the field of social psychology and mental health, the relationship between narrative and depression has likewise attracted scholarly attention. Recent studies have also been conducted on collective memory and social narratives. Figueroa-Grant (2024) demonstrated that collective memory and social narratives are shaped by social identity and power relations and may therefore acquire ideological functions. Thomas Antweiler (2024) argues that memory and narrative can become instruments of governmentality and the management of social perception, while memory policies constitute part of the mechanisms of power in contemporary societies. Furthermore, recent studies concerning “cognitive infrastructures” indicate that artificial intelligence technologies and algorithmic media are increasingly becoming invisible infrastructures shaping perception, meaning, and social narratives. Despite the expansion of research in

the fields of narrative, memory, neuroscience, and mental health, an important gap still exists within the literature. Most studies have examined these domains separately, and relatively few studies have comprehensively analyzed the relationship among narratives, episodic memory, and the embodiment of meaning, social depression, and cognitive governance. Moreover, within Persian-language scholarship and Iranian studies, limited research has addressed the intersection of cognitive science, narrative studies, and futures studies of cognitive governance. Accordingly, the present study seeks to address this theoretical gap through an interdisciplinary and futures-oriented approach by presenting future-oriented propositions concerning the role of cognitive narratives in collective mental health and cognitive governance. Existing studies have examined narrative, memory, cognition, governance, and futures studies largely as separate domains. However, little attention has been paid to the integrated relationship between embodied narrative processes, cognitive governance, collective mental health, and future-oriented social imaginaries. This study addresses this gap by proposing a unified framework connecting these domains.

Theoretical Foundations of the Research

The present study is grounded in an interdisciplinary framework and draws upon theories from cognitive science, cognitive linguistics, neuroscience, narrative theory, cognitive governance, and ultimately futures studies in order to explain the relationship among social narratives, episodic memory, embodied experiences, and social depression. Within this framework, narrative is understood not merely as a linguistic or literary structure, but rather as a neurocognitive-social mechanism for organizing experience, constructing meaning,

representing identity, and regulating emotion.

This conceptual framework illustrates the multi-layered process through which human experience is transformed into social and future-oriented meaning structures. The process begins with embodied experience, where individuals interact with the social and physical environment through sensory, emotional, and bodily engagement. These experiences are subsequently encoded within episodic memory, allowing individuals to store and reconstruct lived events. At the neurocognitive level, memories are reactivated through neural simulation, whereby sensory, emotional, and motor networks are partially re-experienced during narrative construction and interpretation. These reconstructed experiences are then organized within mental spaces, enabling individuals to connect memory, imagination, interpretation, and anticipation. Through this process, mental representations emerge as social narratives, which provide shared frameworks for understanding reality, identity, and collective experience. These narratives subsequently influence cognitive governance, where perception, attention, meaning, and public understanding become central dimensions of governance and policymaking. At the futures level, narratives evolve into narrative futures, shaping collective expectations, images of the future, and societal visions of possible, probable, and preferable futures. Finally, depending on the degree of alignment between governance narratives and lived experiences, societies may experience either collective resilience, characterized by trust, social cohesion, and hope, or social depression, manifested through meaning erosion, distrust, alienation, and cognitive fragmentation. The framework therefore positions narratives as a critical bridge connecting embodied human experience, governance processes, and the construction of future social realities.

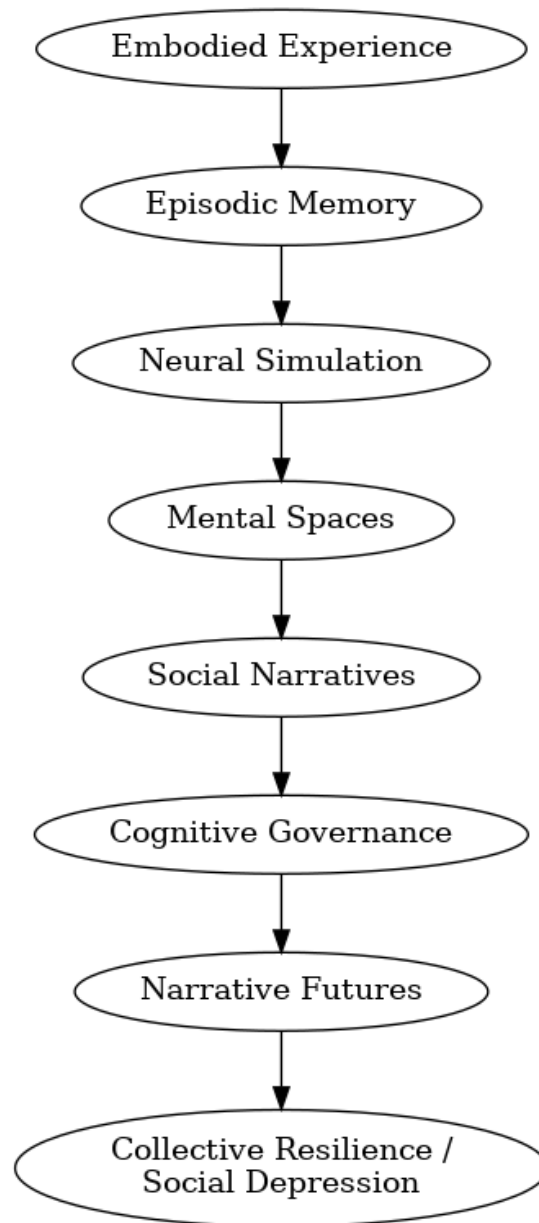


Figure 1. Integrated Framework of Narrative Futures and Cognitive Governance

<http://jti.isca.ac.ir>

Cognitive Narrative Theory

Cognitive narrative refers to the mental representation of experienced events within episodic memory, organized in the mind as structured, hierarchical, temporal, and sequential episodes. These narratives function as internal frameworks for organizing experiences, understanding them, and enabling their meaningful retelling in the form of stories. This mental structure underlies the stories individuals produce and demonstrates how the cognitive system processes narrative. Therefore, cognitive narratives are not merely external stories told to others; rather, they are internal quasi-narrative structures that the mind constructs in order to organize and interpret experiences and memories (Bruner, 1991). For instance, a citizen may organize disparate events—such as tax law changes or subsidy reductions—into a coherent internal narrative of ‘systemic victimization.’ This cognitive structure then serves as the primary lens through which they interpret and respond to subsequent political developments. This cognitive narrative influences the individual’s political attitudes and behaviors. Even if the dominant governmental or media narrative claims otherwise, this person’s cognitive narrative becomes the mental structure through which political events are interpreted and political behavior is shaped. One possible consequence of having such a belief may be voting for opposition parties, participating in protests, or transmitting this narrative to others.

Similarly, in social movements like the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, shared cognitive narratives transform historical memories and experiences of discrimination into a unified story of injustice, which in turn catalyzes and sustains collective political action. This cognitive narrative incorporated historical memories, experiences of discrimination, and contemporary news events, all organized into a coherent mental story. This narrative not only shaped individuals’

political behaviors—such as participation in demonstrations, legal protests, and social struggles—but also enabled them to persuade others and transmit their narrative to future generations. Narratives operate at different levels and determine how a society or culture thinks (Sarbin, 1986). Narratives establish general rules for society that most or all members follow. We encounter personal narratives, interpersonal narratives, subcultural narratives, and, at the highest level, grand narratives. Jean-François Lyotard (1984) argues that grand narratives are stories articulated through structures of power and accepted as dominant and normalized within society. These include ideas concerning what is considered “normal,” “good,” or “real.” Such narratives reflect the perspectives of those who possess cultural, social, or political power. Grand narratives are difficult to define and highly complex to study. Nevertheless, in the social sciences and humanities, what matters most is understanding the role these narratives play in shaping patterns of human behavior. Where conflicts emerge among grand narratives, the probability of social or cultural crises increases. Consequently, the coexistence of two or more grand narratives within a multicultural society may challenge social cohesion.

Grand narratives therefore enable social psychologists and researchers in social cognition to better understand subcultures and the multicultural nature of societies. Grand narratives play a significant role in understanding identity and politics because they demonstrate how cultural and social structures impose limitations upon individuals. These grand narratives help explain why individuals generally conform to the rules and norms established by society.

In contrast to grand narratives, counter-narratives emerge when individuals reveal the biases, assumptions, or power relations underlying dominant narratives (Bamberg & Andrews, 2004). These

narratives create spaces in which overlooked, marginalized, or silenced truths and voices can be heard. Counter narratives consist of stories or sets of stories that challenge grand narratives, question them, or provide alternatives to them. For example, a grand narrative may claim that “success can only be achieved through individual effort,” whereas a counter narrative may reveal that “systemic inequality” restricts opportunities for certain groups and demonstrate that not everyone begins from an equal position. Similarly in media, grand narratives may portray certain communities as “dangerous,” while counter narratives may recount stories depicting those same communities as resilient, compassionate, and diverse. In other words, counter narratives constitute a form of resistance through storytelling and narration. They challenge existing accounts of events and create space for alternative possibilities and social transformation.

Bamberg and Andrews (2004) further classify counter narratives into four categories: factual counter narratives, moral counter narratives, ironic or satirical counter narratives, and positive counter narratives. Factual counter narratives operate by exposing inaccuracies and weaknesses within extremist narratives, often through fact-checking processes. However, this approach does not necessarily result in changes in audience attitudes or behaviors. Moral counter narratives emphasize ethical dimensions and demonstrate that violence is not a morally legitimate means of achieving goals. This approach is more effective when the narrator possesses moral credibility among the audience. Ironic and satirical counter narratives employ humor and satire as tools for delegitimizing extremist narratives by weakening their symbolic power and seriousness. Positive counter narratives seek to strengthen inclusive and convergent voices by constructing active, constructive, and hopeful stories. Providing alternative narratives for feelings of injustice and

dissatisfaction enables individuals to channel their energies and aspirations toward positive and constructive change.

Individuals narrate stories every day in different contexts, ranging from simple accounts of ordinary events to unusual and unexpected experiences, and even dramatic incidents capable of transforming lives. In the process of narration, stories are constructed through the creation of characters, descriptions of actions, and the arrangement of these actions within meaningful sequences. Individuals express their stories through words and linguistic habits that frequently contain implicit biases regarding intentions or behaviors. A patient visiting a physician narrates the story of the limitations caused by pain. A grandmother may describe to a physician how back pain prevents her from engaging in everyday activities and shopping, while the physician usually focuses on selected elements of the story and searches among what may appear to be irrelevant details for clues leading to the cause of pain. Yet the entire narrative remains meaningful to the grandmother herself.

These narratives are often counter narratives formed within the interaction between personal assumptions and broader social assumptions, deeply intertwined with embodied experience. Through expressing counter narratives, individuals challenge the grand narratives of society that emerge within cultural, social, political, and power structures. The articulation of such counter narratives creates opportunities for alternative truths to be narrated and heard, providing different perspectives on events and objective realities presented by dominant grand narratives. Stories are always connected to the specific time and place in which they are narrated and possess social, communicative, and situational functions for both narrators and audiences. Understanding the relationship between narrative, time, place, and social function provides deeper insight into the

interpretation of narratives. Recognizing that every story is narrated within a specific context and serves a “social, communicative, and situational” function for narrators and audiences requires accepting that stories are fluid and dynamic; they may be rewritten and retold differently without necessarily altering the central line of the narrative or its core sequence of events.

At times, narratives are consciously designed and strategically presented by members of society in ways intended to challenge assumptions generated by grand narratives concerning power relations, governance issues, and identities. These articulated counter narratives may initiate processes of social and even cultural transformation—provided that they are heard by policymakers and social administrators. For example, the handling of judicial corruption and economic crime cases in Iran offers a useful illustration of the construction of counter narratives by the people. Such events occurred during periods of financial crisis, inflation, and economic stagnation within Iranian society. The publication of economic corruption cases generated counter narratives and alternative narratives among citizens. Simultaneously, prosecuting and defense attorneys each presented their own narratives to judges. While judicial narratives are formally heard and considered in issuing verdicts, what becomes of the people’s narratives regarding these events? If this process becomes characteristic of broader social conditions and what people embodiedly perceive and experience through their sensory and motor neurons generates narratives contradicting the grand narratives articulated by rulers, then the people’s mind is filled with countless unheard narratives. This feeling of invisibility and being unheard by those possessing the power to improve society may ultimately lead to social depression.

Theory of Embodied Meaning

One of the most fundamental theoretical frameworks of the present study is the theory of embodied cognition and embodied meaning. This theory stands in opposition to classical cognitivist approaches that regarded the mind as an abstract system independent of the body. Within the embodied approach, human mind and cognition are understood as products of dynamic interaction among body, brain, and environment (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Barsalou (1999), in his theory of “Perceptual Symbol Systems,” argues that mental concepts are constructed on the basis of perceptual and sensory-motor experiences, and that human beings simulate associated perceptual experiences within the brain when understanding concepts. Accordingly, meaning is not the result of abstract symbolic representation, but rather the consequence of the reactivation of past embodied experiences. Similarly, Lakoff and Johnson (1999) demonstrate that conceptual structures, metaphors, and human narratives are rooted in bodily experience, and that the human mind understands the world through body-based metaphors. Within this framework, social narratives are not merely linguistic representations; they are embodied reconstructions of real experiences. When individuals narrate experiences, they do not merely recount events linguistically; they recreate them at neural, perceptual, and emotional levels. Research concerning the embodied foundations of narrative demonstrates that storytelling activity is rooted in the bodies of narrators and audiences, in the temporal and spatial context of narration, in human relationships, and in the organizational structure of narratives themselves (Grishakova & Poulaki, 2019). In another study, Speer et al. (2009) demonstrated that readers dynamically activate neural networks associated with visual, motor, and conceptual characteristics of narrated activities while reading

stories. During narrative reading, areas of the brain associated with purposeful action, spatial navigation, and object manipulation exhibit high neural activity, as though individuals were directly involved in the events described.

Studies further indicate that when narratives focus upon sensory experiences and immediate perceptions, activity increases within the parietal and temporal areas of the brain. This pattern of activation reflects embodied representations of perception; in other words, the brain utilizes the same pathways activated during direct observation or physical interaction with the real world (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). Conversely, when narratives emphasize meaning, relationships, and interpretation, hippocampal-cortical networks—particularly the default mode network—become activated. This neural system connects memory, self-awareness, and the experience of subjective time (Fauconnier et al., 2002). Based on such evidence, when parts of the brain become impaired—as in conditions such as Alzheimer's disease—it can no longer function effectively for narration. During storytelling or narrative production, both narrator and listener rely upon complex neural networks as cognitive resources.

Neural Theory of Language and Neural Simulation of Narrative

Another theoretical foundation of the present research is the Neural Theory of Language developed by Feldman (2006). This theory is based on the assumption that language and meaning emerge through neural networks and the interaction of sensory-motor systems within the brain. According to this perspective, language comprehension is not an abstract symbolic process, but rather depends upon the neural simulation of experiences. Research in cognitive neuroscience demonstrates that when individuals hear or read narratives, the same

brain regions involved in actual experiences become activated. Speer et al. (2009) demonstrated that fictional narratives activate motor, spatial, and perceptual areas of the brain in such a way that the brain neurally reconstructs the narrative experience. This process is also related to the functioning of mirror neurons, which enable empathy, understanding of others' actions, and simulation of others' experiences (Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004). Consequently, narration is not merely the transfer of information, but rather a form of "neural reliving" of experiences. This characteristic makes narrative a crucial instrument in providing social empathy, collective memory, and mental health.

Mental Spaces Theory and Narrative

Mental spaces are temporary and dynamic cognitive structures created during language processing and narration. These spaces enable the representation of real, hypothetical, and imaginary situations. Fauconnier et al. (2002), in their theory of "Conceptual Blending," demonstrate that the human mind creates new meanings by mapping and integrating elements from different mental spaces. Narratives, through the interaction of memory, imagination, and experience, activate multiple mental spaces that enable individuals to interpret events, imagine the future, and organize experiences. In the present study, cognitive narratives are regarded as collective mental spaces through which members of society interpret social reality and power relations. Conflicts between grand narratives and counter narratives may therefore be analyzed as conflicts between competing mental spaces.

Cognitive Governance and Narratives

The concept of cognitive governance has recently emerged as one of

the most innovative approaches within governance studies and cognitive science. In this framework, governance is understood not merely as the management of material resources, but also as the management of perception, meaning, attention, and social narratives (Bevir, 2011).

In the era of digital media and artificial intelligence algorithms, narratives have become the primary arena for shaping public opinion and managing social perception. Governance systems influence collective memory and interpretations of reality through media, social networks, and cognitive mechanisms. At the same time, public narratives may challenge formal structures of power. Accordingly, the present study conceptualizes cognitive governance as a process in which the capacity to hear, analyze, and understand social narratives constitutes an essential mechanism for preserving collective mental health and social capital. A society in which people's narratives are ignored will gradually face the spread of powerlessness, social isolation, and collective depression.

Futures Studies, Narrative, and Cognitive Governance

Futures Studies is a field dedicated to analyzing trends, drivers, and possible, probable, and preferable futures. It regards the future not as predetermined, but as constructed through perceptions, narratives, and social actions (Bell, 1997). Within this approach, narratives play a significant role in shaping images of the future, social hope, and cultural orientations. Polak (1973) and futurist scholars such as Dator (2009) argue that human beings understand the future through "images of the future" and social narratives. Consequently, narratives do not merely represent the past; they also construct the future. In contemporary futures studies, the concept of "narrative futures" has gained increasing significance. This perspective suggests that the

futures of societies are profoundly shaped by narratives produced by media institutions, governments, and citizens regarding the future (Inayatullah, 2008). In today's world, social capital is more important than physical capital in organizations and societies. This capital acts as a network of collective and cohesive relationships between individuals. Social capital refers to the instrumental and supportive resources available in networks that are accessible through social ties and allow individuals to benefit from a wide range of supports (Ghasemi & Sharahi, 2025). Hopeful narratives may strengthen social cohesion and resilience, whereas narratives rooted in fear, exclusion, and meaninglessness may contribute to anxiety and social depression. At the same time, the expansion of artificial intelligence, digital media, and cognitive algorithms has transformed narratives into the most significant arena for shaping social perception.

Integrative Framework of Narrative Futures and Cognitive Governance

The present study proposes that narratives operate across multiple interconnected layers. At the cognitive level, embodied experiences are encoded as episodic memories. At the neurocognitive level, these memories are reconstructed through neural simulation and conceptual blending processes. At the social level, they emerge as narratives that shape identity, collective memory, and social perception. At the governance level, narratives influence the management of meaning, attention, and legitimacy. Finally, at the futures level, narratives become mechanisms through which societies construct images of the future and coordinate collective expectations. This integrated framework forms the central theoretical proposition of the present study.

Research Methodology

The present study is, in terms of its objective, fundamental–developmental, and in terms of its approach, qualitative and interdisciplinary. Drawing on concepts from cognitive science, neuroscience, cognitive linguistics, and futures studies, the research examines the relationship between social narratives, episodic memory, cognitive governance, and collective mental health. The research design is descriptive–analytical and based on meta-synthesis. In this approach, theories, models, and findings from previous studies across different domains are collected, compared, and re-synthesized into a coherent conceptual framework (Sandelowski & Barroso, 2007). Accordingly, rather than focusing on statistical or survey data, the present study is grounded in conceptual analysis and theoretical explanation.

In the first stage, approximately 90 sources were reviewed, of which 47 were retained for final synthesis. The sources included books, peer-reviewed journal articles, indexed publications in reputable international databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, as well as selected Persian-language academic works related to narrative and popular culture. In the second stage, the theoretical data extracted from these sources were analyzed using thematic analysis and comparative analysis. At this stage, shared concepts and interconnections among different fields were identified and organized into a conceptual network. The main focus of the analysis was to explain how social narratives, through episodic memory, embodied experience, and cognitive mechanisms, influence the sense of meaning, social belonging, and collective mental health.

Subsequently, to strengthen the futures-oriented dimension of the study, a trend and driver analysis approach was employed. In this

section, emerging trends related to digital media, artificial intelligence, cognitive algorithms, social networks, and transformations in governance were examined in order to analyze their future implications for social narratives and collective mental health. In addition, concepts from critical futures studies, such as “images of the future” and “narrative futures,” were used to analyze the role of narratives in shaping possible social futures. The theoretical population of the study consists of works and theories in cognitive science, narratology, neuroscience, and futures studies. Sampling was purposive and based on the conceptual relevance of sources to the research problem. The validity of the study was ensured through source diversity, the use of reputable scientific literature, comparative analysis of perspectives, and conceptual coherence among the employed theories. In qualitative and meta-synthetic research, validity and reliability are assessed not through statistical measures but through conceptual coherence, transparency of the analytical process, and traceability of arguments. In this study, credibility was ensured through the use of authoritative international scientific sources in cognitive science, narratology, neuroscience, and futures studies, as well as comparative examination of diverse theoretical perspectives. Efforts were made to avoid reliance on single-source interpretations and to incorporate diverse and even conflicting viewpoints in explaining the relationship between narrative, memory, and cognitive governance. The credibility of the study was ensured through source triangulation, conceptual coherence, and the use of authoritative literature from multiple disciplines, including cognitive science, neuroscience, narratology, governance studies, and futures studies. Rather than relying on a single theoretical perspective, the study synthesized diverse and complementary viewpoints to construct an integrated conceptual framework. Transparency in the analytical process and consistency between

theoretical arguments, thematic findings, and conclusions further enhanced the trustworthiness of the research.

Findings and Analysis

A. Process of Conducting Meta-synthesis and Thematic Analysis

This study is based on theoretical meta-synthesis and thematic analysis. In this approach, “data” are not defined as numerical or field-based datasets, but rather as validated scientific texts in the domains of cognitive science, neuroscience, narratology, memory studies, cognitive governance, and futures studies. In the first step, a set of classical and contemporary sources was collected, including theoretical works on embodied cognition (Barsalou, 1999; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999), episodic memory (Tulving, 1972; Conway, 2005), the neuroscience of narrative (Speer et al., 2009; Rizzolatti & Craighero, 2004), narrative and identity (McAdams, 2001; Lopez et al., 2025), cognitive governance (Floridi, 2014; Dennardis, 2020), and futures studies (Bell, 1997; Inayatullah, 2008). In the second step, these texts were decomposed into fine-grained conceptual units, and initial coding was performed. In the third step, similar codes were clustered into higher-order themes. Finally, in the fourth step, relationships among themes were extracted and a multi-level conceptual model was developed to explain the role of narrative in cognitive governance and collective mental health.

B. Explanation of Theoretical Meta-synthesis

In this study, meta-synthesis refers to the integration and reinterpretation of findings from prior theoretical research in order to generate a new conceptual framework. Unlike statistical meta-synthesis, which relies on quantitative data, the unit of analysis here consists of concepts, theories, and scientific propositions embedded in textual sources.

Stages of Theoretical Meta-synthesis

Stage 1: Selection of texts and extraction of theoretical data

In this stage, texts related to the following keywords were collected:

- Narrative
- Episodic memory
- Embodied cognition
- Cognitive governance
- Collective memory
- Futures studies

Subsequently, key propositions and conceptual elements were extracted from each text.

Table 1. Example of Theoretical Data Extraction

<i>Source</i>	<i>Extracted Theoretical Proposition</i>
Tulving (1972)	Episodic memory enables the mental reconstruction of past experiences.
Barsalou (1999)	Concepts are stored in the form of perceptual and sensory symbols.
Speer et al. (2009)	Reading narratives activates sensorimotor neural networks in the brain.
McAdams (2001)	Individuals construct their identity through narrative processes.
Floridi (2014)	Contemporary society is governed within an informational ecosystem.

At this stage, the extracted data are still fragmented and independent.

Stage 2: Conceptual Comparison and Alignment

In this stage, similar or related concepts were juxtaposed in order to reveal shared patterns. For instance:

- Tulving describes memory as the reconstruction of experience;
- Barsalou introduces the idea of perceptual reactivation of experience;
- Speer et al. refer to the neural activation of experience during narrative processing.

Within the meta-synthesis process, these three perspectives were integrated into a single shared conceptual cluster.

Table 2. Example of Conceptual Alignment

<i>Initial Concept</i>	<i>Extracted Shared Concept</i>
Episodic memory	Reconstruction of experience
Perceptual symbols	Reactivation of experience
Neural activation during narrative processing	Simulation of experience

Stage 3: Generation of Meta-synthetic Concept

In this stage, a higher-order concept was constructed through the integration of shared conceptual elements. For example, the following concepts:

- reconstruction of experience;
- perceptual reactivation;
- neural simulation;

were synthesized into the meta-analytic proposition:
“Narrative is the reconstruction of neural networks of real-life

experiences.” This proposition does not appear explicitly in any of the original sources; rather, it is the outcome of the theoretical meta-synthesis conducted in the present study.

C. Thematic Analysis

Following the theoretical meta-synthesis, the data were organized using thematic analysis. In this study, thematic analysis was conducted based on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase framework:

1. Familiarization with the data;
2. Generation of initial codes;
3. Searching for themes;
4. Reviewing themes;
5. Defining and naming themes;
6. Producing the analytical narrative.

Phase 1: Initial Coding

In this phase, key sentences and conceptual statements extracted from the texts were transformed into concise codes.

Table 3. Example of Coding

<i>Theoretical Text</i>	<i>Initial Code</i>
“Narratives activate sensory regions of the brain.”	Neural reactivation
“Humans construct meaning through life narratives.”	Narrative meaning-making
“Official narratives are distant from lived experience.”	Narrative gap
“Narratives shape images of the future.”	Narrative future-making

Phase 2: Code Clustering

In this stage, similar codes were identified and grouped together. The purpose of this step was to reduce fragmentation in the initial coding phase and to organize the data into meaningful conceptual clusters. Through iterative comparison, codes sharing semantic proximity or functional overlap were merged, allowing the emergence of preliminary thematic groupings that later served as the foundation for higher-order themes.

Table 4. Example of Code Clustering

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Conceptual Cluster</i>
Neural reactivation, experiential simulation, episodic memory	Embodied experience
Narrative meaning-making, personal identity, autobiographical memory	Narrative identity
Narrative gap, neglect of real experience	Perceptual disequilibrium
Future imagery, social hope	Narrative futures

Phase 3: Extraction of Final Themes

In this stage, the conceptual clusters were transformed into overarching themes. These themes represent higher-order interpretive categories derived from systematic comparison and refinement of clustered codes. Table 5 presents examples of these primary themes, illustrating how lower-level conceptual groupings were synthesized into coherent analytical constructs.

Table 5. Thematic Analysis

<i>Level of Analysis</i>	<i>Type of Data</i>	<i>Key Sources</i>	<i>Extracted Theme</i>	<i>Social Implication</i>
Cognitive	Real-life experience, neural data	Barsalou (1999), Tulving (1972)	Narrative as reactivation of experience	Construction of meaning
Neural	Experiential simulation	Speer et al. (2009), Rizzolatti & Craighero (2004)	Neural re-experiencing of narrative	Social empathy
Psychological	Episodic memory	Conway (2005), McAdams (2001)	Narrative identity	Identity coherence or fragmentation
Social	Grand/Counter narratives	Lyotard (1984), Lopez et al. (2025)	Narrative gap	Decline in social trust
Governance	Perceptual and narrative data	Floridi (2014), Dennardis (2020)	Cognitive governance	Perception management or meaning crisis
Futures	Images of the future	Bell (1997), Inayatullah (2008)	Future-shaping narratives	Resilience or collective anxiety

D. Interpretive Analysis of Themes

The thematic analysis indicates that narrative in this study is not

merely a linguistic instrument but a multilayered socio-cognitive mechanism that:

- encodes real-life experience;
- organizes individual and collective memory;
- constructs identity;
- regulates social perception; and
- produces future-oriented imaginaries.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that disruptions in the circulation of social narratives—particularly the marginalization of counter narratives—lead to a form of cognitive disequilibrium between the public sphere and governance structures. This imbalance may generate conditions conducive to social depression, meaning crisis, and the erosion of social capital.

E. Analysis of Theoretical Data and Core Findings

Narrative as Transformation of Lived Experience into Cognitive Data

Analysis of cognitive science literature suggests that human real-life experience is initially encoded in the nervous system as sensorimotor data at the moment of occurrence. These data are subsequently structured as episodic memory, enabling mental reconstruction of past experiences (Tulving, 1972). According to Barsalou (1999), such experiential data are stored as perceptual symbols in the brain and are reactivated during narrative production. Narrative, therefore, is not merely recounting events; it is the reactivation of experience at cognitive and neural levels. Accordingly, the process can be summarized as:

Real-life experience → neural networks → episodic memory → narrative

Narrative Data and the Formation of Individual and Collective Identity

At the psychological level, memory-based data are organized into

coherent personal narratives (McAdams, 2001). This process constitutes what is known as **narrative identity**, whereby individuals construct a coherent sense of self through life storytelling. At the collective level, these individual narratives interact and aggregate into collective memory (Lopez et al., 2025). Thus, narrative data play a constitutive role at both individual and social levels. A key finding here is that any disruption in narrative circulation—such as the silencing of real-life experiences—leads to identity fragmentation and a sense of meaninglessness.

Social Data and the Gap between Grand and Counter Narratives

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Theoretical analysis suggests that social data emerge at two distinct levels:

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- **Counter narrative data:** everyday life experiences of individuals
- **Grand narrative data:** official, media-based, and governance narratives

Lyotard (1984) conceptualized this tension as the conflict between grand narratives and real-life experience. The present study shows that when counter narrative data are not represented within grand narrative systems, an **epistemic–perceptual data gap** emerges.

This gap gradually results in:

- reduced social trust;
- feelings of marginalization;
- erosion of meaning;
- increased social depression.

Cognitive Governance and the Management of Perception

Based on Floridi (2014) and Dennardis (2020), contemporary governance is not limited to economic or political data but also includes

perceptual, attentional, and narrative data. In this framework, cognitive governance refers to the management of narrative production, dissemination, and interpretation within society. Findings indicate that:

- When governance integrates people’s narrative data, social cohesion increases.
- When such data are suppressed or ignored, perceptual imbalance and trust crises emerge.

Futures Studies: Narrative as Future Production

Within futures studies, data include “images of the future,” scenarios, and future-oriented narratives (Bell, 1997; Inayatullah, 2008). Analysis shows that narratives are not only representations of the past but also **future-generating data**, as they:

- shape social expectations;
- guide collective acts;
- determine decision-making horizons.

Consequently, controlling or shaping narratives equates to influencing social futures directly.

F. Deep Analysis of Narrative, Being Heard, and Social Depression

One of the most significant findings of this study is the role of **narrative recognition (being heard)** in individual and collective mental health. Humans require not only survival and physical security but also recognition of real-life experience. Narrative functions as a mechanism for meaning reconstruction, emotional discharge, and identity stabilization. When a narrative is heard and understood by others, it produces existential validation and social belonging. Conversely, when narratives are ignored or cannot enter the public sphere, a **perceptual rupture** emerges between the individual and

society. Over time, this rupture leads to feelings of voicelessness, social exclusion, collective forgetting. At the macro level, the accumulation of such conditions may manifest as **social depression**, characterized by reduced hope, meaning erosion, distrust, and collective passivity. The analysis suggests that social depression is not merely a psychological condition but a structural outcome of disrupted narrative circulation and governance incapacity to process lived experiences. In such conditions, individuals perceive a widening gap between official narratives and everyday reality.

G. Cognitive Analysis of the Grand–Counter Narrative Gap

Another key finding is the existence of a cognitive gap between grand and counter narratives.

Counter narratives emerge from everyday life experiences such as poverty, inequality, hope, fear, insecurity, or existential uncertainty. Grand narratives, in contrast, are produced by institutional, media, and governance systems and underpin policy formation. Thematic analysis shows that as the distance between these two kinds of narratives increases, societies enter a state of **cognitive disequilibrium**. In this condition, official narratives no longer reflect experiential reality, resulting in reduced social capital, declining public trust, increased social skepticism.

From a cognitive science perspective, this represents a breakdown in perceptual alignment between society and governance. Effective governance thus depends on its capacity to receive, interpret, and re-integrate societal narrative data. Otherwise, it suffers from **narrative blindness**. The findings further suggest that social depression emerges through a cumulative cognitive process rather than as a purely psychological condition. When individuals repeatedly experience a mismatch between embodied reality and dominant public

narratives, their lived experiences fail to receive social recognition. This narrative exclusion weakens meaning-making processes, undermines narrative identity, and generates a persistent sense of cognitive dissonance between personal experience and socially validated reality. Over time, this condition contributes to identity fragmentation, reduced social trust, declining collective efficacy, and the erosion of future-oriented hope. Social depression can therefore be understood as the macro-social manifestation of prolonged narrative misalignment between citizens' embodied experiences and institutional narratives.

H. Futures-Oriented Analysis of Narratives in the Age of AI and Cognitive Media

The futures analysis of this study is based on trend analysis, driver analysis, and critical futures studies. Futures are not treated as deterministic outcomes but as emergent configurations of technological, cognitive, social, and media-related dynamics (Bell, 1997; Inayatullah, 2008). Accordingly, developments in artificial intelligence, recommendation algorithms, interactive media, social networks, and digital governance are identified as key drivers shaping the future of narratives. The meta-synthesis reveals that the contemporary world is transitioning toward a condition in which competition among social and political actors is no longer primarily about control over information, but about the ability to shape perception and manage meaning. Thus, narratives are evolving beyond “texts” or “stories” into **cognitive data structures** capable of reorganizing perception, emotion, memory, and even social futures. From an embodied cognition perspective, this transformation extends beyond the circulation of information and directly affects the mechanisms through which individuals construct meaning from experience. Human narratives emerge through the interaction of embodied experience, episodic memory, and neural simulation. However, in increasingly

algorithmic media environments, digital platforms and AI systems act as intermediaries that selectively amplify, suppress, or reconfigure narrative exposure. As a result, the cognitive simulations activated during narrative processing are no longer shaped solely by direct social experience but also by algorithmically curated narrative environments. In this sense, AI-mediated narratives function as cognitive infrastructures that influence perception, memory reconstruction, emotional engagement, and future imagination. The future of cognitive governance therefore depends not only on managing information flows but also on understanding how algorithmic systems shape embodied processes of meaning-making and narrative construction. Thematic analysis identified recurring core codes such as attention management, perception engineering, recommendation algorithms, digital collective memory, cognitive polarization, narrative warfare, and narrative futures.

These were ultimately organized into two macro-themes:

- Narrative as a cognitive power infrastructure
- Narrative-based governance

Trend analysis indicates that AI systems and cognitive media are increasingly becoming primary mediators of social perception. Algorithms no longer merely transmit information; they determine visibility, invisibility, and narrative salience. Consequently, public opinion formation is shifting from a linear media-based process to a networked and algorithmic configuration. From a futures perspective, this transformation has several fundamental implications:

1. **Social attention steering:** Narratives will become the primary tools for directing collective attention.
2. **Collective emotion production:** Governance may evolve into “emotional governance,” regulating fear, hope, anger, and empathy.

3. **Digitalization of collective memory:** Memory increasingly depends on algorithmic infrastructures, with both participatory and manipulated outcomes.
4. **Construction of social futures:** Narratives directly shape future imaginaries, expectations, and perceived possibilities for change.

Discussion

The findings indicate that societies lacking mechanisms for systematically listening to citizens' narratives are progressively prone to increasing levels of cognitive polarization¹. Cognitive polarization refers to a condition in which social groups inhabit distinct or parallel narrative worlds and gradually lose the ability to construct a shared perception of reality. The consequences of such a condition include rising distrust, a crisis of meaning, erosion of social capital, and the expansion of collective depression. In contrast, the results demonstrate that narrative-based governance can foster a form of cognitive resilience². Cognitive resilience is defined as the capacity of a society

¹ In the context of this study, cognitive polarization refers to a condition in which different social groups increasingly rely on distinct narrative frameworks for interpreting reality, resulting in reduced overlap in collective meaning-making processes and diminished capacity for shared social understanding. The meta-synthesis suggests that such polarization is intensified when experiential narratives remain disconnected from dominant governance narratives and when algorithmic media environments reinforce selective exposure to particular narrative streams.

² Cognitive resilience is defined as the capacity of a society to maintain shared meaning structures, adaptive collective learning, and constructive dialogue despite conditions of informational uncertainty, narrative conflict, and technological disruption. The findings indicate that cognitive resilience is strengthened when governance systems remain capable of incorporating diverse social narratives and reducing the gap between lived experience and institutional discourse.

to maintain perceptual coherence, shared meaning, and social solidarity under conditions of informational turbulence and narrative conflict. Such a governance model seeks to systematically capture counter narratives of citizens, integrate real-life experience into policymaking processes, reduce the gap between grand and counter narratives, and utilize narrative analysis to anticipate emerging social and cognitive crises.

Accordingly, the future of governance is no longer determined solely by the management of economic and security-related data, but increasingly by the capacity to interpret and manage narratives. In future societies, cognitive power becomes the dominant form of power, and narratives emerge as its fundamental infrastructure. The findings of this study indicate that narratives function as multilayered socio-cognitive data structures that originate in embodied experiences and extend toward the construction of possible social futures. These data operate across four interconnected layers:

1. **Cognitive layer** (language and memory);
2. **Neuroscience layer** (reactivation of neural networks);
3. **Social layer** (identity and collective memory);
4. **Governance and futures layer** (social perception and scenario formation).

Accordingly, narratives do not merely represent the experienced reality; they actively construct the social and perceptual realities of the future. The overall analysis suggests that narratives in contemporary societies are not simply communicative tools but constitute the cognitive infrastructure of society itself. Embodied experience is first encoded as episodic memory, which generates structured mental spaces. It is then expressed through narrative forms and subsequently integrated into collective memory and governance systems. Any

disruption in this cycle—particularly the silencing of authentic real-life experiences—may lead to a crisis in meaning construction, erosion of social trust, cognitive polarization, and collective depression. From this perspective, the future of governance depends less on controlling economic data and more on the ability to understand, interpret, and manage cognitive narratives. Overall, the theoretical meta-synthesis conducted in this study generated a novel conceptual framework regarding the relationship between narrative, cognition, and governance. Thematic analysis further enabled the systematic organization and interpretation of theoretical data. The integration of these two approaches demonstrates that narratives are not only reflections of human experience but also constitutive elements of the cognitive infrastructure and future-making capacity of contemporary societies.

The proposed framework aligns with previous scholarship emphasizing the role of narratives in identity formation (McAdams, 2001), collective memory construction (Thomsen et al., 2025), and embodied cognition (Barsalou, 1999; Varela et al., 1991). It also resonates with emerging studies on cognitive governance and the role of digital infrastructures in shaping social perception (Floridi, 2014). However, the present framework extends existing research by integrating these previously fragmented perspectives into a single explanatory model linking embodied experience, neural simulation, social narratives, governance processes, and future-oriented imaginaries. Unlike many existing approaches that examine these dimensions separately, the proposed model conceptualizes narratives as a continuous socio-cognitive infrastructure connecting individual cognition, collective meaning-making, and future construction.

The primary theoretical contribution of this study lies in the

development of a four-layer integrative framework connecting cognition, neuroscience, social narratives, and governance futures. Although previous studies have examined embodied cognition, narrative identity, collective memory, cognitive governance, and futures studies independently, few have systematically integrated these domains within a unified explanatory model. The proposed framework demonstrates how narratives function simultaneously as cognitive, social, governance, and future-making structures. By linking embodied experience to future imaginaries through narrative mediation, the model offers a novel conceptual lens for understanding governance challenges in increasingly algorithmic and cognitively mediated societies.

Conclusion

The present study, through an interdisciplinary approach combining theoretical meta-synthesis and thematic analysis, examined the relationship between social narratives, episodic memory, mental spaces, cognitive governance, and collective mental health. The central research question addressed whether the recognition and institutional reception of citizens' lived narratives within governance structures can influence meaning-making processes, social belonging, and perceived social well-being. The findings suggest that narratives are not merely tools for information transmission or retrospective accounts of events; rather, they function as constitutive elements of the cognitive architecture of society. Narratives organize human experience, shape both individual and collective identity, regulate social emotions, and contribute to the construction of shared futures. From the perspective of embodied cognition, narrative processes are grounded in the reactivation and recombination of neural and experiential patterns, indicating that storytelling and being heard are

not only communicative acts but also cognitive and affective processes tied to recognition and social existence. The study further shows that personal and collective identities emerge through dynamic interactions between episodic memory and socially shared narratives. In this sense, society can be understood not merely as an aggregation of individuals, but as a distributed network of interrelated narratives that produces a shared sense of social reality.

Disruptions in this narrative circulation may weaken meaning-making structures, reduce perceived recognition, and undermine social cohesion. One of the central conceptual contributions of this study is the proposition that narrative exclusion or institutional silencing of citizens' lived experiences may contribute to conditions of social disaffection and depressive social states. This claim is formulated at a theoretical level and should be interpreted as a conceptual model rather than a directly empirically verified causal relationship. Within this framework, when lived experiences are not adequately reflected in dominant institutional or "grand" narratives, a gap emerges between everyday life and formal systems of representation. This gap may be associated with diminished social trust, reduced perceived agency, weakened social capital, and heightened experiences of alienation. In contemporary contexts shaped by digital media and algorithmic infrastructures, narratives increasingly function as instruments of cognitive governance. Governance is therefore not limited to the allocation of material resources but extends to the structuring of attention, perception, and meaning. Media platforms and AI-driven systems play an increasingly significant role in shaping collective memory and social imagination. This development amplifies the importance of aligning institutional narratives with lived social experience. From a futures-oriented perspective, narratives are not passive reflections of reality but active forces in shaping anticipatory

structures, collective imaginaries, and social expectations. Inclusive and participatory narrative ecosystems may enhance social resilience and cohesion, whereas persistent divergence between institutional narratives and lived experience may increase the risk of meaning fragmentation and social disaffection.

Accordingly, narrative-centric governance is proposed as a conceptual orientation in which policy-making processes systematically incorporate lived experiences, counter-narratives, and plural forms of social expression into decision-making and institutional design. In practical terms, this implies establishing structured channels for narrative inclusion (e.g., participatory listening systems, deliberative platforms, and feedback mechanisms that integrate qualitative lived experience into governance processes), alongside traditional data-driven policy tools. In conclusion, the study argues that narratives constitute a foundational cognitive infrastructure of society and a key dimension of future governance. Their recognition and integration within institutional frameworks may contribute to enhanced social meaning, cohesion, and collective well-being, while their systematic exclusion may correspond with weakened trust and reduced social integration.

Suggestions for future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the following researches are proposed:

- Development of narrative-based governance systems aimed at capturing, processing, and analyzing citizens' social narratives in a systematic manner.
- Integration of narrative analysis approaches into social and cultural policymaking processes to enhance responsiveness to experience.

- Establishment of monitoring systems for tracking social perception and public narratives within digital and online environments.
- Conducting empirical studies on the relationship between social recognition (being heard) and collective depression within the Iranian context.
- Examination of the role of artificial intelligence and media algorithms in shaping collective memory and cognitive governance structures.

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Organizing the Quranic-Based Humanities (A Case Study of Organizing the Divine Traditions of the Quran in the Branch of Educational Sciences)*

Saeed Bahmani 

Assistant Professor, Department of Quranic Sciences, Research Institute for Quranic Culture and
knowledge, Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy, Qom, Iran.
s.bahmani@isca.ac.ir

Abstract

Quranic data are generalizable and scientific when expressed in the form of real propositions. Real propositions are divine traditions. Any tradition whose subject is human and whose predicate expresses one of human voluntary actions constitutes a divine tradition within the realm of the humanities. The necessary prerequisite for the formation of Quranic-based humanities is the localization and structuring of these traditions within the domain of the humanities, which has not been accomplished thus far. This article addresses the organization of divine traditions in the branch of educational sciences, which is among the most important branches of the humanities. The purpose of this research is to demonstrate the authority of the Quran in educational sciences. To

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identify and organize these traditions, the article's strategy relies primarily on extracting the identifying components of educational sciences' data from its definition. Traditions governing voluntary actions constitute first-tier science, while traditions encompassing the philosophy of educational sciences constitute its second-tier science. For the sake of brevity, the data of the philosophy of educational sciences are processed only within those traditions that indicate the foundations, objectives, and methods in educational sciences. The method for determining the identifying components of the data containing divine traditions related to educational sciences is a combination of inductive and deductive methods, external to the implications of the Quran. The research method within the Quranic text is documentary and implication-analytical, which is termed *ijtihad* in verbal evidence. The method of localizing and organizing the traditions within the first- and second-tier knowledge of educational sciences is deductive, because it is based on identifying components and a model constructed upon those components. The article begins three essential processes of organization by determining the identifying components of educational sciences' traditions and continues with the presentation of a conceptual model for data retrieval. Subsequently, the traditions are concretely organized by determining organization patterns and presenting their conceptual model. The result of the research is the operationalization of organizing the Quranic divine traditions in educational sciences. The innovations of the article are as follows: 1. Determining the identifying components of first- and second-tier knowledge regarding divine traditions in the field of education; 2. Determining the process of organizing divine traditions in the field of educational sciences; 3. Delineating a conceptual model for the process of organizing traditions in educational sciences.

Keywords

Divine Tradition, Authority of the Quran, Humanities, Educational Sciences, Organization Patterns, Conceptual Model.

Introduction

The Holy Quran is a collection woven from descriptive and prescriptive teachings. The transformation of human descriptive and prescriptive knowledge in the light of the Quran is undeniable. Naturally, the perspective of the Holy Quran differs from the view of "someone who considers man (as the subject of anthropology) to be a material being on par with other animals." Fundamentally, we witness two types of anthropology that differ vastly from one another in terms of both questions and answers. Of course, the difference lies not only in the questions, but the story is precisely the same regarding the method, purpose, and other foundations of science. (Hasani et al., 2006, pp. 222–223).

We define the humanities as the sciences of describing and modifying human voluntary actions, alongside their second-tier knowledge¹. Likewise, educational sciences consist of disciplines that address the description and modification of human actions and their philosophy.

The divine traditions set forth in the Holy Quran are generative laws. A number of these traditions concern human voluntary actions. These traditions are placeable within the realm of the humanities—specifically educational sciences—and can harbor implications for shaping Quranic-based humanities. Identifying, extracting, and organizing them constitutes the initial process of achieving the structure of divine traditions within these sciences. Beyond providing cognitive benefits and harmonizing human behavior with them, the articulation of divine traditions also possesses motivational functions. Traditions that do not directly describe or modify human actions and

1. The aforementioned definition, with modifications and condensation, is adapted from the definition by Mr. Ahmad Hossein Sharifi (Cf. Sharifi, 2015, pp. 104–155).

primarily serve a cognitive function are not categorized under the first-tier knowledge of the humanities; rather, they form the foundations of human science, which can be addressed within its corresponding branch in the humanities. What is placeable within the first-tier knowledge of the humanities are traditions that directly describe human actions and their effects. Discovering traditions is an implicational and interpretive endeavor; however, organizing and systematizing them is a post-interpretive effort. Discovering and organizing divine traditions in educational sciences—which ranks among the most important branches of the humanities—is a methodological endeavor aimed at demonstrating the objective scientific authority of the Quran.

The humanities investigate disciplines related to the study of man and his voluntary actions. Religious data—particularly the data of the Holy Quran—are laden with anthropological propositions and a collection of descriptive and prescriptive insights for organizing human voluntary actions. Hence, the presence of the subject, predicate, and issues of the humanities within Quranic propositions is undeniable. Despite the abundance of Quranic and religious data and their profound impact on human voluntary actions, we have yet to consciously organize religion-based humanities. To organize the humanities upon the bedrock of religious and Quranic teachings, we are compelled to recreate the method of extracting the humanities from religion and organizing them within these sciences. The lack of systematic organization regarding the scientific data of the Holy Quran in the humanities generally, and its most vital branch—educational sciences—specifically, is the problem this research endeavors to address, taking strides toward its resolution within the designated scope and boundaries.

Divine traditions of the Quran are revelatory propositions that

articulate existence or the relations among objects. These traditions are sciences springing from revelation. For instance, « وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ » "And We made from water every living thing" (Al-Anbiya: 30) is a biological law presenting water as the most fundamental factor and origin of the formation of life. « وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا » "And the sun runs toward its resting place" (Ya-Sin: 38) is physical and cosmological data concerning the quality of the sun's motion. « كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِكَيِّفٍ * أَنْ رَأَاهُ اسْتَغْنَى » "No! [But] indeed, man transgresses * Because he sees himself self-sufficient" (Al-Alaq: 6–7) is anthropological data regarding one of the laws governing his actions. This datum is placeable within the branches of educational sciences, psychology, social sciences, economics, and politics. Organizing the divine traditions of the Quran within the sciences, including educational sciences, is a necessary and inescapable imperative for the Islamization of sciences.

Background of the Title

The article "Organizing the Quranic-Based Humanities: A Case Study of Organizing the Divine Traditions of the Quran in the Branch of Educational Sciences" lacks a direct precedent in which the exact title has been investigated; however, the elements composing the title possess study backgrounds. Therefore, the background of the title's elements is examined. For this purpose, the "background of processing divine traditions in the Quran" and the "background of studies on Quranic-based educational sciences" are investigated. First, we briefly address the background of "processing divine traditions in the Quran" by commentators and Quranic scholars.

From the era of revelation until the end of the twelfth century, only in the eighth century did Ibn Khaldun (703–804 AH / 1304–1406 CE) in *Al-Muqaddimah* and al-Maqrizi (766–845 AH / 1364–1442 CE)

in *Ighāthat al-Ummah bi-Kashf al-Ghummah* pay special attention to "divine traditions." Both utilized this concept to explain historical events.

Quranic and Islamic scholarship of the past two centuries demonstrates the steadily increasing prominence of the concept of the "divine tradition." For example, the concept of the "divine tradition" holds extraordinary prominence in the works of Martyr Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (1931–1980 CE), Martyr Morteza Motahhari (1919–1979 CE), Ayatollah Abdullah Javadi Amoli (born 1933 CE), Master Ali Safaei Haeri (1951–1999 CE), and the like. However, none of the commentators or scholars have organized divine traditions in the sciences generally, the humanities specifically, and educational sciences most particularly. Although expressions such as historical traditions and social traditions appear in these works—and history and society are two branches of the humanities—they have merely extracted certain traditions within these two arenas and have not sought to organize them.

The processing of divine traditions in the Quran over the past two centuries differs vastly from the past; the fourteenth [Hijri Qamari] century in particular can justly be called the century of the prominence of the concept of divine traditions in works of exegesis and Quranic research. The prominence of the concept of divine traditions—prima facie—in the exegesis and Quranic studies of the fourteenth century (the 20th Gregorian century) demonstrates a scientific leap. The formation of martyr [Muhammad Baqir] al-Sadr's theory of historical traditions (1931–1980 CE / Iraq) and the enthusiasm of many scholars such as Naquib al-Attas¹ (born 1931 CE

1. Hassani and Dargahzadeh, 2014, pp. 7–26

/ Malaysia), Ismail al-Faruqi¹ (1921–1986 CE / Egypt), martyr Morteza Motahhari (1919–1979 CE / Iran), and Taha Jabir al-Alwani² (1935–2016 CE / Iraq) for producing Quranic-based knowledge—especially in the humanities—alongside the recent emergence of the theory of the Quran's scientific reference in the past decade, constitute clear instances of this leap in this century. Despite this, Quranic data has not yet been organized within any of the fields of the sciences.

The foundations of the paper are as follows:

1. **The rule of law/traditions in existence (Ontological)**, which "encompasses all beings of the horizons, societies, and souls" (Bakkar Mahmud Al-Hajj Jassim, 2011 AD, p. 33);
2. **God's exclusive sovereignty over the traditions (Ontological)** (Safa'i, 1993, p. 22; Al-Sadr, 2000 AD, p. 71);
3. **The placeability of divine traditions within the domain of the humanities (Ontological);**
4. **The governance of traditions over human voluntary actions (Ontological);** abundant data from the Quran shows that individual and social voluntary actions of human beings stem from antecedent causes³ and possess subsequent

1. Ghorbani, 2014, pp. 131–151

2. Alwani, 2001, pp. 7–14

3. «فَإِنَّمَا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ» "And if there should come to you guidance from Me - then whoever follows My guidance will have no fear upon them, nor will they grieve" (Al-Baqarah: 38); «وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ» "And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness" (Muhammad: 17); «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ» "Indeed, those who fear Allah - when an impulse touches them from Satan, they remember [Him] and at once they have insight" (Al-A'raf: 201); «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ» «عَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ وُدًّا»

→

consequences that are realized in this world¹, in the Hereafter², or in both realms of this world and the Hereafter³. When this data is generalizable and takes the form of a real proposition, it embodies a divine tradition governing human actions.

←

righteous deeds - the Most Merciful will appoint for them affection" (Maryam: 96);
 «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُم خَيْرُ الْبَرِيَّةِ»
 «فَلَمَّا زَاغُوا أَزَاغَ» (Al-Bayyinah: 7); «اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ»
 "And when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate. And Allah does not guide the defiantly disobedient people" (As-Saff: 5).

1. At-Talaq: 2-3: «مَنْ يَتَّقِ اللَّهَ يَجْعَلْ لَهُ مَخْرَجًا * وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَالِغُ أَمْرِهِ قَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدْرًا»
 "And whoever fears Allah - He will make for him a way out * And will provide for him from where he does not expect. And whoever relies upon Allah - then He is sufficient for him. Indeed, Allah will accomplish His purpose. Allah has already set for everything a [decreed] extent."
2. «إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ *»
 «دَعَاؤُهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنْ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ»
 "Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds - their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will flow in the Gardens of Pleasure * Their call therein will be, 'Exalted are You, O Allah,' and their greeting therein will be, 'Peace.' And the last of their call will be, 'Praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds!'"
 «وَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمٍ يَكُونُ فِيهِ أَصْحَابُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ فَجَرٌّ عَلَىٰ الْكُفَرَاءِ نُجَسٌ» (Yunus: 9-10); «وَأَنْتَ تَرَىٰ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَائِيَةٍ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَىٰ إِلَىٰ كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ»
 "And you will see every nation kneeling. Every nation will be called to its record [and told], 'Today you will be recompensed for what you used to do'" (Al-Jathiyah: 28); «اصْلَوْهَا»
 «فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْنَا إِمَّا تُتَجَرَّوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ»
 "Enter it [to burn]; then be patient or impatient - it is all the same for you. You are only being recompensed for what you used to do" (At-Tur: 16); «يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّمَا تُجْرَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ»
 "O you who have disbelieved, make no excuses today. You are only being recompensed for what you used to do" (At-Tahrim: 7).
3. «وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَ سَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا»
 «خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ»
 "And who is more unjust than one who prevents the name of Allah from being mentioned in His mosques and strives toward their destruction? It is not for them to enter them except in fear. For them in this world is disgrace, and they will have in the Hereafter a great punishment" (Al-Baqarah: 114).

Theoretical Framework

1. Examining Quranic Data in the Most Important Branch of the Humanities

In this article, we have selected only one branch among the most important branches of the humanities—namely, educational sciences—to organize the Quranic-based humanities. Choosing educational sciences as the most important branch of the humanities has been adopted inspired by the perspective of Master Safaei Haeri in explaining and ordering the systems derived from religion (Safaei, 2006, pp. 120 and 124; Safaei, 2001, p. 131).

2. Limiting the Scope of Research to Experiential Traditions within the Realm of This World

Divine traditions are classifiable into three categories regarding the sphere of their flow:

First: Worldly or terrestrial traditions; traditions whose sphere of flow is this world.

Second: Hereafter traditions; traditions whose sphere of flow is the hereafter.

Third: Omni-existential traditions; traditions whose sphere of flow encompasses both this world and the hereafter.

The humanities are disciplines that describe and modify human voluntary actions. Human voluntary actions are empirical matters realized in this world. Therefore, the traditions that fall within the purview of this research are those whose sphere of realization is this world.

For instance, the verse: «وَأَنِ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَتَاعاً وَ أَنْ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ ثُمَّ تُوبُوا إِلَيْهِ يُمَتِّعْكُمْ مَتَاعاً حَسَناً إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى» And [commanding], 'Seek forgiveness of your Lord

and repent to Him, [and] He will let you enjoy a good provision for a specified term" (Hud: 3) articulates a tradition whose sphere of flow is this world; the expression «إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى» "for a specified term" explicitly indicates the worldly scope and boundary of its sphere of flow. Naturally, traditions whose sphere of flow is this world are empirically verifiable within this very world. The verse: «وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ «الإسلام ديناً فَلَئِنْ قُبِّلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ» "And whoever desires other than Islam as religion—never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers" (Ali 'Imran: 85) indicates the operation of two traditions in the hereafter: the tradition that no religion other than Islam is acceptable, and the tradition of loss for those who seek other than Islam. Experiencing these traditions in this world is impossible, and until human beings transition to the realm of the hereafter, they cannot observe the flow of hereafter-bound traditions. The verse: «يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْقَوْلِ الثَّابِتِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي «الْآخِرَةِ» "Allah keeps firm those who believe, with the firm word, in worldly life and in the Hereafter" (Ibrahim: 27) also clearly indicates the flow of the tradition of strengthening believers with the firm word across both realms of this world and the hereafter.

Three Points

First: The empirical verifiability of laws and traditions does not necessarily mean that they are recognized through empirical experience. In other words, we do not consider observation and experience to be the sole origin of empirical science; rather, absolute science, including empirical science, can also be attained from revelation.

Second: The hereafter-oriented nature of certain components within the subject, predicate, condition, or consequence in propositions expressing divine traditions does not necessitate that the

sphere of flow of the tradition expressed by them is always the hereafter. It is quite possible that some of the aforementioned components are related to the hereafter, yet the sphere of realization of the tradition expressed thereby is this world. For instance, in the verse: «وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ» "And when Allah is mentioned alone, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter shrink with aversion" (Az-Zumar: 45), a causal relationship is expressed in this tradition between "the shrinking of hearts from the remembrance of God" as the consequence, and "disbelief in the hereafter" as the condition. The hereafter is a component of the concept within the aforementioned condition; nevertheless, disbelief in the hereafter and its consequence are worldly.

Third: Although our theoretical framework is limited to worldly traditions and we do not address traditions whose sphere of realization is the hereafter, we acknowledge their impact on human life and behavior in this world. Naturally, these traditions also exert an influence on the human sciences. Therefore, we must address their functions within the humanities in their proper place and cannot completely ignore them. Some worldly functions of articulating hereafter-oriented traditions in the Holy Quran are as follows:

1. Impact on the ultimate goal of human actions—the final cause
2. Epistemic impact
3. Motivational impact
4. Deterrence—warning
5. Generating longing and hope—glad tidings—for producing faith and reinforcing and increasing it.

For instance, the following verses encompass a number of hereafter-oriented divine traditions in which epistemic impact is

Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, 2000, pp. 69–70). Divine traditions related to man can organize the Quranic-based humanities.

Second: Data Retrieval

In this process, by utilizing the identifying components of educational sciences' data, we engage in data retrieval within the Holy Quran. Data retrieval is a necessary prerequisite for organizing them within the structure of the sciences.

Third: Organizing the Data of Quranic Educational Sciences

Organization is achieved through the localization of the extracted traditions under two main headings and three sub-headings as follows:

1. Second-Tier Science (Philosophy of Science)

- 1.1. Traditions of foundations;
- 1.2. Traditions of objectives;
- 1.3. Traditions of methods.

2. First-Tier Science

- 2.1. Traditions describing cognitive actions and attributes;
- 2.2. Traditions of affective actions and attributes;
- 2.3. Traditions of behavioral actions and attributes.

In the aforementioned arrangement, second-tier knowledge has been prioritized over traditions implying first-tier knowledge, because second-tier sciences typically take an external view of science and serve as a preliminary introduction to understanding the sciences.

The Process of Organizing Divine Traditions

Educational actions of human beings, like any other action, are governed by the laws of traditions. The Holy Quran contains a number

of traditions that express the laws governing educational actions, and these traditions are placeable within educational sciences.

In addition to what we stated previously—namely, Master Safaei Haeri's perspective on the importance of educational sciences—we selected educational sciences for organization because it is one of the most comprehensive dimensions of human life, accompanying every other human branch of science. As noted earlier, it suffices to conceptualize moral education, social education, political education, economic education, and legal education to confirm the companionship of education with all the aforementioned sciences. For this reason, all data within the humanities, across any of their branches, can be considered as possessing an educational dimension. We designate these types of education as specialized educations. Thus, educational sciences and their data serve as a foundational science relative to other human sciences and flow through all of them. The sole distinguishing feature of educational sciences is that the educational scholar regards this data with an educational approach. This same status exists regarding data—or more clearly, traditions—that supply the second-tier knowledge of educational sciences, such as foundations, objectives, and methods. The laws governing education encompass methodological elements because they express causal relationships among human actions. By being aware of these causal relationships and applying them, the educator can engage in educating and modifying the learner.

For instance, the verse: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ» (Ra'd: 11) demonstrates the tradition of the primacy of changing human correlates. This tradition expresses a law governing human transformation, whereby the alteration of any people's correlates is contingent upon changing those things that

accompany the soul—whether internal or external. This tradition governs the modifications of human voluntary attributes and behaviors. From this perspective, it is a placeable tradition within the branch of educational sciences. This very tradition is also placeable within the branch of ethics, as it is generalizable to the moral sphere. Likewise, it is placeable within the branches of social, economic, political, and legal action, for based on this tradition, we can consider social, economic, political, and legal changes to be contingent upon altering the correlates that accompany each person's soul within these spheres. This means that educators who pursue social changes must alter what accompanies the social dimensions of their souls. Other changes follow this exact same ruling. Thus, the tradition governing transformation is a human science tradition that can be considered both within the branch of educational sciences and within other branches of the humanities. The same holds true for traditions related to the second-tier knowledge of educational sciences. For example, the foundation of "humanity's perpetual need for divine grace in self-purification (*tazkiyah*)," derived from the divine tradition articulated in the verse: «وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا» "And if not for the favor of Allah upon you and His mercy, not one of you would have ever been purified" (An-Nur: 21), is not merely an educational foundation; it is also reckoned as a moral foundation.

Now, acknowledging that every datum of the humanities—as well as every divine tradition within the realm of the humanities—is placeable within educational sciences, we contemplate the components through which we can identify traditions that, independent of specialized education, purely encompass the knowledge of desirable modification in human voluntary attributes and behaviors. That is, within them, no determination toward the aforementioned specialized educations is observable, and they solely embody absolute laws

regarding desirable modification in human voluntary attributes and behavior.

First Process: Determining Identifying Components

Education, in lexicography, signifies nurturing, rearing, and instructing (Dehkhoda, 1998, vol. 14, p. 550). This concept possesses various and diverse definitions in technical terminology (Motahhari, 1988, p. 16; Seif, 2005, p. 28; Amini, 1994, p. 14; Arafi, 2016, vol. 1, p. 125; Butler, as cited in Shariatmadari, 1969, p. 31; Phoenix, as cited in Shariatmadari, 1969, p. 32; Hushyar, 1948, p. 13). Our selected definition of education and educational sciences is as follows: "Education: A voluntary action performed with the objective of bringing about change in oneself or others." "Educational Sciences: Disciplines that address the description and modification of human voluntary actions and their philosophy."

We stated that our strategy in determining identifying components is the analysis of the elements of the definition. Our definition consists of two parts: the first part, namely "disciplines describing and modifying human voluntary actions," constitutes the definition of science and first-tier knowledge of educational sciences; the second part, namely "its philosophy," forms the second-tier knowledge of educational sciences. Each part possesses its own elements and identifying components. The elements present in the selected definition are: "science," "description," "desirable modification of voluntary attributes," "desirable modification of voluntary behavior," and "man." The presupposition is that we have identified and extracted the divine traditions of the humanities' domain and are now on the verge of organizing them within the branch of educational sciences. Therefore, the scientific nature of the traditions and their descriptive character are presupposed. It is clear that a divine tradition does not inherently contain recommendations and prescriptions; although divine

traditions are sometimes accompanied by prescriptive propositions, the aforementioned propositions are not generative divine traditions; rather, they are commands that, relying upon the data of divine traditions, shape human actions and abstentions. Furthermore, it is presupposed that by identifying the divine traditions of the humanities' domain, we have attained the divine traditions related to human voluntary actions. Whatever knowledge these traditions place at our disposal will possess an educational function. Consequently, the identifying components of the first-tier knowledge of educational sciences, derived from the first part of the definition, are:

1. **"The science of describing human voluntary attributes and actions"**; our intended meaning of descriptive science is the descriptive propositions of the Holy Quran.
2. **"The science of desirable modification of attributes and desirable actions"**; our intended meaning of modification science is any proposition that exclusively articulates the factors and barriers of desirable modification in human attributes and actions.
Thus, any tradition embodying one of the aforementioned components is a placeable tradition within the first-tier knowledge of educational sciences.
3. **Philosophy of educational sciences (second-tier science)**; our intended meaning of the philosophy of educational sciences is any proposition related to educational sciences that addresses matters external to it. Among the topics of the philosophy of educational sciences, we have selected three subjects: foundations, objectives, and methods.

Second Process: Explaining Data Retrieval and Its Conceptual Model

The aforementioned components lead us to the data of the first- and

second-tier knowledge of Quranic educational sciences. The explanation of the data retrieval process based on each component is as follows:

First—The component of "sciences describing human voluntary attributes and actions"

Based on this component, any divine tradition that encompasses the description of human voluntary attributes and actions is placeable within the branches of the humanities and educational sciences. We stated and argued earlier that every Quranic tradition in the humanities' domain can likewise be placeable within the branch of educational sciences; we even stated that we can consider the divine tradition related to each branch of the humanities—such as economics, politics, and law—as the educational traditions of that branch. Therefore, in identifying the divine traditions of the educational sciences branch, we do not face complexity and difficulty. Since every descriptive datum of the humanities is placeable within educational sciences, all divine traditions of the humanities are worthy of knowledge for the educator.

For instance, the verses: « فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَعْطَىٰ وَاتَّقَىٰ * وَصَدَّقَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ * فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْيُسْرَىٰ * وَأَمَّا مَنْ بَخِلَ وَاسْتَغْنَىٰ * وَكَذَّبَ بِالْحُسْنَىٰ * فَسَنُيَسِّرُهُ لِلْعُسْرَىٰ » (Al-Layl: 5–10) can be categorized among the data of the humanities; because the first three verses indicate a tradition reporting a causal relationship between three voluntary actions—"giving," "fear of God (*taqwā*)," and "believing in the best"—and "the provision of ease and wealth by God." The next three verses likewise indicate a tradition reporting a causal relationship

between three voluntary actions—"withholding (stinginess)," "self-sufficiency," and "denying the best"—and "the provision of hardship and poverty by God." In addition to their placeability within the first-tier science of educational sciences, the above verses encompass teleological data that fall within the philosophy of educational sciences. However, here we elucidate the aspect of first-tier science. The concepts of "giving," "fear of God," and "believing in the best" are desirable realities, while "withholding," "self-sufficiency," and "denying the best" are undesirable and modifiable realities in human beings. Education is the process of desirable modification in the learner, which is realized by generating desirable attributes and actions or eliminating undesirable attributes and actions. The causal relationships expressed in the aforementioned verses show that if an educator wishes to provide the factors of ease within the learner's personality, it is necessary to instill in them the behavior of giving, the emotion of piety, and the recognition of goodness. Similarly, to steer them away from hardship, it is necessary to distance them from stinginess, self-sufficiency, and the falsehood of considering goodness unreal.

Second — The component of "the science of desirable modification of human voluntary actions"

Any divine tradition embodying data regarding the modification of human voluntary actions—whether desirable or undesirable—is placeable within the branch of educational sciences, in addition to being a tradition in the realm of the humanities. It is worth noting that we equate "science of modification" with prescriptive, evaluative, and advisory sciences. These sciences are usually expressed in the form of propositional imperatives and in the mold of commands and prohibitions. Another category exists in the form of propositions that

praise or condemn a human action. Divine traditions can be analogous to this category of evaluative propositions because Almighty God expresses evaluative propositions to bring about changes in human behavior through awareness of the value of an action. The praise or condemnation of a human voluntary action by the Creator of man, in addition to its evaluative implication, expresses an ontological truth regarding it. For example, in the Quranic expression: « لَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَرُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ » "And do not insult one another and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [belief]. And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers" (Al-Hujurat: 11), the imperative phrase "And do not insult one another" and the prohibitive phrase "and do not call each other by [offensive] nicknames" do not inherently indicate any descriptive knowledge; however, the declarative sentence "Wretched is the name of disobedience after [belief]" and the sentence "And whoever does not repent - then it is those who are the wrongdoers," although both are declarative sentences and real propositions that also indicate descriptive knowledge, possess prescriptive and evaluative implications as well. These sentences indicate the impropriety of "calling one another by bad names" and "failing to repent from it." The harmony of the two aforementioned expressions reveals the deeper meaning of the first expression. In the Quranic expressions, we encounter two Quranic divine traditions:

First: Naming [someone] with a corrupting name after belief is bad.

Second: Believers who do not repent from bad naming are wrongdoers.

The aforementioned traditions, in addition to their ontological

implication, also possess implications regarding prescriptive content. Prescriptive content encompasses the knowledge of modifying human voluntary attributes and actions. Our elucidation regarding the implication of the aforementioned traditions on prescriptive content is as follows:

- a) The word "*bi'sa*" is termed a verb of condemnation in contrast to "*ni'ma*," which is for praise.
- b) The word "*bi'sa*"—both independently and in the compound "*bi'samā*"—has been used a total of 20 times in the Holy Quran. In all twenty usages, *bi'sa* entails the meaning of a discordance between the object related to *bi'sa* and man. This discordance, accompanied by unpleasantness, is not merely an evaluation devoid of truth; rather, it informs of a reality within existence.
- c) The Creator's notification of "the badness of a thing," in addition to announcing a value, informs of an ontological truth. The Creator's report differs from the report of a created human being. If a human gives such a report, they are solely informing of a value and an asserted truth, and it is not certain that a reality exists beyond it; however, divine reports are ontological.
- d) If from the first expression we do not reach the ontological reality of "the discordance of the object of *bi'sa* with man," we arrive at it from the second expression; because if we consider merely the lexical meaning of injustice (*zulm*), which is "placing a thing in other than its proper place," the "wrongdoing of believers who do not repent from giving bad names to others" signifies persistence in an action that

is out of place—meaning it is incompatible with the position in which they are situated and with the divine generative and legislative traditions.

Therefore, any evaluative content expressed in the form of a declarative sentence in the Quran, in addition to being evaluative, possesses an ontological nature and indicates a generative reality. Thus, propositions of this sort can likewise bear divine traditions. Since these traditions also indicate desirable and undesirable actions—just as the aforementioned verses indicate the desirability of repentance and the undesirability of "corrupt naming"—they are traditions placeable within educational sciences; because they provide a portion of the educator's awareness regarding human voluntary actions and their effects, which can exert an impact on the adoption of educational measures and actions.

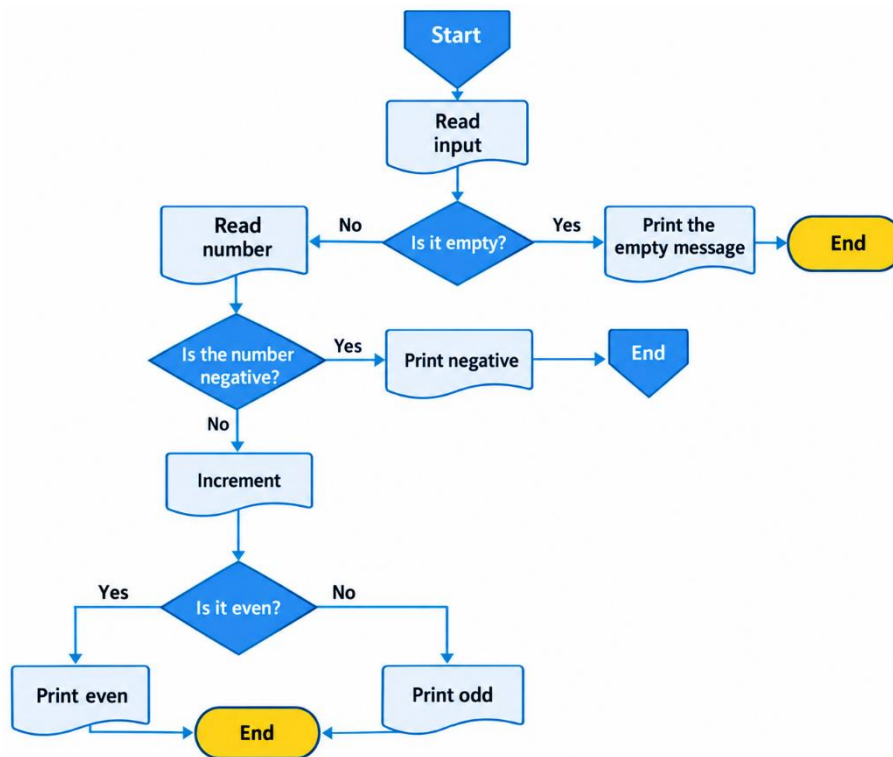
Third — The component of "second-tier sciences of describing and modifying human voluntary actions," which includes foundations, objectives, and methods. For instance, the verse (Al-Isra: 70), which expresses the divine tradition of the inherent dignity of man, indicates an anthropological foundation. Likewise, the verse (Al-Hujurat: 13) possesses a teleological implication, indicating acquired dignity as a desirable and educational objective. Similarly, the traditions present in the verses (Rum: 6–9) can harbor methodological implications, such as the practical role of "awareness-raising," "emerging from heedlessness," and "contemplation" in education.

Conceptual Model of Data Retrieval in Educational Sciences within the Quran

By possessing the three identifying components stated previously, we can delineate the conceptual model for identifying the divine

traditions of the educational sciences branch. The presupposition is that we have already identified the divine traditions. First, we separate the data related to the branch of educational sciences from the humanities, and then determine the type of its scientific content in terms of first-tier or second-tier science.

The following diagram illustrates the conceptual model of the pathway for identifying data indicating the educational branch:



Third Process: Organizing the Data of Quranic Educational Sciences

The third process is the organization of the data of Quranic educational sciences. For this purpose, we need to accomplish two stages:

a) Determining the organization patterns of educational sciences and drawing the conceptual model of each

In this stage, we determine two patterns for organizing the data of both first- and second-tier sciences. We select the pattern in such a way that it falls among the most comprehensive circles of data classification; because the objective of the article is to demonstrate primary examples of data organization in educational sciences, and this level of localization and structuring is sufficient for determining more detailed patterns. This conciseness is also compatible with the limited capacity of a scholarly article.

b) Explaining the examples

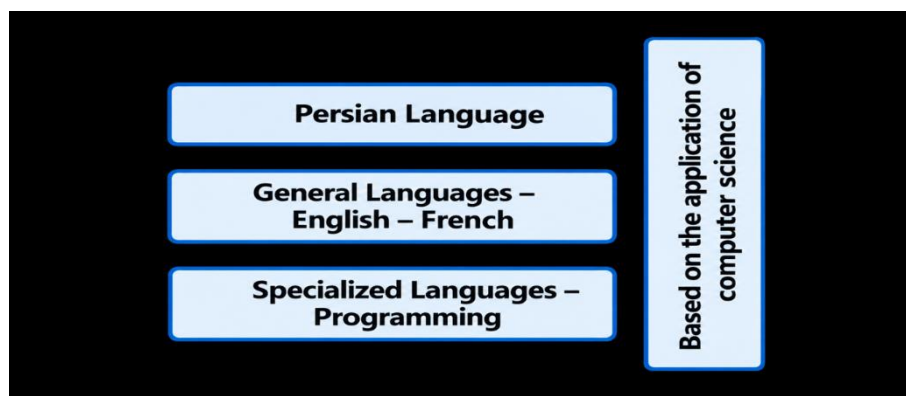
Following the determination of organization patterns and their diagrammatic presentation in the form of two conceptual models—which depict a simple picture of the pathway for organizing the data of Quranic-based educational sciences—we proceed to explain examples of organizing Quranic data within the structure of the humanities, thereby concretely demonstrating the operationalization of the organization.

A) Determining the Organization Patterns of Educational Sciences

1) The pattern for organizing first-tier knowledge data of educational sciences

To organize the Quran's humanities data within the branch of educational sciences, we localize the data within the three-domain pattern of human actions—namely, the cognitive, affective, and

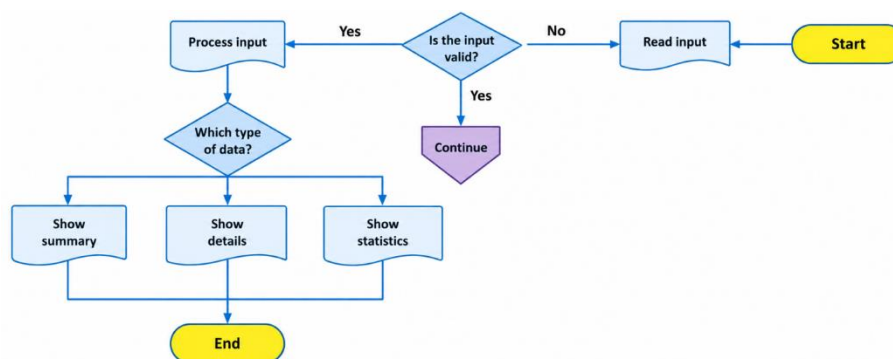
behavioral domains. The structural diagram of the first-tier educational science of the Holy Quran based on the aforementioned pattern is as follows:



Conceptual Model for Identifying and Organizing First-Tier Data of the Educational Sciences Branch

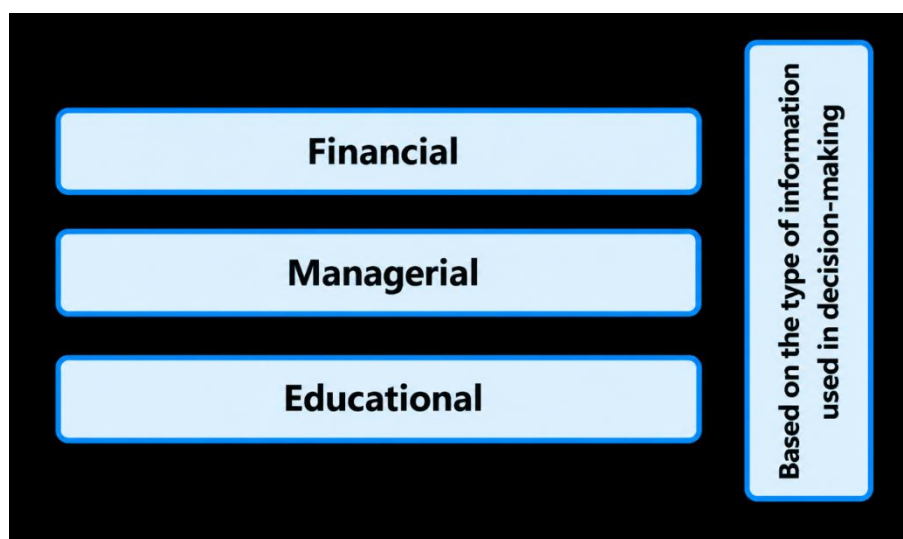
This pattern is the most comprehensive and inclusive structure that can be utilized to organize first-tier educational sciences. The function of organizing educational sciences derived from the Holy Quran within this pattern is that it demonstrates how the data of the Holy Quran encompasses all three of the aforementioned domains.

The following diagram illustrates the pathway for organizing the Quran's first-tier data across the three cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains:



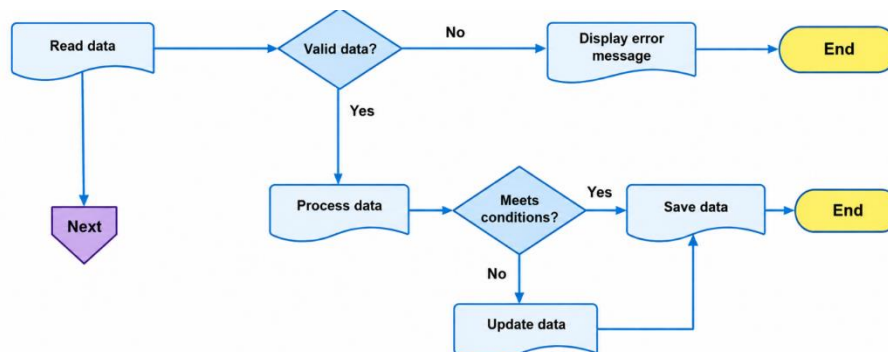
2) The pattern for organizing second-tier science data of educational sciences

Since we selected three dimensions of the philosophy of science for investigation, the identifying components of the second-tier knowledge of educational sciences are: foundations, objectives, and methods. Accordingly, the structural diagram of the second-tier science of educational sciences is as follows:

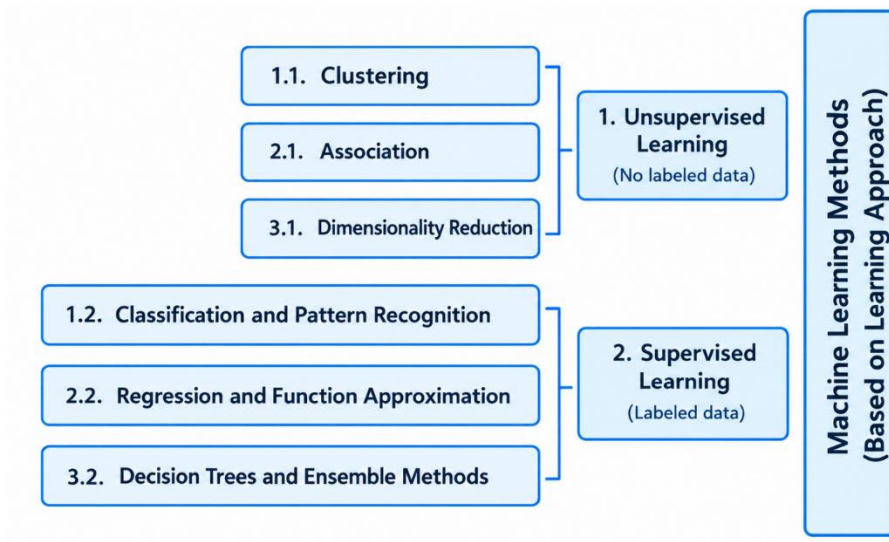


Conceptual Model for Organizing Second-Tier Science Data of Educational Sciences

The following diagram illustrates the conceptual model of the pathway for organizing the Quran's second-tier data across the three dimensions of foundations, objectives, and methods:

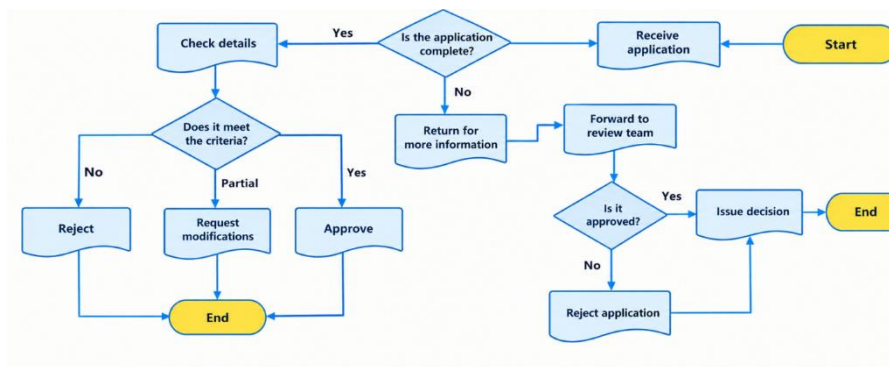


Comprehensive Pattern for Organizing Quranic-Based Educational Sciences



Comprehensive Conceptual Model of the Organization Pathway

The integration of the previous models depicts the comprehensive conceptual model of the pathway for organizing the data of both first- and second-tier Quranic educational sciences:



B) Examples

The operational stages of organization follow the two patterns we considered. We endeavor to examine and localize at least two Quranic examples for each of the domains in first-tier science, and for each of the foundations, objectives, and methods in second-tier science. Thus, we will analyze and organize a total of 6 to 12 examples—6 examples of second-tier educational science data and 6 examples of first-tier data—by localizing them within the aforementioned patterns and structures.

First: Organizing Second-Tier Quranic-Based Educational Sciences Data

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Foundations in Educational Sciences

1. «فَطَرَتِ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ» "The *fiṭrah* of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah" (Ar-Rum: 30) is a divine tradition concerning human creation. This tradition expresses the existence of *fiṭrah* (innate disposition) within human beings, which is a divine affair and in the emergence of which human choice and action have no intervention. Despite this, the aforementioned tradition constitutes one of the foundations of the humanities from the perspective of contemporary exegetes (Jawadi Amuli, 2010, pp. 129–131), and specifically an anthropological foundation in educational sciences.
2. «وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا» "And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference" (Al-Isra: 70) indicates the inherent dignity of man (Office of Cooperation between Hawzah and

University, 1998, p. 145). The inherent dignity of man constitutes an anthropological foundation in Quranic-based educational sciences, as many have acknowledged (Jawadi Amuli, 1987, p. 18; Farhadian, 1999, pp. 231–250; Shahriari and another, 2014; and Heydarnejad, 2018). It is evident that the dignity expressed in this tradition is not acquired; rather, it is intrinsic. The tradition of man's inherent dignity is a second-tier knowledge and falls among the foundations of the humanities and educational sciences. Based on this tradition, every individual inherently and by virtue of themselves possesses dignity. Therefore, human education must also be within the framework of their inherent dignity and must not compromise it; rather, it should foster its flourishing and growth.

Quranic-Based Data for Objectives in Educational Sciences

1. «قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْآنًا عَجَبًا * يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ» Say, 'It has been revealed to me that a company of the jinn listened and said, "Indeed, we have heard an amazing Qur'an * It guides to the right course, and we have believed in it. And we will never associate with our Lord anyone"' (Al-Jinn: 1–2). The "continuous guidance of the Quran toward the right course (*rushd*)" is an absolute yet potential tradition. The constituent element of the *rushd* targeted by the Quran is faith and righteous deeds. This tradition expresses a goal-oriented datum in the science of education, thereby embodying second-tier knowledge for educational sciences.
2. «وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ» "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Ad-Dhariyat: 56) expresses ontological content regarding the jinn and humans. Restricting the cause of their creation to worship clearly demonstrates the divine

objective behind their creation. This objective is perpetual, and the creation of every human being and jinn is accompanied by it. The educator's awareness of this objective guides them toward steering all cognitive, affective, and behavioral actions of the learner in the direction of realizing worship and growth.

Quranic-Based Data for Methods in Educational Sciences

2. «إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا» "Except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful" (Al-Furqan: 70) informs of a direct and causal relationship between the components of "repentance," "faith," and "righteous deeds" for "wrongdoers" and "the replacement of bad deeds with good ones." The sequence mentioned in the verse is meaningful, and any permutation within it will impede the flow of the tradition. Fundamentally, a person who does not repent from the aforementioned sins cannot truly believe in their terrifying consequences, and until they believe, they will not proceed to replace sins with righteous deeds, which are good acts. The tradition of replacing bad deeds with good ones possesses processual components. Processes form a part of methods; therefore, the aforementioned tradition indicates a part of the methodology of religious education and is counted among the methodological traditions within the science of education. This tradition demonstrates how to achieve transformation. It indicates the necessity of undertaking the aforementioned threefold process to realize the conversion of a bad deed into a righteous one. Accordingly, by being aware of the processual factors of repentance, followed by faith and then righteous deeds, the educator attains the methodology for modifying the learner's actions and can render them

eligible for the tradition of transformation.

Quranic-Based Data for Methods in Educational Sciences

3. إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَٰئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ «عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا» "Except for those who repent, believe, and do righteous work. For them Allah will replace their evil deeds with good. And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful" (Al-Furqan: 70) informs of a direct and causal relationship between the components of "repentance," "faith," and "righteous deeds" for "wrongdoers" and "the replacement of bad deeds with good ones." The sequence mentioned in the verse is meaningful, and any permutation within it will impede the flow of the tradition. Fundamentally, a person who does not repent from the aforementioned sins cannot truly believe in their terrifying consequences, and until they believe, they will not proceed to replace sins with righteous deeds, which are good acts. The tradition of replacing bad deeds with good ones possesses processual components. Processes form a part of methods; therefore, the aforementioned tradition indicates a part of the methodology of religious education and is counted among the methodological traditions within the science of education. This tradition demonstrates how to achieve transformation. It indicates the necessity of undertaking the aforementioned threefold process to realize the conversion of a bad deed into a righteous one. Accordingly, by being aware of the processual factors of repentance, followed by faith and then righteous deeds, the educator attains the methodology for modifying the learner's actions and can render them eligible for the tradition of transformation.
4. «ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَا بَأْ» "That is the True Day; so he who will takes to his Lord a resort" (An-Naba: 39) informs of the causal relationship between human volition (*masyiah*) and the

initiation of guidance toward God. A number of verses in the Holy Quran indicate this divine tradition (Al-Kahf: 29; Al-Muddaththir: 36–37 and 54–56; Al-Muzzammil: 19; Al-Insan: 29; and At-Takwir: 27–29). The aforementioned tradition illustrates one of the processual factors of moving toward God or turning away from Him. The formation of volition (willing) for the divine education of oneself or another is a processual necessity; hence, it possesses a methodological function. By being aware of this processual factor, the educator realizes that to create a fundamental change in the learner, prioritizing the methodology of influencing their volitions and desires must be placed at the forefront.

Second: Organizing First-Tier Educational Sciences Data

Quranic-Based Data

Cognitive Domain of Educational Sciences

5. «ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ أَصَاؤُا السُّوَاىَ أَنْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَ كَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ» "Then the end of those who did evil was the worst [consequence] because they denied the verses of Allah and were toward them mocking" (Ar-Rum: 10); "Then the end of those who did evil was evil because they denied the verses of Allah and used to mock them." The verse demonstrates a causal relationship between "denying the verses of Allah and mocking them" and "an evil consequence." That is, an evil end belongs to those who did evil because they denied and mocked the verses of Allah (Tabatabai, 1970, Vol. 16, p. 159). The continuous denial and treating as false of the verses of Allah constitute a cognitive action. Man's bad ending is the effect of this continuous cognitive action of his. This datum is placeable among the Quranic-based data of the cognitive domain of educational sciences. By recognizing this tradition, the educator distances the learner from committing evil so as to protect them from the

aforementioned consequence.

6. «شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُوا الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ» "Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge—maintaining [creation] in justice" (Al-Imran: 18); "Allah testifies that there is no deity except Him; and the angels and those possessing knowledge, while standing firm for justice."

The verse demonstrates the impact of man's rising for justice on the testimony or witnessing of the oneness of God; just as Allameh Tabatabai considers this testifying to be presence-based and intuitive (Tabatabai, 1970 AH, Vol. 3, p. 113). In any case, the aforementioned testimony is epistemic and cognitive, and rising for justice is instrumental in this cognition. With this explanation, the cognition and witnessing of God is eternal, while the cognition of the angels and humans is non-eternal. The difference between the cognition of angels and that of humans lies in the fact that angels possess cognition of God by essential necessity, whereas humans are not accompanied by this necessity, and the bulk of human cognition is acquired. Thus, rising for justice is an eternal necessity in God, an essential necessity in angels, and acquired in humans. Man voluntarily acquires knowledge and rises for justice, and consequently attains the cognition and witnessing of the divine oneness. Some exegetes have considered "maintaining [creation] in justice" (*qā'iman bi-al-qist*) to be solely a circumstantial state (*ḥāl*) qualifier for "Allah" (Jawadi Amuli, 1998, pp. 210–211; Tabatabai, 1970 AH, Vol. 3, p. 113), although Allameh's phrasing emphasizes that Allah is the possessor of the circumstantial state (*dhū al-ḥāl*) and is not explicit in denying other agents as *dhū al-ḥāl*; however, Ayatollah Jawadi's phrasing clearly indicates the exclusivity of Allah as the *dhū al-ḥāl*. This is subject to critique: first, *ūlū al-'ilm* (those of knowledge) is the closest agent to the circumstantial state;

second, if the state were intended for all agents, it should have stated, "Allah testifies—standing in justice—that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge," so that these two would be conjoined to Allah, the object of testimony, and Allah's state. Accordingly, by recognizing the aforementioned tradition, the educator realizes that in order to lead the learner to the testimony or witnessing of the divine oneness, it is necessary to bring them to the sufficiency of knowledge coupled with rising for justice.

Quranic-Based Data

Affective Domain of Educational Sciences

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7. «فَتَلَقَّى آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ» "Then Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful" (Al-Baqarah: 37).

A natural concomitance exists between repentance and remorse. Of course, not every level of remorse leads to repentance, just as the Holy Quran reports the remorse of some without recording their repentance (Al-Ma'idah: 31 and 52). Not everyone who is remorseful is necessarily repentant, but everyone who is repentant is at the highest level of remorse, because only this level of remorse culminates in repentance. Therefore, repentance, by way of implicative indication, is a tradition governing human affective action. Recovering and restoring the learner to desirable actions depends upon generating the affect of remorse that culminates in repentance within them.

8. «مَنْ يَوْقَ شَحِّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ» "And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful"

(Al-Hashr: 9).

The Holy Quran speaks of an affective action oriented toward wealth and economic matters that provides the groundwork for *falāḥ* (success/salvation) and an open path toward God. *Shuḥḥ* means stinginess accompanied by greed (Raghib Isfahani, 1991, p. 446). Stinginess is an affective action directed toward property and economic matters that prevents a person from spending where expenditure is necessary. *Yūqa*, meaning "is protected," speaks of an action that influences the aforementioned affective action. The verse informs of a causal relationship and a tradition. One of the complete causes for attaining *falāḥ* is the prevention of the affective action of stinginess accompanied by greed. This tradition is placeable among the data of the affective domain of the Quranic-based educational sciences. One of the ways to lead the learner to the lofty goal of *falāḥ* is for the educator to curb the attribute of "stinginess accompanied by greed" within them.

Quranic-Based Data

Behavioral-Operational Domain of Educational Sciences

9. ذَٰلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ * الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا « رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ * وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ رَٰزِقُونَ * أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ "This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah * Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them * And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith] * Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful" (Al-Baqarah: 2–5).

The nominal form of the root *taqwā* indicates stability in being characterized by the origin of the action. The use of present tense verbs for the actions of faith, expenditure (*infāq*), and certitude (*yaqīn*) also denotes dynamism and continuity. This means that performing the aforementioned actions only once or a few times and then abandoning them is not fruitful; rather, to achieve the stated results, each of these actions must be institutionalized within human existence continuously and dynamically.

There is a processual connection between the two groups of actions, stating that "dynamic and continuous faith in the unseen" is the cause of "the continuous establishment of prayer," and "dynamism and continuity in establishing prayer" is the cause of "the continuity and dynamism of expenditure." Likewise, "continuous faith in what has been revealed to the Prophet" is the cause of "the dynamism and continuity of faith in what was revealed before the Prophet," and "dynamic faith therein" is the cause of "continuous and dynamic certitude regarding the Hereafter." To bring the learner to the aforementioned desirable results, the educator must foster behaviors in them that act as the causes for those results.

10. يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَ يَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَ مَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ * الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ « بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَ يَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ » "He misleads many thereby and guides many thereby. And He misleads not except the defiantly disobedient * Who break the covenant of Allah after its contracting and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth. It is those who are the losers" (Al-Baqarah: 26–27).

The verse indicates at least four divine traditions; however, only two traditions are conditioned upon human behavior. First: the tradition of the "causal relationship between deviance (*fisq*) and three

actions: breaking the covenant, severing ties of kinship, and causing corruption on earth." Second: the tradition of the "relationship between deviance and the aforementioned actions with loss (*khusran*).\" The aforementioned traditions are placeable among the data of the behavioral domain of Quranic-based educational sciences. By being aware of the causal relationships between the aforementioned behaviors and their undesirable outcomes in order to prevent the learner's deviation through the Quran, the educator must distance them from the attribute of deviance. Similarly, to prevent their loss and self-alienation, it is necessary to curb the actions of breaking the covenant, severing kinship ties, and causing corruption on earth within the learner.

Conclusion

1. Religious data, including the data of the Holy Quran, are fraught with anthropological propositions and a collection of descriptive and prescriptive knowledges for organizing human voluntary actions. Therefore, the subject matter, predicate, and issues of the humanities overlap with the data of the Holy Quran.
2. Educational sciences rank among the most important branches of the humanities.
3. A remarkable portion of the data of the Holy Quran consists of divine traditions that describe human voluntary actions and are placeable within the branch of educational sciences.
4. Formulating a methodological approach for organizing divine traditions within the domain of the humanities and positioning the said traditions therein—especially within its most important branch, namely educational sciences—serves as one of the

undeniable prerequisites for Islamization and is a necessary and unavoidable task.

5. The essential processes of organizing Quranic-based humanities within any branch of the humanities, including educational sciences, are as follows:
 - 5.1. First: Determining the identifying components;
 - 5.2. Data retrieval;
 - 5.3. Organizing the data of Quranic educational sciences;
6. The identifying components of the divine traditions in the domain of first-tier educational knowledge consist of: first—incorporating the description of human voluntary actions; second—incorporating the modification of human voluntary actions.
7. The identifying components of the divine traditions in the domain of second-tier educational knowledge consist of: first—incorporating foundations; second—incorporating objectives; third—incorporating educational methods.
8. Those components whose inclusion in any divine tradition necessitates its placeability within educational sciences.
9. Data retrieval is carried out through examining the inclusion of identifying components in each divine tradition.
10. Divine traditions containing first-tier knowledge of educational sciences are organizable within three domains: cognitive, affective, and behavioral.
11. Divine traditions containing second-tier knowledge of educational sciences are organized within a threefold structure of foundations, objectives, and methods.

12. The conceptual model for organizing each of the divine traditions containing first- and second-tier knowledge of educational sciences, as well as their comprehensive conceptual model, is delineable.

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Rereading Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's Theory of Religious Science by Presenting a Hierarchical Explanation of Religious Science*

Isa Moallem¹

Yousef Daneshvar Niloo²

1. PhD Student, Department of Theology and Philosophy of Religion, Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qom, Iran (**Corresponding Author**).
isamoallem@gmail.com

2. Associate Professor, Department of Theology and Philosophy of Religion, Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qom, Iran.
daneshvar@iki.ac.ir

Abstract

The issue of religious science is one of the most important epistemological discussions in contemporary Islamic thought, and Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi is among the thinkers who have presented a coherent view regarding its possibility and essence. In some prevailing interpretations of this view, religious science has been sought mainly in the realm of normative sciences, and descriptive and natural sciences have been deemed outside this domain due to their empirical nature. By analytically rereading the works of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi, the present article attempts to provide a different reading of his view. Based on this rereading, the religiousness of science in his thought is not merely in the

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sense of the direct presence of religious teachings in the content of scientific propositions, but can also be realized at the level of the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of science. To elucidate this claim, using a descriptive-analytical method, the article shows that in his intellectual system, one can distinguish between two levels of scientific analysis: the level of the descriptive content of sciences and the level of their foundations and explanatory frameworks. Accordingly, although empirical propositions are neutral at the descriptive level in terms of being religious or non-religious, natural sciences can at the level of foundations rest upon divine presuppositions and in this sense fall under the category of religious science.

Keywords

Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi, religious science, descriptive sciences, normative sciences, Islamization of sciences, metaphysical foundations, philosophy of science.

Introduction

The discussion regarding the relationship between religion and science, especially in the realm of humanities and social sciences, has turned into one of the central topics in contemporary Iranian intellectual discourse. Among the put-forward viewpoints, Ayatollah Mohammad-Taqi Misbah Yazdi holds a prominent position by presenting a philosophical and systematic analysis of the nature of science and its relation to religion. However, in many prevailing readings of his view, religious science has been sought mainly in the domain of normative sciences, and descriptive and natural sciences, due to their empirical nature and discovery function, have been deemed neutral at the level of proposition content and outside the religious sphere.

The present article argues that this perception does not provide a complete picture of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's intellectual system. The main claim of this research is that in his thought, the "religiousness of science" does not merely mean the direct presence of religious teachings in the content of scientific propositions or its restriction to normative sciences; rather, it can also be realized at the level of metaphysical and epistemological foundations governing science. Accordingly, even natural sciences, if grounded upon divine presuppositions, can fall within the framework of religious science. From this perspective, the Islamization of science is not confined to reforming prescriptive and value-oriented sciences, but is rather directed toward the reconstruction of fundamental epistemological frameworks across all sciences.

The key to understanding this claim lies in paying attention to two fundamental distinctions in Misbah Yazdi's thought: First, the distinction between "science as descriptive propositions derived from empirical or rational methods" and "science as a scientific discipline

or tradition with specific historical and theoretical presuppositions." In his works, the negation of values' influence is mainly directed toward established scientific propositions within a specific methodological framework, rather than the entire complex process of scientific inquiry, which is always influenced by intellectual backgrounds and theoretical presuppositions (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, pp. 180 and 204). The second distinction is between "the religiousness of a science in the sense of that science's intrinsic relation to human happiness" and "the influence of extrascientific foundations—whether religious or non-religious—in the formation of macro-epistemological frameworks of sciences." Disregard for these levels has paved the way for interpretations that have either resulted in the absolute neutrality-attribution of natural sciences or negated the possibility of their being religious.

Within this same framework, his epistemological analysis of the nature of experience and induction is also significant. Criticizing the simplistic positivist view of empirical science, he emphasizes the limitations of the empirical method in achieving certainty and considers the inference of general laws from partial observations to be based on a kind of implicit probabilistic syllogism that does not yield demonstrative certainty (Misbah Yazdi, 2010, vol. 1, p. 110). Furthermore, even under strict laboratory conditions, proving the exclusivity of a cause and the certainty of an empirical result encounters philosophical difficulties (Misbah Yazdi, 2011, vol. 2, pp. 71–72). This analysis shows that in his view, empirical science is not a source of absolute certainty, but an epistemic and probabilistic activity in which the possibility of revision always exists.

Previous researches on this view have mostly engaged in critiquing the perspective or reporting and linearly analyzing the foundations of religious science, and have rarely attempted to coherently

formulate the relationship between different levels of religious science analysis. The innovation of the present article lies in offering a reading that, by providing a structural and hierarchical explanation of the levels of science, shows how his expressions regarding the relative objectivity of descriptive sciences on the one hand, and the emphasis on the role of metaphysical and epistemological foundations on the other, pertain to two different levels of analysis and do not entail inner contradiction.

In this research, direct quotations from the works of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi have been used in certain instances. The reason for this is that the objective of the article is to present an analytical and relatively novel reading of his intellectual system regarding the relation between religion and science, which requires careful attention to the expressions and the manner of conceptual formulation in his own works. Therefore, in some positions, to avoid imprecise interpretive reconstruction and to show the ratio between the various components of this view, quoting the original expressions has been necessary. In addition, the innovation of the present article lies more in offering a fresh reading and analytical formulation of this theory than in undertaking a critical evaluation of it; hence, the direct quotation of certain expressions has been utilized as the basis for this analytical reconstruction.

It is worth noting that the objective of this article is not a critical evaluation of the theory of religious science in Misbah Yazdi's thought; researches regarding the strengths and challenges of this view have been conducted previously. Among them, the author, in an article titled "Examining Ambiguities in Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's View on the Realm of Religion" published in the quarterly *Ma'refat-e Kalamhi*, has addressed certain ambiguities and challenges of this view. The focus of the present article is on rereading and analytically

reconstructing the discussions to demonstrate that within his intellectual system, the possibility of science being religious is not restricted to normative sciences, and natural sciences can also fall under the category of religious science at the level of foundations and explanatory frameworks. This research has been organized using a descriptive-analytical method and relying on the published works of Misbah Yazdi.

1. Elucidating Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's View Regarding the Nature of Science

To meticulously and fairly analyze Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's view on this complex topic—which at first glance may contain statements that appear different or even contradictory—all dimensions and subtleties of his discourse must be placed side by side with great care, as they appear in the extensive text of his statements, without omission or one-sided selection, within a cohesive and detailed logical structure. Without paying attention to these levels of distinction, the aforementioned statements may appear contradictory; however, by analyzing his methodological foundations, one can achieve internal consistency within this intellectual system. Since he is a wise philosopher, contradiction and inconsistency can be attributed to this view only if no reconciling ground exists among these statements. The goal of this analysis is to demonstrate the internal consistency of this theory and to lift the suspicion of contradiction among certain discussions. This is accomplished by uncovering the fundamental distinctions put forth by him. This key distinction, as raised previously, is the separation of "the connection and relation of a science with human happiness" as the primary criterion of being religious, from "the influence of metaphysical foundations" as an unavoidable reality in human knowledge. To achieve this goal, the analysis is advanced

step by step, relying on the wide spectrum of discussions raised in this perspective, such that every argument has firm backing from his own words. To strengthen this analysis in this section, we have inevitably made greater use of the exact phrases of Allameh Misbah Yazdi.

2. Section One: The Corpus of Statements Indicating the Commonality and Neutrality of Descriptive and Natural Sciences and the Negation of Their Religiousness

In the layer of analysis that focuses on the methodological nature and the process of discovery in empirical and descriptive sciences, Ayatollah Misbah, with explicit and repeated emphasis, states a position according to which a specific domain of scientific knowledge intrinsically and logically lacks the capacity to be attributed to religion or oppose it. This domain is none other than "pure descriptive sciences" or "science in the sense of discovering the objective relations of phenomena." To understand this position, one must see how he defines science and religion in this discussion. Ayatollah Misbah places the starting point of the discussion on definition and states that if we consider science in a specific sense, then the compound "religious science" may become meaningless. His intended definition of science in this discussion is "empirical acquired knowledge". In other words, science is that which is obtained through experience and observation and seeks to discover the relations between perceptible phenomena. In contrast, religion in this definition is restricted to "the set of beliefs and values directed toward human happiness." Accepting these two definitions, he concludes that "in this case, we will have nothing called religious science." The reason for this claim is that in this type of science, the researcher's personal faith has no intervention in the result of the work. This view explicitly states that "belief or disbelief in God and other religious teachings has

no effect on discovering the relation between two perceptible phenomena through experience, just as the researcher's other tendencies and attitudes have nothing to do with science." (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, pp. 165–166) This is a general principle upon which he insists (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, pp. 56, 214, and 282; Misbah Yazdi, 2012, p. 19; Misbah Yazdi, 2015 [A], p. 294).

To clarify this principle, an example is cited to show that completely contrasting tendencies of two scientists cannot alter the result of an empirical experiment: "Someone who has an ascetic inclination or looks at existence with a pessimistic attitude can reach the same result in empirical issues as a scientist who has a contrary inclination and attitude." Then, they explain why this is the case: "The reason for this truth is that, apart from the scientist's insight and attitude, empirical science operates within the limits defined for it and goes its own way." In other words, the empirical method has its own rules and framework that operate independently of personal beliefs. This view goes even a step further, concluding that if these personal beliefs interfere with the result of science, what is obtained is no longer science in the sense of empirical acquired knowledge: "The difference in ontological attitudes or value judgments of scholars has no intervention in the content of science, for if they intervene, it will no longer be science." From his perspective, in this limited definition of science, the final product of science is nothing other than those very formulas and discovered relations: "What is called science in accordance with this term is the formulas themselves that indicate the relations among phenomena; but the scientist's type of outlook toward existence and their beliefs lie outside the essence of science and have no intervention in it." (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, pp. 165–166) These statements clearly show that at this level of analysis, a methodological independence and a content neutrality toward beliefs are ascribed to science.

This general principle, raised in the realm of pure empirical sciences, also spills over into other epistemic arenas. The exact same logic is employed in analyzing the human sciences. In the human sciences, where it might seem that the place of values is more pronounced, this view makes a complete distinction between two parts: the descriptive part and the prescriptive part. He believes that as long as human science remains within the realm of describing and explaining relations, the same rule governs. It is also stated: "In the human sciences, as long as the discussion is about outlining the essence of a human or social phenomenon and explaining its relation to other phenomena, we are dealing with pure science." What is the characteristic of this branch of human sciences? This view emphasizes: "These sciences, which merely describe human and social phenomena, are shared between the religious and the non-religious, Muslims and non-Muslims." (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, pp. 206–207) That is to say, a Muslim sociologist and a non-Muslim sociologist, if they properly apply the scientific method, must reach similar results in describing a specific social phenomenon (e.g., the causes behind a specific type of collective behavior). These commonalities are not limited to the science of sociology and encompass other sciences such as economics. As a prominent example, he points to the science of economics and emphasizes that basic economic laws pertain to an external reality in which individuals' faith creates no change: "In economic discussions, as far as it relates to the scientific laws of economics, there is no fundamental difference between the markets of Muslims and non-Muslims. No one denies that mechanisms govern economic relations among humans which can be discovered and explained by utilizing scientific methods." (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, pp. 134–135) This shows that an economic law, such as the law of supply and demand, is a discoverable reality that does not belong to a specific society with a particular worldview.

This view even goes beyond empirical and human sciences, encompassing a broader realm of knowledge. He believes that the principle of commonality and the non-effect of faith and disbelief holds true for all acquired sciences obtained through education, experimentation, or the study of documents. In a general and highly thought-provoking statement, he notes: "Faith and disbelief have no intervention in acquiring acquired sciences that must be learned from a teacher, experimented with in a laboratory, or obtained from documents and records; hence, both a believer can acquire them by employing the proper methodology from reliable sources, and a disbeliever." This sentence by itself speaks volumes about this outlook. However, for further emphasis and to show the depth of this issue, he even extends it to the realm of understanding religious teachings themselves, adding: "Even the condition for understanding and acquiring knowledge regarding some religious issues is not that a person must necessarily be a believer, and this is the very reason why disbelievers can also understand some foundational teachings of religion and come to believe in the truth of religion." Then, he provides a theological argument for this claim: "If it were not so, disbelievers would have a legitimate excuse for their lack of faith, and sending prophets would appear to be in vain." (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, p. 174) This argument shows that the process of understanding and reasoning operates largely independently of a person's prior beliefs, and anyone can arrive at truths through reflection.

In his lectures, this stance has also been clearly repeated with tangible examples. In a clear summation during a session with university professors, he draws the dividing line as follows: "If the purpose is a scientific interpretation—meaning within the framework of science—Islam, atheism, and disbelief have no effect on it." (June 8, 2012) And immediately, so that the discussion is not abstract, he

provides a concrete and undeniable example: "Alcohol intoxicates, and it may also have benefits; this is a reality in which a believer and a disbeliever make no difference." (June 8, 2012) This example and general statement constitute the core of his view at this level of analysis. Science discovers realities that are objective and independent of our value judgments. These realities are the same for everyone. Therefore, from this perspective, applying the terms "religious" or "Islamic" to a physical law or a sociological description would be meaningless. This conclusion is the logical outcome of the specific definition of science he presents. This part of his view is primarily put forth in contrast to those who want to place an ideological label on every scientific discovery or imagine that prevailing sciences are inherently anti-religion. With this portion of his statements, he demonstrates that the products of empirical science can be accepted without contradiction with faith, because these products are neutral in and of themselves.

3. Section Two: The Corpus of Statements Indicating the Fundamental and Inevitable Influence of Metaphysical and Epistemological Foundations in Forming the Macro-Framework of Science

However, this picture of absolute neutrality and complete commonality is only one layer of Ayatollah Misbah's complex analysis. At another depth and on a macro level, with utmost seriousness and contrary to simplistic positivist approaches, he heavily emphasizes the essential and inescapable dependency of all scientific knowledge—even pure empirical sciences—upon a network of axioms, presuppositions, and a priori foundations rooted in philosophy, metaphysics, and epistemology. The selection of these foundations is neither a personal nor a preferential matter; rather, it determines the framework for interpreting the world, guides research, defines "scientific problems," and even

dictates the limits of meaningfulness for explanations. Essentially, coherent and deep scientific activity is deemed impossible without accepting (consciously or unconsciously) such foundations, and the logical structure of sciences is recognized as relying upon them. To understand this outlook, one must answer the question: how do sciences prove their issues? Responding to this foundational question, he states: "All sciences, to prove their issues, need principles that are either self-evident and from among accepted common principles, or from axiomatic principles that have already been proven in another science and ultimately in philosophy." (Misbah Yazdi, May 21, 2012) This means no science is an isolated island. To prove their propositions, sciences inevitably rely on principles that are either assumed to be self-evident (such as the principle of non-contradiction) or have been proven in another discipline and accepted as "axioms" in this science. This chain ultimately leads to philosophy and metaphysics, where the discussion concerns the most general principles governing existence and knowledge.

Ayatollah Misbah believes that the fundamental flaw and epistemic deficiency of prevailing Western sciences—which has also spread to other countries—lies precisely here: in incorrect, unproven, or even false metaphysical foundations that have been unconsciously accepted. He repeatedly and explicitly raises this critique. For instance, in a general critique, he states: "One of the general criticisms of the sciences that are today called Western sciences is that they are based on a series of axiomatic principles that have either not been proven in their proper place, or have even been refuted, but are still cited by scientists as the basis for proving and explaining scientific issues." He then concludes that this issue compromises the validity of many seemingly scientific theories: "Many issues that are raised and famous in various sciences as 'scientific theories' and acquire global

validity are based on incorrect metaphysical foundations." (Misbah, 2018, pp. 34–35) To ensure this general criticism is not merely a claim, he turns to objective instances.

One of the most prominent examples he frequently points to is the cosmological theory of the "Big Bang." In cosmology, for instance, the theory of the accidental origin of the universe has global fame, according to which the origin of the universe is explained by an explosion occurring in compressed primordial matter, bringing galaxies, various cosmic systems, celestial bodies, and so forth into existence as a result of this explosion. However, the critique raised in this view against this theory is not a technical critique of its calculations or observational data (which might be correct within its own domain). The critique targets the metaphysical interpretation offered alongside this theory. From Ayatollah Misbah's perspective, interpreting this event as an "accident" is actually a heavy philosophical claim: "The philosophical and metaphysical meaning of this answer is accepting the possibility of the emergence of certain phenomena without any cause, because accident here means the emergence of a phenomenon without a cause." In his view, however, this philosophical claim is rejected: "This is while we definitively prove in metaphysics that such a thing is impossible and no phenomenon can come into being without a cause!" (Ibid.) Therefore, in this view, the main problem of this theory is not its empirical data, but the "philosophical presupposition" hidden within it. Elsewhere, he emphasizes: "The proof of one of the most fundamental hypotheses of empirical sciences that forms the basis of many sciences (the Big Bang) rests upon a philosophical presupposition; a presupposition that self-evident philosophical principles reject!" (Misbah, 2018, pp. 243–244) This analysis shows how a scientific theory can be influenced by metaphysical foundations.

This critique is not limited to cosmology. He believes that many theories in the human sciences and psychology are also built upon incorrect metaphysical foundations. Specifically, he names materialism, the denial of incorporeal entities, and the denial of a soul independent of the body as anti-religious foundations that have penetrated prevailing sciences. This view emphasizes: "Scientific theories that are either based on anti-religious foundations such as materialism, the denial of incorporeal entities, and the denial of a soul independent of the body, or propose methods and behaviors that are incompatible or in conflict with religious beliefs or values, are counted as instances of non-religious or anti-religious science." He then explains what contradiction with religious beliefs precisely means: "Being in conflict with beliefs means that these theories are based on axiomatic principles—such as the equality of existence with matter or the limitation of human life to this world—that are not accepted by religion." (Misbah, 2018, pp. 206–207) For instance, behavioral psychology, which attempts to reduce all psychological phenomena to material interactions in the brain, is grounded in the denial of the soul. Or sociologies that view human happiness purely in material welfare are based on limiting life to this world.

Given these descriptions, should these sciences be completely discarded? No, the solution he proposes is "Islamization" or, more precisely, "reconstructing the foundations" of these sciences. This view explicitly states: "Making these sciences religious or Islamic entails discovering and promoting theories and interpretations, and prescribing methods and behaviors that are compatible with Islamic beliefs and values." (Misbah, 2018, pp. 206–207) This does not mean that all empirical data of these sciences should be thrown away; rather, it means that the interpretive framework, goals, and macro-foundations

of these sciences should be revised based on a correct view of existence and humanity. For instance, in psychology, instead of denying the soul, its existence should be accepted as a reality, and the mutual interaction of body and soul should be considered in behavior analysis. This outlook makes science deeper and more truth-reflective.

He also raises a very important point regarding the neutral and impartial nature of science, which holds great significance. He believes: "No scientist can escape the reality that their ontology—whether correct or incorrect, whether conscious or unconscious—can to some extent have an effect on their scientific knowledge. Materialist scientists are influenced by a materialist outlook in solving scientific issues, and divine scholars are influenced by a divine outlook. This reality is compatible with the principle of the neutrality of descriptive sciences, because ontology belongs to the category of knowledge, and utilizing it—like utilizing the achievements of other sciences—is unhindered for proving scientific issues. It is clear that the purpose of science's neutrality is not that using the results of other sciences is forbidden, because, for example, mathematics is used in physics, and some even condition its scientific nature on being mathematical. Scientific neutrality means that a researcher must not prejudice the result of research before investigating and examining reasons and evidence, nor allow unproven traditional beliefs or personal desires to interfere in the conclusion." (Ibid., pp. 275–276) In this statement, it is clearly specified that the intended neutrality of descriptive sciences is not about being neutral toward foundations; rather, it means one must not prejudice research outcomes prior to examining evidence, nor accept unproven beliefs as foundational principles. Paying attention to this meaning of the "neutrality of descriptive sciences" is crucial for an accurate analysis of this view.

4. Section Three: Statements Indicating the Influence of Psychological and Value-Based Factors as a Human Reality in the Process of Scientific Inquiry

In addition to the impact of macro-metaphysical foundations—which relate to the structure of knowledge and pertain to the content and framework of science—Ayatollah Misbah also acknowledges another inescapable reality in the process of scientific inquiry: the influence of the researcher's personal and social tendencies, preconceptions, interests, stakes, and values. This influence is more pertinent to the research process itself than to the scientific propositions proper. However, what distinguishes this view from certain extreme sociological interpretations (such as the Edinburgh Strong Programme) is that he considers this influence not as an inherent logical necessity of science, but as a human weakness, a flaw, an error factor, and a deviation from the correct path of research that must be overcome through epistemic and moral effort, and self-purification. He by no means justifies this influence, instead viewing it as a problem.

Ayatollah Misbah asserts that complete liberation from these influences and achieving a fully objective perspective is an extremely difficult task requiring spiritual perfection that is not readily available to everyone. He explicitly states: "Such a thing is not possible for the majority of people, and rare are the individuals who can keep themselves aloof from preconceptions and tendencies in the position of inquiry. To achieve such a matter, something akin to infallibility is required." Yet, is this unattainable? No, he believes: "This objective is attainable through abundant effort in the arena of self-purification." (Misbah Yazdi, 2010 [A], p. 114) This shows that genuine scientific inquiry is not merely an intellectual activity, but also requires moral refinement and combat against carnal desires. A scientist who is captive to prejudices, ambitions, or material interests will very likely fall into

error or poor judgment in observing, reporting, or interpreting data. On the other hand, since this task is deemed extraordinarily difficult, it can be said according to this view that the science formed so far has generally been influenced by these tendencies and values. It is unlikely that Ayatollah Misbah attributes anything akin to infallibility to the scientists who produced and shaped this science!

Thus, examining the scientist's function in the realm of practice shows that although Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi accepts the infiltration of values and tendencies in existing sciences and deems them in need of reform, his intended "pure" or "neutral" science does not describe the sciences observed today. Rather, he refers to an ideal and desirable science devoid of any susceptibility to values.

The key point in Ayatollah Misbah's philosophy of science is his sensitivity toward the intervention of values and tendencies (particularly relying on epistemological foundations). In contrast, most contemporary philosophers of science in the West, by fully accepting the influence of these factors, still consider the produced propositions to be scientific; because their approach is grounded in attention to the history of science and field realities, avoiding purely abstract discussions. They believe that scientists throughout history, even in the phase of theory evaluation and selection, have been influenced by their values (Godfrey-Smith, 2013, p. 120; Barbour, 1997, p. 226; Burtt, 1932, p. 50).

Therefore, the fundamental difference between Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's view and contemporary philosophers of science (such as Kuhn and Ladyman) does not lie in the principle of "accepting or rejecting the influence of values on science"; because both views agree that the existing process of scientific inquiry is shaped within a context of scientists' tendencies and biases (Godfrey-Smith, 2013, p. 120; Barbour, 1997, p. 226). The main point of divergence lies in the

"epistemic possibility of transcending this limitation." Contemporary philosophers of science generally rely on methodological relativism or the structural limitations of the human mind to deem complete neutrality impossible (Chalmers, 2023, p. 85); whereas Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi believes that despite great difficulty, achieving truth-reflection and freedom from non-epistemic values is possible and accessible through demonstrative methodology and self-purification (Misbah Yazdi, 2010 [A], p. 114).

Perhaps another statement by Ayatollah Misbah better demonstrates a proximity to the philosophy of science. He points to the reality of differing viewpoints in sciences—part of which stems precisely from these psychological, social, and cultural factors—and accepts it under the broader concept of "science as a platform and space for scientific dialogue or the scientific process." Explaining this outlook, he states that sometimes "science" does not refer to definitive and proven propositions, but rather to the arena where diverse views are expressed: "If the purpose of science is the platform where scientists discuss, express views and theories, and follow a single subject and method, many factors influence it." This view explains that in this space, susceptibility to various factors is common: "If you look closely, it becomes clear that all, or at least a vast portion, of the views of our scholars in all sciences are influenced by the views of their predecessors... Now, if someone says that religious theories are also effective in science in the sense of a platform accommodating contradictory views, consequently the resulting theory will also be just one theory alongside others and will create no problem." He then points to the origin of divergences: "The differences of opinion that exist in a science originate from various factors such as social environment, value system, society's culture, and so forth." (June 8, 2012) This statement shows that he also views science as a collective,

historical, and contextual process in which various factors—including religious ones—can appear as influential sources in the genesis of an opinion or theory. However, note that he does not interpret this as the correctness of all those theories; rather, it simply means that such influences exist within the fiercely contested process of science. Ultimately, from an epistemological perspective, the correct theory is the one that matches reality, independent of its origin, and although difficult, this is attainable and rarely found in existing sciences.

5. Section Four: The Teleological Explanation of "Being Religious" and Its Sharp Distinction from the Concept of "Influence of Foundations" as the Key to Solving the Riddle

Armed with these three seemingly heterogeneous categories of statements—which emphasize the commonality of sciences across different worldviews, the impact of metaphysical foundations, and the impact of psycho-social factors—the question might arise: Is science, from Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's perspective, religious or not? Can one simultaneously hold to commonality and the influence of religious foundations? The key to solving this riddle and discovering the internal consistency of his discourse lies in paying attention to the primary criterion and axis for ascribing the descriptor "religious" to a science or a piece of knowledge. From Ayatollah Misbah's perspective, what makes a piece of knowledge or an epistemic system "religious" in the true sense of the word is not merely its susceptibility to certain metaphysical presuppositions aligned with religion, but its direct and intrinsic relation to "human happiness or wretchedness." Religion, in this outlook, is essentially charged with guiding humanity toward ultimate happiness, and all its knowledge, values, and rulings are organized around this axis.

Therefore, sciences that are descriptive in nature and engage in

discovering "whats" and objective relations—even if they are formed within the framework of divine foundations, are influenced by them, and are even practiced by committed believers—are inherently and in the position of pure description "indifferent" and neutral toward human happiness. In fact, the neutrality of science does not mean neutrality toward metaphysical foundations, values, or tendencies; rather, it means that the scientific proposition itself is neutral toward human eternal happiness. These sciences are tools for understanding a portion of the world's realities, but this understanding in itself and directly does not lead humanity to happiness, even though this understanding rests upon religious metaphysical foundations. To reach happiness, a further step is required: the need for value judgment, determining dos and don'ts, and practical guidance.

This is where religion enters. This is the exact point explicitly stated when explaining the duties of religion and distinguishing it from science. Ayatollah Misbah first introduces descriptive sciences as follows: "The study of bodies and the examination of the extent and type of elements constituting a specific substance, and the expression of its physical and chemical properties, are among the goals of certain natural sciences." Then he immediately demarcates the scope of religion: "On the other hand, explaining how to utilize it in order to achieve true human happiness goes beyond the subject matter and goal of science." Whose duty is this, then? The clear answer: "It is religion that bears the responsibility of explaining the relation of phenomena to the perfection of the human soul and human interests, evaluating how humans interact with material and non-material phenomena, and determining human duties in encountering them." (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, p. 205) Simply put, science says, "This substance has this property." Religion says, "Considering that this substance has this property, how you should or should not use it to reach happiness."

Based on this, he lists a long array of subjects that are not counted among the duties of religion because they possess a descriptive nature: "Expressing realities related to physical and chemical facts, geological and cosmic phenomena, human bodily structure, physical illness and health, psychological disorders and their treatments, and thousands of other similar issues are not counted among the duties of religion." (Misbah Yazdi, 2015, p. 29) Religion's duty toward these matters is not to describe them, but to guide how these forms of knowledge are utilized on the path to happiness.

Therefore, from this perspective, even if divine or atheistic foundations are inevitably influential in the formation, selection, and interpretation of theories in descriptive sciences (which, from his view, they are), this influence by itself does not render those sciences "religious" or "non-religious" in the teleological and precise sense of the word. Why? Because the criterion for being religious is "relation to happiness," not merely "being aligned with metaphysical foundations or religious texts."

"Becoming religious" in the primary and precise sense of the word is realized when science itself directly and essentially serves the values, dos and don'ts, rulings, and happiness-inducing goals of religion, and its content is saturated with this orientation. In pure descriptive sciences, such an intrinsic orientation does not exist; hence, he calls these sciences "neutral," "pure," and "merely descriptive." These three concepts pertain to the connection of these sciences with true human happiness, not their connection with metaphysical foundations, as he fully accepts that these sciences are founded upon metaphysical foundations and is himself a critic of this current status, claiming that the first step in Islamizing sciences is reforming these very metaphysical foundations. (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, p. 236) This orientation primarily exists in the realm of prescriptive, normative,

and value-oriented sciences. For example, "Islamic economics" is a religious science not because it denies or alters the laws of supply and demand, but because it determines the goals of the economic system (such as justice, equity, poverty alleviation), moral limitations (such as the prohibition of usury, fraud, hoarding), and priorities based on religious values.

The ambiguity existing in this conception of religious science is that if "being religious" for a science entails that scientific propositions themselves point to the eternal happiness of human beings, what difference will there be between "religion" and "religious science"? According to Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's view on the definition of religion, the centrality of religion's goal is fully evident. Specifically, defining religion, he states: Religion is a set of beliefs, values, and practical rulings that show humanity the path to achieving eternal happiness. (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, p. 100; Misbah Yazdi, 2002, p. 14; Misbah Yazdi, 2018 [B], p. 32; Misbah Yazdi, 2019, p. 31; Misbah Yazdi, 2010 [B], p. 104; Misbah Yazdi, 2016, p. 145; Collective of Authors, 2018 [B], p. 197) Furthermore, a science that directly points to human eternal happiness is considered not only religious but identical with religion itself. In fact, these directives themselves form a part of religion and are unified with it (Misbah Yazdi, 2010 [A], pp. 118–119).

6. Section Five: Islamization as Scientific Realism, Foundation Reconstruction, and Framework Correction, Not an Ideological Endeavor

Now, with the clarification of the pivotal distinction between "being religious in the sense of teleology and connection to human eternal happiness" and "the influence of foundations in sciences," Ayatollah Misbah's objective in presenting the intellectual project of the "Islamization of sciences" can be re-examined. Upon closer inspection, a

broader meaning for the Islamization of sciences can be envisioned within this perspective. Many might assume that Islamization means imposing pre-determined beliefs onto scientific data or ignoring realities to harmonize them with religious texts. Therefore, he strongly and repeatedly emphasizes the opposite of this assumption. In this view, Islamization is never an ideological, prejudiced, political, or purely slogan-driven act; rather, it is the height of realism, a hundred-percent scientific activity, and an epistemological necessity for achieving a deeper, more coherent, and more accurate understanding of the world. In fact, the goal of Islamization is to understand the world better, more deeply, and upon correct foundations—to place the edifice of science on solid ground rather than a shaky one. As is clear, such a task is not limited to the realm of normative sciences, but is entirely feasible in the descriptive branch of the human sciences as well as the natural sciences. If Islamization means a hundred-percent scientific activity and an epistemological necessity for achieving a deeper, more coherent, and more accurate understanding of the world, then descriptive sciences and natural sciences (even if they have no relation to human happiness) possess the capability of being Islamized. This meaning of Islamization can also be deduced from Ayatollah Misbah's perspective.

Ayatollah Misbah explains the precise meaning of this endeavor as entailing two essential phases: "The purpose of Islamizing sciences is that in the first phase, the foundations of the sciences are proven, and the sciences are explained based on correct foundations, so that thereafter, the connection of the sciences' issues with their foundations becomes clear." (Misbah Yazdi, 2010 [A], p. 236) Thus, the first step is working on foundations. But what are the correct foundations? He responds: "Correct foundations are principles that agree with the Qur'an; meaning that reason and revelation are in

complete agreement here." This sentence is extremely important. He does not believe that correct foundations are those we have extracted from the Qur'an and then forced reason to accept. Rather, he believes that correct foundations are principles accepted by both demonstrative reason and endorsed by revelation (the Qur'an). These foundations "will inevitably be Islamic," not due to prejudice, but because they hold the truth. He emphasizes: "We do not claim this blindly; rather, when we say it is Islamic, we have debated it and can prove it to you to reach the conclusion that those foundations are precisely what Islam—and—in the words of the Supreme Leader—the Qur'an says." (Misbah Yazdi, May 21, 2012) Therefore, Islamization is a discursive and demonstrative activity.

Ayatollah Misbah explicitly distances this project from any taint of prejudice and ideologization: "The purpose of Islamizing sciences is not a ritualistic and prejudiced act to prove an ideological tendency or a political task." In contrast, he considers the nature of this work to be entirely scientific: "This task is a hundred-percent scientific and novel activity for reforming sciences in the world, such that the entire world will feast at your table." (Ibid.) That is to say, if this task is performed correctly, its outcome will be so rigorous and beneficial that others will inevitably be compelled to accept and utilize it. Naturally, this task is feasible in both normative and descriptive sciences.

This stance is rooted in a fundamental and impartial truth-seeking that can be defended even independently of personal beliefs. He views the questioning of the foundations of science as a query that every fair-minded researcher must ask themselves: "The effort to answer these questions is a hundred-percent academic and scientific activity, not an ideological activity stemming from prejudice toward Islam, nor even to fulfill the slogans of the Islamic Republic." He then

puts forward an interesting hypothesis: "Even if we were not Muslims, or did not live under the shadow of the Islamic Republic, these questions would still confront us as a searching and truth-seeking human being, and every impartial and unbiased individual must initiate their work from these foundations as a pure scientific task; otherwise, their other scientific efforts will remain rootless, fragile, and abortive..." (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, pp. 242–243) This statement shows that critiquing the materialistic foundations of prevailing sciences and striving to replace them with more rational foundations is a universal epistemological necessity, not a parochial religious demand.

Ayatollah Misbah attributes his critical stance toward prevailing Western sciences not to anti-Westernism or prejudice, but to truth-seeking and the recognition of shortcomings: "If we take a stance against Western sciences and wish to purge our universities of certain data from Western sciences, it is not simply because they are 'Western'—for we hold the exact same stance toward 'Eastern' sciences; rather, it is because we observe flaws, deficiencies, and occasionally errors and fallacies in their data, and our sense of truth-seeking—in addition to our religious duty—dictates that we not tolerate those shortcomings and distortions, and strive to attain truths as accurately and realistically as possible" (Misbah Yazdi, 2018, p. 33).

This interpretation of Islamization elevates it from a purely identity-driven or political project to an epistemological and reformative one. On the other hand, it accounts for all of Ayatollah Misbah's statements, showing that while emphasizing the Islamization of the human sciences, he does not consider natural sciences or the descriptive branch of human sciences to be inherently non-Islamic. In fact, the Islamic nature of science has two meanings. In the first sense, it means that the science itself has a connection to human eternal

happiness; in the second sense, it means that a science is able to rest upon divine foundations.

Ultimately, even if this interpretation of Islamization is not accurate from his perspective, the assertion that metaphysical foundations necessarily and logically influence science is a correct and precise reading of Ayatollah Misbah's view, the documentations of which were presented earlier. Furthermore, the claim that values and tendencies have predominantly influenced existing sciences is also an accurate and precise extraction of his viewpoint. These analyses bring his perspective very close to that of contemporary philosophers of science. In any case, one can produce science based on theological and normative foundations, and even based on religious tendencies, and such a science is still considered science in academic circles because, according to Ayatollah Misbah, existing science is "predominantly" and, from the standpoint of philosophers of science, "entirely" based on the metaphysical foundations, values, and tendencies of scientists.

7. Final Summary: A Hierarchical Theory in Relational Analysis of Religion and Science

Rereading the works of Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi regarding the relation between religion and science shows that his view can be explained within a hierarchical model. Many interpretations that perceive some incompatibility between emphasizing the neutrality of descriptive sciences while simultaneously defending the possibility of Islamizing sciences stem from conflating two different levels of science analysis. By separating these two levels, his aggregate views can be formulated within a coherent framework.

At the first level, analysis pertains to the nature and function of descriptive sciences. At this level, natural and empirical sciences are

formed with the goal of discovering and describing objective realities, and the content of their propositions points to "whats" rather than "oughts." Hence, these sciences, logically and with respect to their epistemic function, are neither religious nor non-religious; because the criterion for being religious in this sense is a direct connection to human guidance and happiness, whereas descriptive sciences lack such a function.

At the second level, analysis is directed toward the macro-epistemological foundations and frameworks of science. At this level, scientific activity always takes place within the context of specific metaphysical and epistemological presuppositions that play a role in defining scientific problems, orienting theorizing, and interpreting data. From this perspective, reviewing and reforming these foundations based on a divine worldview can harmonize the general framework of sciences with the religious epistemic system.

Based on this distinction, the term "religious science" is used in Misbah Yazdi's thought in at least two senses, distinguishing which is essential for an accurate understanding of this view:

- **Normative and prescriptive sciences** based on religious teachings, such as jurisprudence, ethics, and certain branches of human sciences that directly deal with guiding human behavior and regulating "oughts" and "ought-nots." These sciences, due to their direct connection with human guidance and happiness, inherently fall within the realm of religion and are actually counted as part of religious teachings (Misbah Yazdi, 2010 [A], pp. 118–119).
- **Descriptive sciences** that are reconstructed or interpreted within the framework of divine metaphysical foundations; such as physics, psychology, or sociology, which while

retaining their descriptive nature, are understood within the framework of divine presuppositions. In this sense, the religiousness of science does not mean its direct connection to human happiness, but pertains to the compatibility of its theoretical foundations with a divine worldview.

Accordingly, in Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's thought, one can on the one hand maintain the objectivity and methodological commonality of descriptive sciences at the level of reality-discovery, and on the other hand raise the possibility of critiquing and revising the metaphysical foundations governing these sciences. These two positions pertain to two different levels of analysis of science and do not conflict with one another; rather, they can be reconciled within a hierarchical framework. Consequently, the Islamization of science in this view, rather than relating to changing the content of empirical propositions, pertains to rethinking the macro-epistemological foundations and frameworks of science.

Conclusion

This research, by systematically rereading Ayatollah Misbah Yazdi's viewpoint, demonstrated that the apparent conflict in some renditions of his opinions stems from conflating two distinct levels of science analysis. The results derived from the hierarchical explanation show that:

- Firstly, at the micro and propositional level, descriptive and empirical sciences—due to their inherent goal of discovering the relations of the world's phenomena—are neutral, and the researcher's faith or disbelief plays no role in the truth-value of their reports.
- Secondly, at the macro and paradigmatic level, these sciences are inevitably bound to rest upon a priori metaphysical and

epistemological foundations. Islamization at this level is not the ideological imposition of beliefs, but the reform and epistemic upgrade of the foundations of science based on demonstrative reason and confirmatory evidence from revelation.

- Thirdly, the teleological distinction shows that the genuine criterion for a science being religious is its intrinsic tie to human eternal happiness. Accordingly, normative sciences are inherently religious, and descriptive sciences are attributed to religion by virtue of resting upon monotheistic foundations. This model provides a coherent framework for resolving the conflict between the methodological independence of empirical science and the necessity of Islamization.

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Amir-Moezzi's Shi'a Studies: A Critical Analysis of Sources and Citations*

Alireza As'adi 

Associate Professor, Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy, Qom, Iran.
asaadi@isca.ac.ir

Abstract

In his Shi'a studies, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi has built his historical analyses and reconstructions of early Shi'ism upon a spectrum of Shi'i hadith, narrative, and historical sources. The main issue of this research is a critical examination and evaluation of his sources and citations, assessing their reliability and the methodological coherence of Amir-Moezzi's research in his utilization of them. Adopting an analytical-critical approach, this study examines the most significant hadith sources cited by Amir-Moezzi, the manner in which he utilizes these sources, and the critical viewpoints raised regarding them. The findings indicate that Amir-Moezzi faces serious problems in source selection, evaluation of traditions, and data analysis, including an extensive reliance on texts with dubious attribution or lacking definitive authenticity, disregard for hadith studies and rijāl (biographical) criteria in evaluating traditions,

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selective treatment of data, biased translations and interpretations, and references that are inaccurate or inconsistent with primary sources. Furthermore, the results indicate that a portion of his analyses is influenced by esoteric presuppositions and Orientalist approaches, which, in some cases, has led to the imposition of specific readings upon narrative texts.

Keywords

Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, Orientalists, Shi'a Studies, Early Shi'ism, Shi'a.

Introduction

Sources and citations are among the most important pillars of any scientific research, and the credibility of the research results depends to a great extent on the authenticity, accuracy, and manner of their utilization. This issue gains greater importance in historical and religious studies, especially Shi'a studies, because historical analyses and reconstructions in this field are primarily based on hadith texts, commentaries, and historical reports, and any weakness in evaluating these sources can lead to a distorted picture of Shi'i history and thought.

Among contemporary Shi'a scholars, Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi has attracted widespread attention by proposing the theory of "early esoteric Shi'ism." Relying on hadith texts, he argues that a significant portion of early Shi'is attributed a status to the Imam beyond the human level, and this esoteric tradition continued until the 10th century CE. In his belief, with the victory of the rationalist Baghdad school over the hadith-oriented Qom school, Imami Shi'ism shifted from supra-rational esotericism toward theological and jurisprudential rationalism, and thus the final form of Imami doctrines was shaped.

Although Amir-Moezzi's viewpoints have been the subject of numerous studies and critiques, these studies have often focused on topics such as Imamology, Mahdism, ghuluww (extremism), esotericism, and his historical reading of Shi'ism. However, an independent and methodical examination of his sources and citations and an evaluation of his method of utilizing hadith and historical data have received less attention; whereas without evaluating the credibility of sources and the accuracy of citations, judgment regarding his results and claims will not be complete.

The present study seeks to fill this gap and, through a critical examination of Amir-Moezzi's sources and citations, evaluates their credibility, authenticity, and methodological coherence. To this end, first, the position of the Holy Quran in his works and the implications of his view on the issue of the distortion (tahrīf) of the Quran are examined. Then, the hadith sources he cites are analyzed in terms of authenticity and reliability. Subsequently, his manner of encountering hadith and historical texts is evaluated from the perspective of source selection, methodological inconsistency, disregard for the research of Muslim scholars, and certain instances of misunderstanding or distortion of texts. Also, by matching his references with primary sources, examples of inconsistency between research data and cited texts will be demonstrated. In total, this article attempts to show that a part of Amir-Moezzi's historical reconstructions, rather than being based on definitive historical evidence, is influenced by a specific type of source selection and interpretive reading of texts.

First: The Holy Quran

Although Amir-Moezzi has not independently named the Holy Quran among the primary sources of his research, he has cited Quranic verses throughout his Shi'a studies and has utilized them in historical, theological, and Imamological analyses. In discussions such as Imamate, Wilayah, esotericism, the issue of ta'wīl (esoteric interpretation), Mahdism, and even explaining the epistemic status of the Imams, he has repeatedly referred to the Quran and has attempted to reinforce his specific reading of early Shi'ism by citing certain verses and narrative commentaries. Therefore, although the Quran does not have an independent position in his official list of sources, it is effectively one of his most important argumentative backings, and examining his perception of the Quran is necessary for understanding the foundations and results of his research.

The importance of this issue is doubled because the type of perspective toward the Quran has a foundational impact on the manner of understanding Islamic history and theology. In the Islamic tradition, the Holy Quran is considered the most reliable and foundational source of religious knowledge, and other sources, including hadiths, are evaluated and validated in its light. In the Shi'i hadith heritage as well, the compatibility of a tradition with the Quran is considered one of the most important criteria for assessing the credibility of a hadith. Therefore, any historical or theological analysis regarding Shi'ism that is formed based on a specific type of perception toward the Quran will inevitably affect the final results of the research.

Examination and Critique The Holy Quran, as previously stated, is among Amir-Moezzi's research sources. In our view, the Holy Quran is considered an important source for religious beliefs, and in traditions, one of the criteria for validating hadiths is their compatibility with the Quran. Amir-Moezzi, although acknowledging this, has damaged the credibility of the Quran by implying its problematic nature. He considers important examples of the problematic nature of the Quran to be issues such as the authenticity of the Quran, the distortion of the official Quran, the lack of organization of the Quran in terms of the order of revelation, the interference of Meccan verses in Medinan surahs and vice versa, and the belief in *nāsikh* and *mansūkh* (abrogator and abrogated) to settle glaring contradictions in the Quran. In his analysis of why the Quran was compiled with such a text, he points to numerous factors and, in a way, assigns a centrality to Shi'ism in them. Internal conflicts and also enmity and opposition to Imam Ali are among the most important factors he has addressed. Amir-Moezzi has considered the belief in the distortion of the Quran as the origin of the necessity for Quranic exegesis and believes that the Shi'i Imams initially provided the undistorted text of the verses to their followers, as evidenced by the

examples of Shi'i verses in traditions. Based on this very approach and the belief in the deletion of phrases or names from the Quran, Shi'ism believed in the theory of the "silent Quran" and considered the understanding of the Quran to be conditional upon its interpretation by the Imams. However, according to Amir-Moezzi, around the 10th century CE, Shi'ism, for various reasons, abandoned the claim of the distortion of the Quran and subsequently believed in the theory of the levels of Quranic meaning so that it could provide a Quranic basis for proving its claims in the discussion of Imamate through interpretation and ta'wīl (Amir Moezzi, 2019, pp. 919-967). Accordingly, if the credibility and authenticity of the Quranic text are considered so damaged, ultimately the Quran itself can no longer be used as a definitive and reliable source for extracting religious beliefs and historical analyses; an issue that will have important methodological implications for Amir-Moezzi's entire intellectual system.

Second: Hadith Sources

Amir-Moezzi has divided the hadith sources of his research into two categories: primary sources and secondary sources. In stating the primary sources of his research, he calls them the first systematic compilers of Imami hadiths as well as sources of supra-rational esoteric Imamiism, of which Ibn Babawayh is the loyal last presenter from the early period. These sources are:

- Basā'ir al-Darajāt written by Sheikh Saffar Qumi (died 903 CE)
- Usūl al-Kāfī and Furū' al-Kāfī by Sheikh Kulayni
- al-Ghaybah written by Nu'mani
- Some works of Saduq such as 'Ilal al-Sharā'i', Kamāl al-Dīn, al-Tawhīd, al-Amālī, 'Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā, Ṣifāt al-Shī'ah, and Faḍā'il al-Shī'ah.

He has divided the secondary sources into three categories:

- Works whose Imamological and esoteric aspects are inseparably connected to each other, such as the book *al-Maḥāsin* by Abu Ja'far Ahmad ibn Muhammad Barqi (died 887 or 893 CE).
- Sources whose dependence on supra-rational esoteric Imamiism, i.e., the original belief, is partial; such as the exegetical works of early Imami exegetes like Furat ibn Ibrahim Kufi (died 912 CE), Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumi (died 919 CE), and Muhammad ibn Mas'ud Ayyashi (died 932 CE).
- Primary sources whose authenticity and completeness have not been definitively proven; for example, *Nahj al-Balāghah*, or *Ithbāt al-Waṣiyyah li-l-Imām 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, which Shi'is attribute to the famous Mas'udi (died 956 CE), author of *Murūj al-Dhahab*.

Amir-Moezzi has considered the exercise of maximum caution necessary in using secondary sources and considers their utilization permissible where they confirm or complete the contents of the primary and original sources (Amir Moezzi, 1994, pp. 19-22). With the argument that a few decades after the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, rationalists gained superiority and marginalized the irrational esoteric tradition, and in truth, Imamiism engaged in self-censorship, he believes that old lithograph prints and also manuscripts of some primary sources, i.e., manuscripts related to the irrationalist esoteric tradition, are still widely used and in some cases, reference to them is even necessary (Amir Moezzi, Schmidtke, 1997, pp. 73-122). Among the mentioned sources, Amir-Moezzi has paid the most attention to the book *Basā'ir al-Darajāt* written by Saffar Qumi. He has even written a

lengthy article about this book and its author entitled “Al-Saffār al-Qummī et son Kitāb basā’ir al-darajāt.” According to him, Saffar Qumi’s book is the oldest systematic collection of hadiths related to Twelver Imamology and has gathered the foundations of the metaphysics and ancient mysticism of Imamiism within itself. For this reason, this book undoubtedly belongs to the original tradition, i.e., “irrationalist esotericism” (ésotérique non-rationnelle). Amir-Moezzi has attributed the reason for referring to specific hadith sources like Basā’ir al-Darajāt to the immense transformation of Shi’ism in the 10th century CE, in which the rationalist theological current became dominant. In his opinion, if we want to know Shi’ism before this jurisprudential-theological transformation, which is a late transformation and goes back to the 10th century CE and the Buyids, through these texts, we are forced to rely on texts like those of Saffar and Kulayni. Because after them, Shi’ism transforms and, as stated in the texts, distances itself from the teachings of the Imams. Amir-Moezzi has considered his work in referring to such sources as similar to Majlisi’s reference to the sources of the Akhbaris and the first Shi’i sources, and states that if it is permissible to criticize him, it should be possible to criticize Majlisi as well (Amir Moezzi, 2018, v. 3, p. 47).

Examination and Critique

1- The Challenge of Authenticity and Credibility of Sources

As mentioned earlier, citing sources that possess scientific credibility, historical accuracy, and narrative firmness not only provides a solid backing for the researcher's arguments but also places the analyses in a documented, coherent, and evaluable context. However, the sources that Amir-Moezzi cites the most in his works are not at the same level in terms of authenticity, credibility, and degree of reliability. They can be classified into two general categories:

1. Sources with Valid Attribution and Textual Authenticity

This category includes works whose attribution to known authors is based on sufficient historical evidence and documentation, and there is no serious doubt about the general authenticity of their text. These works have a consolidated position in the Imami hadith and exegetical tradition and are considered among the most important sources for studying Shi'i doctrines; although the critical evaluation of their individual traditions is still necessary. Among the most important sources in this category is *al-Kāfi* by Kulayni, which has always been trusted by Shi'i scholars in terms of narrative and historical accuracy, although validating its individual traditions remains a necessity in hadith studies. The works of Sheikh Saduq also possess the same status and have been widely used throughout the history of Imami thought. Also, the *Tafsīr* of Ayyashi, despite the fact that the chains of transmission of many of its traditions have been removed in the existing version, is not in doubt in terms of attribution to Muhammad ibn Mas'ud Ayyashi. As Allameh Tabataba'i stated in his introduction to this work, it is "the best and most authentic book in ma'thūr (narrated) exegesis" (see: Ayyashi, 1959-1960 CE, pp. 2-4).

2. Sources with Doubts in Attribution or Textual Authenticity

This category includes works about whose attribution to authors, text authenticity, completeness of the work, or the process of their compilation there are ambiguities that may stem from weak chains of transmission, late additions and edits, the absence of old manuscripts, or the existence of inconsistent historical evidence. Therefore, utilizing these sources requires critical examinations and precise historical, rijāl, and textual evaluations.

2-1. Kitāb al-Qirā'āt by Sayyari

Abu Abdallah Ahmad ibn Muhammad Sayyari, author of *Kitāb al-*

Qirā'āt, has been weakened by a number of Shi'i rijāl scholars and scientists, and some have considered the corruption of his school of thought to be a matter of consensus. Furthermore, although a portion of the traditions included in this book has been reflected in ancient sources, the attribution of the existing version of the book to him has not been definitively proven, and the characteristics of the existing late versions also strengthen the possibility of tampering with the text (See: Tusi, 1983-1984 CE, v. 2, p. 865; Najashi, 1986, p. 80; Khu'i, 2009, p. 225).

2-2. Kitāb Basā'ir al-Darajāt

Basā'ir al-Darajāt, despite the famous attribution to Saffar, based on some new research, was probably compiled by Muhammad ibn Yahya Attar and based on a work by Sa'd ibn Abdallah Ash'ari and has undergone additions and changes over time (Ansari, 2009, p. 62).

2-3. Kitāb al-Maḥāsin

This book, although confidently attributed to Ahmad ibn Muhammad Barqi, does not have a complete version in hand. Furthermore, the existing content of the book, rather than reflecting a coherent hadith system, consists of moral themes, literature, mursal (interrupted chain) traditions, and various anecdotes, and in this respect, it differs from reference hadith sources (See: Najashi, 1986, pp. 76–77; Tusi, 1986, v. 1, pp. 62–63; Majlisi, 1993, p. 193).

2-4. Kitāb Sulaym ibn Qays (Asrār Āl Muḥammad)

There are many differences of opinion regarding the chain of transmission, attribution, and content of this book. Some rijāl and hadith scholars have rejected the original book (Ibn al-Ghadha'iri, 2001, p. 36; Shahid Thani, 2000, pp. 992–993), and another group, while accepting the original work, has considered it to have been subject to extensive

distortion and additions (Mufid, 1993, p. 149; Shushtari, 1993, p. 239; also see: Javadi, 2005, pp. 163–179).

2-5. Tafsīr attributed to Imam Hasan Askari

This exegesis, in the view of many researchers, is not considered an authentic work issued by Imam Hasan Askari (Ibn al-Ghadha'iri, 2001, p. 98; Shushtari, 1993, p. 558; Balaghi, 1994, pp. 161–216).

2-6. Tafsīr of Ali ibn Ibrahim Qumi

The Tafsīr of Qumi, contrary to popular belief, is not completely a direct work of Ali ibn Ibrahim, but is a collection that has been compiled from material attributed to him and other sources (Sheikh Agha Bozorg Tehrani, 1987, p. 302; Ma'rifat, 2007, p. 197).

2-7. Tafsīr of Furat Kufi

Regarding Furat ibn Ibrahim Kufi, the content of the only remaining work of his shows that he was either Zaydi or at least had considerable sympathy and inclination toward Zaydism. In this book, many narrations from Zaydi figures are seen, and there is no tradition regarding the doctrine of the Twelve Imams. Furthermore, in some traditions narrated from Zayd ibn Ali, infallibility has been negated for anyone other than the Five of the Ahl al-Bayt (See: Kufi, 1990, throughout the book). Therefore, this work cannot be considered a representative of the Imami exegetical tradition.

2-8. Tafsīr of Habari

There is no consensus regarding the religious identity of Habari; some researchers have considered him to be from among the Sunni scholars, and others have considered him to be Zaydi (See: Habari, 1984, introduction to the book, pp. 36–38). Therefore, attributing the interpretive and esoteric

tendencies of this work to the Imami tradition faces serious difficulties.

2-9. Works of Rajab Barsi

Rajab Barsi has not only been accused of ghuluww (extremism) and excess in the field of thought and beliefs, but based on some new research, his original historical existence is also faced with ambiguities (Hurr Amuli, n.d., p. 117; Danesh Shahraki et al., 2021, pp. 195–215). Allameh Majlisi has also considered his *Mashāriq al-Anwār* and *al-Alfayn* to consist of confusing, incorrect material, a mixture of correct and incorrect, and extremist themes, and has explicitly stated that he only narrated from him traditions compatible with reliable sources and has not trusted his individual traditions, such as *Khutbat al-Iftikhār* and *Khutbat al-Ṭunjiyyah* (Majlisi, n.d., v. 1, p. 10). Furthermore, a portion of the traditions and themes existing in his works either do not have a precedent in early Imami sources or are reported only in some Nusayri texts with dubious chains of transmission (See: Ansari, 2021).

The outcome of the aforementioned discussions is that a significant portion of the sources cited by Amir-Moezzi are matters of debate in terms of authenticity, attribution, or historical credibility. Therefore, reconstructing the history of Imami thought and attributing esoteric and interpretive doctrines to early Shi'ism based on such sources, without critical and precise historical and textual evaluation, does not possess a solid backing.

2- Disregard for Sources or Research of Muslim Scholars

Amir-Moezzi, apart from the primary sources mentioned earlier and examined in terms of credibility and authenticity, has also referred to other sources. An interesting point in this source selection is that he has given special attention to Orientalist sources and has referred to them throughout his research. As he has only referred to the books and

articles of Orientalists regarding the theme of the covenant (mīthāq) (Amirmoezzi, 1994, p. 163). Also on pages 42 and 43, most references are to Orientalist sources. Even the fact that studies have been conducted regarding the will (waṣiyyah) in Islam and especially in Shi'ism has been referred to the work of Goldziher (Amirmoezzi, 1994, pp. 42-43). This is while Islamic scholars, at least in the commentaries of hadith books, have addressed these issues and explained them. In the issue of Mahdism, Amir-Moezzi emphasizes that because Imami and Shi'i Mahdism, the occultation and its historical consequences, the person of the occult Imam, and some personal aspects have already been studied, he avoids entering into these aspects. He then refers to numerous sources, all of which are Orientalist sources (Amirmoezzi, 1994, p. 211).

3-Selective Reading of Sources in Data Collection

A. Methodological Inconsistency in Encountering Hadith Sources: In Amir-Moezzi's works, a type of methodological inconsistency is clearly evident in encountering hadith sources. He sometimes attributes a tradition from Sheikh Saduq directly to Imam Sadiq without textual/chain-of-transmission analysis and makes the date of the tradition the basis of analysis; but in other cases, he merely makes the date of the compilation of the source the criterion for analysis. This duality shows that the choice of method is not a follower of scientific principles, but stems from the author's theoretical presuppositions and analytical goals. A clear example of this issue can be seen in Amir-Moezzi's analysis of the following tradition: « قَالَ الصَّادِقُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ (ع): مَنْ أَنْكَرَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَشْيَاءَ فَلَيْسَ مِنْ شِيعَتِنَا الْمِعْرَاجِ وَالْمُسَاءَلَةِ فِي الْقَبْرِ وَالشَّفَاعَةِ » (Saduq, 1997, pp. 294-295). Amir-Moezzi writes: "'Whoever denies three things is not our Shi'a: the Ascension, the questioning in the grave, and intercession.' According to this hadith and similar

hadiths reported by Ibn Babawayh - Sheikh Saduq, the belief in the Ascension is clearly one of the pillars of Imami Shi'i faith; but the Ascension of whom? These hadiths are silent about this issue just like the subject of intercession. But there is a reason, because in the period when Ibn Babawayh was writing, it was completely accepted in Shi'i circles that the Imam, like the Prophet, has the ability to go on the Ascension (just as he can intercede) and this - as we will see - was taking place despite efforts that were trying to use the term Ascension exclusively for the celestial journeys of the Prophet. The silence of the hadith about this point seems intentional; because this subject was sensitive, especially in this era." (Amir Moezzi, 2011, p. 169).

The above tradition has come with a connected chain of transmission in the works of Sheikh Saduq, but as can be seen, Amir-Moezzi makes the time of the compilation of the source the criterion in analyzing it, not the time of its issuance from the Imam. Furthermore, by raising the question "the Ascension of whom?", he tries to induce ambiguity in the text of the tradition, whereas in the hadith tradition, the term "Ascension" (Mi'rāj) is conventionally applied to the Ascension of the Prophet of Islam and does not need further clarification. On the other hand, historical analysis also shows that this tradition clearly lies within the framework of the doctrinal demarcations of the early Islamic periods.

The triple content of "Ascension, questioning of the grave, and intercession" is a reaction to currents like the Mu'tazila and Jahmiyya who denied these doctrines. This combination is seen exactly in the works of early Sunni scholars; for example, Abu al-Hasan Ash'ari (d. 935 CE) (Ash'ari, 1980, pp. 293-296) and Abu Muzaffar Isfarayini (d. 1078 CE) (Isfarayini, n.d., pp. 56-57) introduce these very elements as indicators of the Sunni faith and subjects of denial by the Mu'tazila (cite: 1). Therefore, the tradition narrated from Sheikh

Saduq is completely valid and in accordance with the intellectual space of its time in meaning, structure, and historical context. While Amir-Moezzi implies that this tradition is fake by making the time of the source's compilation the criterion in analyzing the tradition, he sometimes attributes traditions with extremist (ghāli) contents from late sources, without any critical examination, to the Ahl al-Bayt. Such as hadiths which he has cited regarding the divinity of the Imams (Amir Moezzi, 2011, pp. 103-133). These contradictions not only show the weakness of methodology but also indicate the precedence of mental and ideological traditions over scientific analyses.

B. Focusing on Specific Viewpoints and Deleting Counter-Evidence: Amir-Moezzi's research method is primarily based on the selective choice of sources; that is, he only considers those traditions and texts that are consistent with his theoretical framework and deletes or downplays opposing sources for various reasons. This issue has caused his analyses in some cases to be reliant on incomplete data. For example, Amir-Moezzi definitively claims that hadiths that indicate that the Mahdi shares the same name and kunyah (agnomen) with the Prophet are fabricated and related to the uprising of Mukhtar in support of Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya.

His evidence is a statement by Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya who introduces himself as the Mahdi and shares the Prophet's name (Ibn Sa'd, 1990, v. 5, p. 70), but even if we consider this tradition valid, the mere statement of Muhammad ibn Hanafiyya is no indication of the fabricated nature of the hadiths attributed to the Prophet. This tradition actually shows that in the mind of the general public during the Mukhtar uprising, the Mahdi was someone who shared the Prophet's name and kunyah. In addition, other reports that Ibn Sa'd has brought before this tradition clearly indicate the Prophet's statement regarding the Mahdi sharing his name and kunyah; just as the Prophet had

promised Ali that he would have a son whose name and kunyah would be similar to the Prophet's, and others have no right to such naming (Ibn Sa'd, 1990, v. 5, pp. 67-68). These evidences reinforce the authenticity of the hadiths related to the shared name of the Mahdi and weaken the hypothesis of their fabrication. However, Amir-Moezzi, by overlooking these valid evidences and incorrectly interpreting the material, engages in presenting baseless and immature claims.

4- Distortion or Misunderstanding of Sources

In religious research, reliance on reliable sources and precise understanding of sacred and historical texts play a basic role in producing valid analyses and reliable results. However, sometimes for reasons such as incorrect understanding, intellectual presuppositions, or interpretive misunderstandings, the ground is prepared for distortion or misunderstanding of sources; an issue that can lead to presenting an incomplete or incorrect picture of religious concepts. Amir-Moezzi's research and works in the field of Shi'a studies suffer from such harm.

Numerous instances show that he has imposed his own mystical-esoteric understandings upon texts, sometimes with incorrect translation, sometimes with incomplete reporting or changing the location of the tradition, to which instances are mentioned as examples. In the book *The Spirituality of Shi'i Islam: Beliefs and Practices*, after claiming a doctrinal link between Shi'ism and the culture of ancient Iran, he writes: "Let us suffice with a few examples: a hadith according to which the sacred book of Zoroaster has 12,000 volumes and contains all sciences and Ali as the ultimate acquaintance of this book..." He then refers to *al-Kāfī*, *Amālī al-Saduq*, *al-Tawhīd*, *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh*, and *Tahdhīb al-Aḥkām* in note 130 related to this point and then writes: "References to Ali as knowing

Zoroastrian sciences are also found in Sunni books." He then refers to Abu Yusuf's *al-Kharāj* and Abd al-Razzaq's *Muṣannaf* (Amir Moezzi, 2011, p. 97). Ignoring the ambiguities in the addresses provided by Amir-Moezzi regarding this hadith, his intention is apparently traditions that count the Magians among the People of the Book and explain the legitimacy of taking jizyah from them; traditions that have also been reported in some Shi'i hadith sources (Kulayni, 1986, v. 3, p. 567; Tusi, 1986, v. 1, p. 113; Saduq, 1992, v. 2, p. 53; Saduq, 1997, p. 343). However, Amir-Moezzi's understanding of these hadiths is not consistent with the text of the traditions; because firstly, the expression «فِي اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ أَلْفَ جُلْدٍ ثَوْرٍ» in these traditions, the word "جلد" does not mean "volume" as Amir-Moezzi has brought, but the expression «جلد ثور» means "bull skin." Secondly, in none of these traditions is there any talk of the Zoroastrian book "containing all sciences."

Thirdly, in the text of the hadiths, Imam Ali has also not been introduced as the "ultimate acquaintance" or interpreter of Zoroastrian sciences. In Sunni sources as well, expressions such as «وَاللَّهِ مَا عَلَيَّ «الْأَرْضِ الْيَوْمَ أَحَدٌ أَعْلَمُ بِذَلِكَ مِنِّي، إِنَّ الْمَجُوسَ كَانُوا أَهْلَ كِتَابٍ يَعْرِفُونَهُ وَعِلْمٌ يَدْرُسُونَهُ قَالَ عَلِيُّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ: وَأَنَا أَعْلَمُ النَّاسَ بِهِمْ، كَانُوا أَهْلَ « (San'ani, 1983, v. 6, p. 70) and «كِتَابٍ يَقْرَأُونَهُ، وَعِلْمٌ يَدْرُسُونَهُ؛ فَتَزَعُ مِنْ صُدُورِهِمْ» (Abu Yusuf al-Qadi, n.d., p. 143) have come; but these expressions also have no indication of Imam Ali's special knowledge of Zoroastrian sciences, but the whole point is in proving the Magians are People of the Book and explaining why the taking of jizyah from them is permissible. Furthermore, none of these traditions have any indication of a link between Shi'ism and ancient Iran, and what Amir-Moezzi has raised in this regard is in fact an imposed interpretation stemming from his own presuppositions, not a concept that the text of the hadith has indicated. Amir-Moezzi, in numerous instances, in translating or interpreting traditions, uses

concepts such as "secret," "acquaintance with secrets," and "teaching of secrets," while these expressions do not exist in the original text of the hadiths and are the result of his interpretive and esoteric reading of the traditions. For example, after narrating this hadith from Imam Sadiq: «إِنَّ أَمْرَنَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَحَقُّ الْحَقِّ وَهُوَ الظَّاهِرُ وَبَاطِنُ الْبَاطِنِ وَهُوَ السِّرُّ وَ سِرُّ السِّرِّ وَ «سِرُّ الْمُسْتَسِرِّ وَ سِرُّ مُقَنَّعٍ بِالسِّرِّ» (Saffar Qumi, 1983, p. 29), he writes: "Perhaps the repetitive words of the Imams that have been repeated like a theme throughout their collections should be understood in this sense: We are the treasury and treasurers of God's secret and our Shi'is are our treasury and treasurers" (Amirmoezzi, 1994, p. 148). As can be seen, in the text of the tradition, there is talk of the "affair" (amr) of the Ahl al-Bayt and describing its levels and *butūn* (inner meanings). This approach is repeated in different parts of his works; such that when talking about the knowledge of the Imams, he utilizes expressions such as "teaching of acquaintance with secrets," "knowledge of acquaintance with secrets." He states: "The knowledge of acquaintance with secrets (Initiatory Knowledge) is the constituent element of the Imam's existence.

What makes the Imam is the possession of this knowledge. The titles and descriptive expressions of the Imam, in most cases, are related to this knowledge: treasurer of God's knowledge, mine of God's knowledge, knower of the Quran, firmly rooted in knowledge (*rāsikh fī al-ʿilm*), heir to knowledge, etc." (Amirmoezzi, 1994, p. 177). This is while none of these expressions in hadith sources necessarily indicate "acquaintance with secrets" in the conventional sense intended by Amir-Moezzi. Concepts such as "treasurer of God's knowledge," "heir to knowledge," or "firmly rooted in knowledge" in Shi'i hadith literature are observant of the scientific, divine, and exegetical authority of the Imams, and carrying them on to a type of mysterious and ritual knowledge requires premises and evidences that

Amir-Moezzi does not provide. Another example is his translation of a tradition narrated from Imam Husayn at the beginning of the third chapter of the book. He translates the hadith « وَلَوْلَا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنَّا » (Hammuwi Juwayni, n.d., v. 1, p. 45; Qunduzi, v. 1, p. 75) as: "Because of us, the guides who are acquainted with secrets, the sky does not collapse onto the earth," while in the text of the tradition, there is no expression equivalent to "guides who are acquainted with secrets," and the tradition merely indicates the role of divine proofs in the survival of the universe.

The addition of the expression "acquainted with secrets" in the translation is in fact a reflection of Amir-Moezzi's interpretive presupposition, not the content of the hadith itself. Amir-Moezzi writes on page 48 of the book *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*: "Regarding this, the Imam says: In relation to the Lord, three things are impossible for servants: manifestation, reception, and knowledge, because there is no eye that can bear His manifestation, no heart that can bear His reception, and no intellect that can bear His knowledge." He then brings the Arabic text of this part of the hadith in note 243 and refers it to *Tafsīr Ja'far al-Šādiq*, Nuwaya edition, pp. 196-197 and Zi'ur edition, p. 141. Ignoring the issue of the credibility of this book and its hadiths, observing the complete text of the hadith shows that Amir-Moezzi's translation and understanding of the tradition is not precise; because the second part of the tradition (فلا عين تراه...) has been considered as the reason for the first part of the tradition, while this part of the tradition is in truth not an argument but an exposition of the previous material, and its argument comes in the continuation of the tradition, which Amir-Moezzi has not narrated: The complete text of the tradition is: « ثلاث من العبيد الى ربهم محال: التجلي والوصلة والمعرفة. فلا عين تراه ولا قلب يصل اليه ولا عقل يعرفه. لان اصل المعرفة من الفطرة واصل المواصله ثلاث من العبيد الى ربهم محال: التجلي والوصلة والمعرفة. فلا عين تراه ولا قلب يصل اليه ولا عقل يعرفه. لان اصل المعرفة من الفطرة واصل المواصله من المسافة واصل المشاهدة من المباينة » (Sulami, 1990, pp. 29-30).

5- Inconsistency of Research Data with Primary Sources

One of the common harms in research is the non-correspondence of presented data with the actual content of sources; an issue that can stem from incorrect understanding, incomplete reporting, or distortion in reporting sources and ultimately reduces the credibility of the research. In religious studies, loyalty to the text and precision in citation have double importance. However, in Amir-Moezzi's works, numerous examples of inaccurate references and reports inconsistent with primary sources are observed, some of which we will examine below from the book *The Divine Guide in Early Shi'ism*. The hadith narrated in note 156 (page 160) has been referred to 'Ilal al-Sharā'i'.

Amir-Moezzi has only narrated a part of this detailed tradition: « وَقَدْ قَالَ عَلِيٌّ ع أَنَا مِنْ أَحْمَدَ كَالضُّوءِ مِنَ الضُّوءِ أَمَا عَلِمْتَ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا وَ عَلِيًّا ص كَانَا نُورًا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ قَبْلَ خَلْقِ الْخَلْقِ بِأَلْفِي عَامٍ وَ أَنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَمَّا رَأَتْ ذَلِكَ النُّورَ رَأَتْ لَهُ أَضْلًا قَدْ تَشَعَّبَ مِنْهُ شُعَاعٌ لَامِعٌ فَقَالَتْ إِلَهَنَا وَ سَيِّدَنَا مَا هَذَا النُّورُ فَأَوْحَى اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى إِلَيْهِمْ هَذَا نُورٌ مِنْ نُورِي أَضْلُهُ نُبُوَّةٌ وَ فِرْعُهُ إِمَامَةٌ أَمَّا النُّبُوَّةُ فَلِمُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدِي وَ رَسُولِي وَ أَمَّا «إِلَامَةُ فَلِعَلِّي حُجَّتِي وَ وَلِيِّي وَ لَوْلَاهُمَا مَا خَلَقْتُ خَلْقِي (Saduq, 2006, p. 174). He has changed the order of the phrases of the hadith in this section and has moved the phrase « قَالَ عَلِيٌّ ع: أَنَا مِنْ أَحْمَدَ كَالضُّوءِ مِنَ الضُّوءِ » which is at the beginning, to its end. On page 30, he writes: "In Imami hadiths, the Prophet himself repeatedly repeats that he and Ali were created from a single light before the creation of the world." He refers this matter in note 157 (p. 160) to a hadith with this expression: « خلقت انا و على من نور ».

This hadith has been referred to three sources: Amālī of Sheikh Saduq, al-'Umdah of Ibn Batriq, and the book *Khaṣā'iṣ Wahī al-Mubīn*. Ignoring that narrating a hadith in multiple sources does not necessarily mean the repetition of the hadith by the Imams or the Prophet, the narrated hadith does not correspond with the sources to which it has been referred. The expression of this hadith in Amālī of

Saduq is: «خُلِقْتُ أَنَا وَ عَلِيٌّ مِنْ نُورٍ وَاحِدٍ». In the book al-'Umdah, the expression is: «خلقت انا وعلى من نور واحد قبل ان يخلق آدم باربعة عشر الف عام» (Ibn Batriq, 1085 AH, p. 91) and in Khaṣā'is Waḥī al-Mubīn as well, it is close to this very expression. (Ibn Batriq, 1096 AH, p. 187). Therefore, in total, in none of these sources has the expression «قبل ان تخلق الدنيا» come. Amir-Moezzi writes on page 30: "In a prophetic hadith it has come: God placed prophecy and blessing in me and Imamate (in another narration: eloquence) and chivalry (al-furūsiyyah) in Ali." He has referred this hadith to 'Ilal al-Sharā'i', chapter 116. However, neither in 'Ilal al-Sharā'i' nor in Ma'ānī al-Akḥbār - where Sheikh Saduq has narrated this very tradition in it - does the term "Imamate" exist, and only the word "al-furūsiyyah" has come.

Therefore, it is not clear from what source Amir-Moezzi has narrated the term "Imamate." Even if we consider this term a variant reading, the requirement of the scientific method is that first the text existing in the cited source should be mentioned and then the difference in version should be pointed to. Furthermore, the examination conducted in the Jāmi' al-Aḥādīth software and the Islamic Theology Library shows that the closest expression to this theme is the statement of Sheikh Hurr Amuli in Ithbāt al-Hudāt, who writes: «إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَ فِيَّ النُّبُوَّةَ وَ فِيَّ عَلِيٍّ الْخِلَافَةَ» (Hurr Amuli, 2001, v. 3, p. 187). With all this, even in this report, the term "Imamate" does not exist and there is talk of "Caliphate," not "Imamate." Amir-Moezzi writes on page 32: "Terms such as 'first world of shadows' (ʿālam al-aẓilla al-awwal) or 'first world of particles' (ʿālam al-dharr al-awwal) that are used from time to time in hadiths related to creation, have naturally been applied to this second world." He refers this matter in note 172 to the book al-Ghaybah of Nu'mani and al-Amālī of Sheikh Saduq. However, examining the sources shows that firstly, the expression «عالم الأظلة الأول» essentially does not exist in the traditions. Secondly,

although the expression «الذرّ الأول» has come in some traditions, the combination «عالم الذرّ الأول» is not seen in hadith sources. Furthermore, in the sources that Amir-Moezzi himself has referred to, the word "world" ('ālam) does not exist. Also, the expression «الذرّ الأول» is not found in the second source, i.e., al-Amālī, and only the phrase «و بوركت بالذرّ» has come in it. Therefore, it seems that Amir-Moezzi, by adding the word "world" and constructing combinations like "world of shadows" and "world of particles," has attributed a systematic and terminological concept to the traditions that does not exist in the text of hadith sources. On page 32, he writes: "In a prophetic hadith it is narrated as follows: When Gabriel saw the name of Muhammad inscribed on the curtain of the Throne, he asked God to show him the content of this name.

God took His angel to the first world of particles and there showed him twelve spectral bodies without spirits and said: 'This is the light of Ali ibn Abi Talib, this is the light of Hasan and Husayn' up to the light of the Twelfth Imam, the Qa'im of the family of Muhammad.'" Amir-Moezzi has referred this tradition to Kifāyat al-Athar. The text of the hadith in this book is as follows: «عَنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ص قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنِي جِبْرِيلُ ع لَمَّا تَبَتَّ اللَّهُ عَرْ وَ جَلَّ اسْمُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَى سَاقِ الْعَرْشِ قُلْتُ يَا رَبِّ هَذَا الْإِسْمُ الْمَكْتُوبُ فِي سُرَادِقِ الْعَرْشِ أَرِنِي أَعَزَّ خَلْقِكَ عَلَيْكَ قَالَ فَأَرَاهُ اللَّهُ عَرْ وَ جَلَّ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ أَشْبَاحاً أَبَدَاناً بِأَلَا أَرْوَاحَ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَ الْأَرْضِ فَقَالَ يَا رَبِّ بِحَقِّهِمْ ... عَلَيْكَ إِلَّا أَخْبَرْتَنِي مَنْ هُمْ قَالَ هَذَا نُورٌ عَلَيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ وَ هَذَا نُورُ الْحَسَنِ وَ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ» (Khazzaz Qumi, 1981, pp. 169-170). As can be seen, there is no talk of the "first world of particles" in the text of the tradition and essentially such an expression does not exist in the hadith. It seems that Amir-Moezzi, with an interpretation beyond the text of the tradition, has explained it in a way that he could consider the hadith as a confirmation of his viewpoint regarding the "world of dharr" and the structure of the worlds of creation.

Amir-Moezzi writes on page 33: "They have used many words to describe the actions of the Imams in this stage and these words can be divided into two categories: testimony to oneness (Tawhid and Tahlil) and praise of God (Tahmid, Tamjid, Tasbih, Taqdis). 'Twelve luminous spectres [floating] between the heavens and the earth ... are busy with the Tawhid and Tamjid of God.'" He has also brought the Arabic text of this tradition in note 176 as: « اثني عشر اشباحا من نور بين » السما والارض ... يوحدون الله عزوجل و يمجّدونه and by declaring the tradition to be prophetic, he refers it to Kifāyat al-Athar of Khazzaz Qumi and Muqtaḍab al-Athar of Ibn Ayyash. In this regard, several points are worth noting: Firstly, in the address of Kifāyat al-Athar, there is no tradition from the Prophet; therefore, the mentioned reference seems incorrect. Secondly, on page 72 of Kifāyat al-Athar, there is a tradition with a close theme, but the expression « يوحدون الله » is not seen in it, but the expression of the tradition is as follows: « تُسَبِّحُ الله تَعَالَى وَ تُمَجِّدُهُ ». Thirdly, in the second source, i.e., Muqtaḍab al-Athar of Ibn Ayyash, neither has there been talk of the "world of dharr" and "world of shadows" nor are expressions like "Tawhid," "Tahlil," and "Tamjid" seen in this context. What has come in this book are mainly traditions regarding the Ascension and the luminous creation of the Prophet and the Imams. (Ibn Ayyash, n.d., pp. 24 and 27). Furthermore, based on searching in the Jāmi' al-Aḥādīth-e-Nūr software, which contains a wide range of Shi'i hadith sources, the expression « يوحدون الله عزوجل و يمجّدونه » was not found in the traditions. Therefore, Amir-Moezzi's report and reference in this case are also faced with serious ambiguities and inconsistencies, and at least a part of the used expressions do not have a clear backing in the cited sources.

Amir-Moezzi has narrated this hadith in note 183 on page 163 from Imam Sadiq: « كنا ارواح نور فتعلم الأظلة أسرار علم التوحيد و التحميد » and

has referred it to page 63 of the book *Muqtaḍab al-Athar* written by Ibn Ayyash. While not only does such a tradition not exist in the mentioned source, but based on searching in the *Jāmi' al-Aḥādīth* software, it is in no source. Only in *'Ilal al-Sharā'i'* written by Sheikh Saduq, does a similar tradition exist: «قَالَ لِلْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ أَبِي طَالِبٍ (ع) أَيَّ شَيْءٍ كُنْتُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَخْلُقَ اللَّهُ عَرْزَ وَجَلَّ آدَمَ (ع) قَالَ كُنَّا أَشْبَاحَ نُورٍ نَدُورُ حَوْلَ عَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنِ فَتَعَلَّمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ الشَّيْخَ وَالتَّهْلِيلَ وَالتَّحْمِيدَ» (Saduq, 1983, p. 23). As can be seen, this hadith is merely similar to it and not identical to it. On page 141, he writes: "Often in the speech of the Imams we encounter terms like (العقل قطب ديننا) meaning intellect is the pole of our religion, (العقل هو ...) intellect is the axis around which right revolves, (العقل هو ما يحتاج به في امرنا) and so on. For example (see: Kulayni, 1986, v. 1, p. 10; Ibn Babawayh, 1985, v. 1, p. 88, 107 et seq., Ibn Babawayh, 1997, p. 418)." These expressions do not exist as hadith in any of the stated sources. Only in the third case, the late Kulayni has such an expression in the sermon of the book *Kāfī*, page 9: «إِذْ كَانَ الْعَقْلُ هُوَ» «الْقُطْبُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْمَدَارُ وَبِهِ يُحْتَجُّ، وَلَهُ النَّوَابُ، وَ عَلَيْهِ الْعَقَابُ» which, in addition to this expression not being a hadith, it is not the exact expression narrated by Amir-Moezzi either. On page 31, he writes: "In a hadith from Imam Baqir narrated by his son Imam Sadiq, it has come: "Throne means the religion of truth" He has brought the Arabic text of this hadith in note 164, page 161 and has referred it to (Ibn Ayyash Jawhari, n.d., p. 57) but such an expression was not found in the sources. Amir-Moezzi writes on page 33: "The Prophet journeys to the world of shadows and particles in many of his Ascensions and there observes the lights of the Twelve Imams (or Fourteen Infallibles)." He refers in note 174, page 162 for this claim to two sources, i.e., *Kifāyat al-Athar* (Khazzaz Razi, 1981, pp. 110-111) and *al-Khiṣāl* (Sheikh Saduq, 1983, v. 1, p. 156).

However, examining these traditions shows that in them there

is only talk of the observation of the lights of the Imams by the Prophet in the Ascension and there is no mention of the "world of shadows" or "world of particles." In fact, Amir-Moezzi has provided an interpretation beyond the traditions that only indicate the observation of the lights of the Ahl al-Bayt and has linked it to a theory regarding the "world of azilla" and "world of dharr"; while these concepts are not seen in the text of the cited traditions. Amir-Moezzi divides shadows into three categories on page 33 and considers the first category as "shadows of non-human spiritual beings who will live in the heavens and the earth in the future" and refers for this claim in note 178 (p. 162) to works such as *Basā'ir al-Darajāt* (Saffar Qumi, 1983, pp. 67 and 69) and *al-Ghaybah* (Nu'mani, 1989, p. 137). However, there is no talk of the "world of shadows" in these sources; just as in *Basā'ir al-Darajāt*, under the chapter "What God has assigned to the Imams from the family of Muhammad and the wilayah of the angels," there are only traditions regarding the wilayah-acceptance of the angels and it has no connection to their creation in the world of shadows. Also, in explaining the third category, he speaks of "shadows of the believers of the children of Adam; meaning the devoted followers of the Imams and those acquainted with the secrets of esoteric teachings" and refers in note 180 (p. 163) to *Basā'ir al-Darajāt* and *Usūl al-Kāfi*; while the content of these sources is only regarding the world of the covenant (mīthāq) and taking the pledge from humans or believers and has no indication of "those acquainted with the secrets of series of teachings" or the opposition between "true believers" and "ordinary Muslims". Therefore, Amir-Moezzi's interpretation of the word "believer" as meaning "acquainted with secrets" and the claim of its exclusivity to esoteric Shi'is does not have a clear backing in the cited traditions and is more a reflection of his own specific interpretive framework than the content of the

primary sources. Amir-Moezzi writes in note 183, page 163: "The four oaths have caused the word mawāthiq (plural of mīthāq) to be used sometimes in the hadiths of the Imams" and refers to several sources for this claim.

However, examining the sources shows that only on page 80 of Basā'ir al-Darajāt, which is the first source cited by him, does the term "mawāthiq" come in the chapter title: «ما اخذ الله موثيق الخلق لائمة آل» (محمّد ع) بالولاية لهم, but such a term does not exist in the text of the hadiths. Furthermore, the use of the word "mawāthiq" in the chapter title is observant of the multitude of humans, not the multiplicity of oaths; contrary to the understanding that Amir-Moezzi has presented. Also in other cited sources, i.e., Usūl al-Kāfī, al-Ghaybah, and 'Ilal al-Sharā'i', in the mentioned addresses, the term "mawāthiq" is not seen; although the expression "mawāthiq al-'ibād" has come in other places of these sources. Therefore, Amir-Moezzi's citation in this case as well does not have complete correspondence with the actual content of the sources. Amir-Moezzi narrates this expression as a hadith from Imam Sadiq on page 165 and note 193: «إنّ الإمام يعرف شيعة و أعداءه» and «بوجوههم و أسمائهم بعلم الطينة التي خلقوا منها» and refers it to the two books Muqtaḍab al-Athar and Basā'ir al-Darajāt. However, such a hadith with these wordings was not found in the mentioned sources. What exists in Basā'ir al-Darajāt is a chapter title close to this theme: «باب في الإمام أنّه يعرف شيعة من عدوه بالطينة التي خلقوا فيها بوجوههم و أسمائهم». Therefore, it seems that Amir-Moezzi has narrated the chapter title in the form of the text of the hadith. Furthermore, the tradition existing in the cited address is narrated from Imam Ali, not Imam Sadiq. Therefore, in this case as well, a clear inconsistency is seen between the narrated text, the narrator of the hadith, and the cited sources.

Conclusion

The present research, with the aim of examining and criticizing the sources and citations of Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi in Shi'a studies, showed that a significant portion of his historical and doctrinal reconstructions regarding early Shi'ism is based on foundations and methods that are faced with serious challenges in terms of validation and methodological coherence. Examining the sources used by him indicates that alongside utilizing some valid hadith texts, there exists an extensive reliance on works that either have serious doubts raised about their attribution or have undergone additions, distortions, and late reworkings throughout history. At the same time, Amir-Moezzi's manner of encountering these sources does not possess methodological coherence in the common criteria of hadith studies, rijāl criticism, and historical analysis, and in numerous cases, a selective and cherry-picking approach is observed. Also, analyzing the data shows that a type of esoteric presupposition rules over his works in interpreting texts; such that many traditions and historical reports have been re-read within the framework of "esoteric and mysterious Shi'ism," even in cases where the text or historical context does not confirm such an indication. Among other methodological shortcomings, one can point to the use of biased translations, adding interpretive layers to the text of traditions, incomplete reporting or moving of phrases, and also references that are sometimes inaccurate or inconsistent with primary sources. Furthermore, strong reliance on Orientalist hypotheses and disregard for the research heritage of Muslim scholars has in some cases led to ignoring counter-evidence and the formation of one-sided readings. In total, although Amir-Moezzi's works are important in drawing attention to some less studied dimensions of the Shi'i hadith and Imamological heritage, a significant portion of his results, due to

weakness in validating sources and being influenced by interpretive presuppositions, does not possess sufficient scientific robustness and requires critical re-reading based on precise criteria of historical and hadith research.

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The Scope of Imam al-Mahdi's Imamate over Extraterrestrial Beings in Verses and Traditions*

Hengameh Arasp¹  Ali Ghazanfari² 

1. Level 4 Graduate in Comparative Tafsir, Kowsar Specialized Center of Islamic Sciences, Tehran, Tehran, Iran (**Responsible author**).

hengame14@gmail.com

2. Associate Professor, Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Quranic Sciences, University of Quran and Hadith Sciences of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

ghazanfari@quran.ac.ir

Abstract

One of the divine promises to the prophets in the Quran is the subject of empowerment, which can be generalized to the righteous global government following the reappearance of His Holiness Hujjat(PBUH). As the ultimate divine government and the conclusion of all other sovereignties, the global government of Imam al-Mahdi utilizes all available and unknown capacities to overcome anti-truth and truth-evading currents through the state of truth. This research has been conducted using a qualitative content analysis method and library resources, aiming to elucidate rational life beyond the earth and the encompassing nature of the Imamate of Baqiyatullah over them. It

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appears that the existence of extraterrestrial beings is undeniable, considering the implications of the Quran and the explicit statements of the traditions. On the other hand, according to transmitted traditions, the Imam of the Age (PBUH), the axis of the universe of possibility, holds responsibility for the guidance and Imamate of all beings in all celestial spheres, both on earth and beyond. Since existential guardianship is the tool and necessity of this global management, through this guardianship, he is able to exert influence across the expanse of the universe and guide affairs; therefore, divine guardianship and administration in the system of creation during the periods of occultation and reappearance rests in his hands.

Keywords

Extraterrestrial beings, al-Mahdi, Verses and Traditions, Scope of Imamate.

Introduction

The Holy Quran is the focal text and point of reference for all Islamic denominations, and Mahdism is a shared belief among all of them. The Promised Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is an undeniable necessity in the world as the divine proof and the continuation of His vicegerency, constituting one of the definitive and absolute truths of the order of creation; he is considered an absolute necessity of the existential order because the Perfect Man is the intermediary of divine grace in the universe, and through him the universe attains divine grace; thus, he is God's proof over His creatures. The Infallible Imams (peace be upon them), and especially the Imam of the Age, are the complete manifestation of the divine names and attributes. Existential guardianship is a manifestation of divine lordship and administration entrusted to them. This administration is global and encompassing (Mousavi Khomeini, R, pp. 30-50, digital version 1997, p. 23).

The universality of the Imam of the Age means that he is not only the leader of the Shias, but the proof of God over all humanity and rational beings, and the macro-management of the universe during the periods of occultation and reappearance rests in his hands. Existential guardianship is the tool and necessity of this global management. Through this guardianship, he is able to exert influence across the expanse of the universe and guide affairs. Despite his apparent occultation, the Imam of the Age, through existential guardianship, is in spiritual and metaphysical contact with all those whose guidance he is responsible for and is aware of their affairs. This connection lays the groundwork for general guidance and provides the prerequisites for the reappearance.

One of the topics that has engaged the minds of many thinkers is the existence of extraterrestrial beings—a matter that has been

explicitly and implicitly pointed out in the Holy Quran and Islamic traditions, along with their Imamate and guidance. Numerous theses, books, and articles have been written from various perspectives regarding His Holiness Hujjat, including Imamate, government, and existential and legislative guardianship, which are close to the subject of this article, such as:

The article "The Existence of Living Beings in the Heavens" (Rezaee Isfahani and Arab, 2010). This article examines the issue of life in the heavens from the perspective of the Quran, traditions, and empirical sciences, and states that this article demonstrates that the existence of life in the heavens is accepted by the Holy Quran and that it theorized scientifically prior to modern science.

The article "The Quran and the Global Government of Imam al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance)" (Looke Alikhan, 2014), which, by examining the verses, concludes that the world has a day ahead in which a government and society will be formed that, on the one hand, is connected with the Creator of existence and, on the other hand, is linked with righteous deeds, and the righteous will inherit the earth.

What this article addresses is the scope of the domain of the Imamate of the Imam of the Age, the Promised Mahdi, not only on earth but across all celestial spheres, which clarifies the distinction of this writing from other studies. Therefore, what this research seeks to answer is the following question: Is the Master of the Affair solely the Imam of humans residing on earth, or is he the Imam of every being subject to religious obligations (*mukallaf*) throughout the entire universe, in every celestial sphere, both on earth and beyond?

1. Quranic and Narrative Evidences on the Existence of Extraterrestrial Beings

Extraterrestrial beings in verses and traditions: The speech of the

Quran and Hadith, explicitly or implicitly, concerns beings living in other spheres. These verses and traditions point to the creation of other worlds and the life of multiple beings within them, which are under the general and infinite system of God's creation.

A) Quranic Evidences

In several verses of the Quran, reference is made to countless beings in celestial spheres, some of whom reside outside the earth, including the verses: «مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ» "those in the heavens and on earth" (Al 'Imran: 83, Yunus: 66, and Ra'd: 15), and verse 44 of Surah al-Isra: «تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ» "The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them glorify Him," as well as other instances that refer to rational beings. Words such as «العالمين» "the worlds" «فَضَّلْتَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ» in "and exalted you above the worlds" (Baqarah: 122) and verse 33 of Al 'Imran, wherein God names prophets who were chosen over the worlds, using the plural word "worlds" in the verse, point to different worlds.

Verse 1 of Surah al-Buruj, which speaks of the mansions of the stars. Verse 54 of Surah al-A'raf, after stating the creation of the heavens and the earth and the subjection of the sun, moon, and stars, attributes them to God, stating that "Lord of the worlds («رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ»)" is the Lord of all worlds and realms, not just the two worlds of this life and the hereafter. Verses 3 and 9 of Surah Saba state that nothing in the heavens and the earth is hidden from Him; thus, there must be something in the heavens and an occurrence taking place that is not hidden from God. Furthermore, verse 5 of Surah al-Saffat, "Lord of the Easts," and various other instances suggest to the human mind God's attribute of lordship over realms other than the earth.

Among the Quranic indications regarding other celestial spheres and the existence of extraterrestrial life within them is the

verse: «وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَهُوَ عَلَى جَمْعِهِمْ إِذَا يَشَاءُ قَدِيرٌ» "And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and whatever living creatures He has dispersed throughout them, and He is able to gather them together whenever He wills" (Shura: 29). The phrase «مَا بَثَّ فِيهِمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ» "whatever He has dispersed throughout them" explicitly points to the existence of living creatures in the heavens, because the dual pronoun «فِيهِمَا» "in both of them" refers to both the heavens and the earth. Therefore, interpreting this phrase as referring solely to the earth is considered highly implausible. Likewise, interpreting *dābbah* as the angels of heaven is also deemed improbable, because *dābbah* is generally applied to material living creatures, not immaterial beings such as angels (Makarem, 1992, vol. 20, p. 439; Ibn Ashur, 1999, vol. 25, p. 158). *Dābbah* refers to living and moving creatures scattered throughout the heavens and the earth. This concept encompasses both microscopic organisms and giant animals, all of whom in some way glorify the Truth (Makarem, 1992, vol. 20, p. 437).

The author of *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* suggests the possibility of the existence of beings in the heavens that have movement and motion there, just as some contemporary scholars have also considered the existence of inhabitants on Mars to be probable (Ibn Ashur, 1999, vol. 25, p. 158). The author of *Tafsir-e Noor* has also considered the aforementioned verse as evidence for the residence of living and moving creatures in the heavens (Qara'ati, 2009, vol. 4, p. 530). Other exegetes have similarly derived the interpretation of the possibility of life in the heavens—in other words, on planets—which is raised as a scientific theory derived from the Quran (Rezaee Isfahani, 2008, vol. 1, p. 95). Allamah [Tabatabai] also defined the word *dābbah* as meaning any moving creature possessing motion and life, thus encompassing living animals, and states that it is apparent from

the outward meaning of the verse that there are also moving creatures in the heavens (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 18, p. 84).

Therefore, most commentators have considered *dābbah* to mean material and living creatures that include both terrestrial and celestial beings (based on the apparent meaning of the verse), and interpreting *dābbah* as angels or immaterial beings has been deemed highly implausible. Scientists have not yet clearly discovered beings on other spheres, but they have discovered planets where the probability of life is very strong; such as the red dwarf star, which is only 105 light-years away from us and can be a habitable world. In an orbit close to this cold and dim star, two rocky exoplanets have been found, one of which, namely "Lp 890-9b," is located at such a distance from its sun that it can easily form life within itself; it is 60 percent larger than Earth, its distance from its sun is similar to the distance between Earth and the sun, the probability of water as the fluid of life in it is high, and it possesses other necessary conditions for life (Scientists' views on the probability of life in galaxies, News Code 8340875, www.yjc.ir/0yzqqf, February 2023).

B) Narrative Evidences

Several traditions have been transmitted from the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) regarding the existence of beings in celestial spheres, and these beings take various forms. Some possess perception and understanding, and are therefore subject to religious obligations (*mukallaf*) from God and in need of a guide, while others possess a lower level of perception and naturally possess innate guidance like terrestrial creatures. Among these traditions are:

The tradition of Imam al-Baqir in the exegesis of the verse (Al-Rahman: 33), wherein he states: "When God wishes to effect a change (*badā*) and gather the creatures He has kept hidden for an essential

matter, He commands a proclaimer to call out so that humans and jinn gather in the blink of an eye. He commands the first (lowest) heaven to descend, and then commands the descent of the second heaven, which is twice the size of the first. When the inhabitants of the first heaven see the inhabitants of the second, they think the Lord has come, and it is said to them: No, rather the command and decree of the Lord have come, until all the heavens descend, with each one positioned behind the other while each is double the size of the preceding one. And the command of God also descends accompanied by a canopy of clouds and angels, and affairs are carried out. Then God commands a proclaimer to call out, and the aforementioned verse is recited"¹ (Qomi, 1984 , vol. 2, p. 77; Majlesi, 1983 , vol. 7, p. 117; Huwaizi, 1994 , vol. 5, p. 195; Bahrani, 1994 , vol. 5, p. 238).

The implication of the verse is that man can leave the earth and planets by means of *sulṭān*, that is, with superior force. Until now, man has been able to leave the earth and the moon. The earth and planets have a gravitational force and a specific boundary, and man, by means of a superior force such as spacecraft, has overcome the gravitational force of the earth and the moon, leaving them through centrifugal force and other means.

As some exegetes have not only considered ascension across the diameters of the heavens and the earth to be impossible, but have stated: Mankind, through the power of science and the invention of instruments, has provided the means whereby they have become privileged to travel in the heavens and other spheres (Banu Amin, 1982, vol. 13, p. 29), and some, such as Makarem, have also referred to human

١. «إِنَّ اللَّهَ إِذَا بَدَأَ لَهُ أَنْ يَبْيِّنَ خَلْقَهُ وَ يَجْمَعَهُمْ.. حَتَّى يَنْزِلَ كُلُّ سَّمَاءٍ يَكُونُ كُلُّ وَاحِدَةٍ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْأُخْرَى ...».

"Indeed, when God wishes to reveal His creation and gather them... until every heaven descends, with each one positioned behind the other..."

space travel under the condition of possessing scientific and industrial dominion (Makarem,1992, vol. 23, p. 149). Banu Amin stated that the reason some ancient exegeses interpreted the verse as the state of the Day of Judgment or death was because in those times, ascension across the diameters of the heavens and the earth was considered impossible (Banu Amin,1982, vol. 13, p. 29). Therefore, according to these commentators, the possibility of ascension and space travel to other spheres is feasible. The tradition points to the existence of living and obligated beings in the heavens and other spheres, and that it is only with extraordinary force that one can access those planets, obtain news of them, and establish communication.

Since the address «يَا مُعْشَرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ» "O company of jinn and humans, if you are able to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth..." encompasses all the heavens and not just our planet Earth «يَا مُعْشَرَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ», the Imam explained the interpretation of the verse regarding crossing the regions of the heavens and the earth under the condition of possessing dominion (*salṭanah*). Therefore, it is understood from the explicit text of the tradition ("...and when the inhabitants of the lowest heaven see it, they will say..." «..فَإِذَا رَأَوْهَا أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا قَالُوا»") that if man achieves this dominion, he will become aware of living and obligated beings in other spheres.

The purpose of the descent of the first, second, and other heavens is the descent of the beings residing in those heavens, because the Imam describes the passage of celestial beings through the regions of the heavens at a specific location by God's command, though it is not specified where that location is. Another point is that each of the heavens is double the size of the preceding one. Scientifically, scientists have proven that some planets in various galaxies are several

times larger than others and vary in size, which "each one is behind the other and is double the one adjacent to it" in the tradition confirms. And the statement "Then God commands a proclaimer to call out, 'O company of...'" at the end of the tradition indicates the gathering of humans and jinn who are present at the session and are the addressees of the verse and tradition. Another point of the tradition is that the God of all of them is the One and Only God; they know Him and seek His command. At the beginning of the tradition, it says that when God wills *badā* and wishes to reveal His creatures, it means these creatures are hidden from our knowledge, and this doctrinal deduction shows that with God's help, they can be reached. The existence of extraterrestrial beings was not only undiscovered by the people and scientists at that time, but scientists still only hold a strong probability regarding the existence of such beings, without having achieved access to them yet.

Another tradition discussing extraterrestrial beings and their worlds is the tradition of Imam al-Sadiq in the exegesis of the verse "And He creates what you do not know" (An-Nahl, 8), wherein, quoting the noble Messenger (PBUH and his progeny), he speaks of spheres like the earth, numbering thirty-one, and states: "You live on one of them, and you have no knowledge of the rest"¹ (Ibn al-Ash'ath, n.d., p. 242; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 7, p. 602).

Similar to this hadith is the tradition of Imam al-Baqir, who glanced at the sky and said: "O Aba Hamzah, this dome is that of our father Adam, and truly Almighty God has thirty-one domes besides it;

١. لِلّٰهِ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالٰى اِحْدٰى وَ ثَلَاثُونَ قُبَّةً مِنْهَا وَاحِدَةٌ اَنْتُمْ فِيْهَا ثَلَاثُونَ قُبَّةً اَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ بِهَا...».

"For God, the Blessed and Exalted, are thirty-one domes, of which one is that which you are in, and thirty domes you do not know about..."

within them are creations that have not disobeyed God for the blink of an eye" (Majlesi, 1983 , vol. 1, p. 256).

The first tradition points to habitable spheres in the galaxies where beings live on some of them, because it utilizes the phrase "you are within it." In the second tradition, the dome of Adam is the earth, and the Imams are presenting instances of earths under the name of domes to the audiences of their time so that their sphericity would be comprehensible.

The Commander of the Faithful¹ states: "These stars in the sky are cities like the cities on earth, connected to each other by a column of light at a distance of 250 years: هَذِهِ النُّجُومُ الَّتِي فِي السَّمَاءِ مَدَائِنٌ مِثْلُ الْمَدَائِنِ الَّتِي فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرْبُوطَةٌ كُلُّ مَدِينَةٍ إِلَى عَمُودٍ مِنْ نُورٍ طَوَّلُ ذَلِكَ الْعَمُودِ فِي السَّمَاءِ مَسِيرَةُ مِائَتَيْنِ وَخَمْسِينَ سَنَةً" (Qomi, 1984 , vol. 2, p. 219; Majlesi, 1983 , vol. 55, p. 91). This tradition can be considered apparent in the existence of structures or worlds similar to terrestrial cities outside the solar system. The author of *Tafsir-e Nem* has interpreted the luminous columns as an expression of gravitational and repulsive waves between spheres (Makarem Shirazi, 1992, vol. 10, pp. 111-112).

Likewise, the Imam states that the purpose of "And by the sky full of paths (وَ السَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْخُبُكِ)" is that the sky possesses fine creatures: "Ibn al-Kawwa asked the Commander of the Faithful about the saying of the Almighty, 'And by the sky full of paths,' and he said: 'Possessing fine creation'"

«سَأَلَ ابْنُ الْكَوَّاءِ أَمِيرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ × عَنْ قَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى وَ السَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْخُبُكِ قَالَ ذَاتِ الْخُلُقِ الْحَسَنِ»
(Majlesi, 1983 , vol. 55, p. 92)

The tradition of Imam al-Baqir speaks of other suns and moons and numerous planets and the beings residing in them, which are

1. Amir al-Mu'minin

located at a distance of forty years beyond our sun and moon, to whom inspiration comes like bees, and they have no knowledge of the events of the earth;¹ (Majlesi, 1983 , vol. 30, p. 99; Hilli, 2000 , p. 74; Bahrani Esfahani, 1993 , vol. 19, p. 196; Barazesh, 2015 , vol. 16, p. 376). This tradition can corroborate traditions that speak of inhabitants in other spheres. The indication of the tradition regarding the existence of a number of suns and moons expresses the abundance of planets similar to the earth, sun, and moon of us earthlings in the galaxies, with a great distance between each of them, and they have inhabitants who, like us, benefit from the advantages of their sun and moon. The quantity and distance stated by the Imam in the tradition are not limited to that specific amount, but merely convey abundance and multiplicity. Perhaps their comparison to bees is because they are not conscious beings like humans, but possess a lower degree of understanding. This tradition serves as confirmation...

Another tradition pointing to extraterrestrial creatures is the tradition of Imam Sajjad, who states: "Do you suppose that God has not created any creature other than you? Indeed, by God, God has created a million Adams and a million worlds, and you, by God, are at the end of all these worlds²... (قَالَ أَ تَظُنُّ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَخْلُقْ خَلْقًا سِوَاكُمْ بَلَىٰ وَاللَّهِ ... (Majlesi, 1983 , vol. 5, p. 25).

Therefore, paying attention to the verses, one can arrive at the conclusion that apart from our inhabited earth of humans, there are unknown creatures in the space of the sky who not only have the conditions for life but reside therein, and the traditions strengthen the

١. «إِنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ هَذِهِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَيْنَ شَمْسٍ.. فِيهَا خَلْقٌ كَثِيرٌ مَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ آدَمَ».

"Indeed, beyond these are forty springs of the sun... in them is a multitude of creation who do not know that God created Adam."

probability of the existence of such beings, some of whom possess intellect and thought. The Creator of all these creatures is God, and according to divine teachings in the Quran and belief in the Resurrection, every possessor of intellect is in need of guidance and the sending of messengers. Based on the rule of grace (*lutf*) and the verse "And never would We punish until We sent a messenger" (Al-Isra: 15), God has not withheld this grace from His creatures. Of course, the aforementioned traditions do not specify the type of messengers—whether they are like human messengers or not. It must be noted that if there are beings in spheres, planets, galaxies, and all realms and higher heavens, their characteristics and traits are certainly proportionate to the specific realm in which they live; just as a terrestrial creature cannot live in water, and a marine creature cannot live on land. Now the question is: Do the creatures living on other planets who need a guide have guides of their own, or do the very prophets and vicegerents commissioned by God on planet Earth guide and direct them as well, just like the jinn (Al-Jinn: 13)? The answer will come in the next discussion.

2. Scope of Imamate and Proof over Divine Creatures

In verses of the Holy Quran, God speaks of the possibility of utilizing existence, human abilities and power, and achieving this dominion—a dominion which, *a fortiori*, the prophets and their successors among the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) possess twofold and with divinely bestowed knowledge (*'ilm-e ladunī*). This benefit is not solely restricted to the earth and its apparent bounties, but encompasses the heavens and hidden bounties as well: ﴿أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ (وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً)﴾ (Luqman: 20). To interpret the aforementioned verse, the Messenger of God (PBUH and his progeny)

said to the people around him: "Tell me, what is the first blessing by which God honored and tested you?"

They spoke of livelihood, food, children, and spouses. When the Prophet (PBUH and his progeny) asked the Commander of the Faithful to recount those blessings, he stated: "Almighty God created me when I was nothing, showed goodness to me, and made me living rather than dead, then brought me into existence in the best form and most steadfast composition. He made me thoughtful and aware, not foolish and heedless. He provided me with perceptive faculties... Then He subjected for me His heaven and His earth, and whatever is in them and between them of His creation..."¹ (Majlesi, 1983 , vol. 40, p. 175; Ameli Nabati, 1964 , vol. 2, p. 13; Huwaizi, 1994 , vol. 4, p. 212; Barazesh, 2015 , vol. 11, p. 564).

After enumerating the apparent and hidden divine blessings bestowed upon himself, the Commander of the Faithful—referencing the beginning of the aforementioned verse—expresses how the heavens, the earth, and everything between them from among God's creations have been subjected to him. This means the tools that enable man to subjugate the heavens and the earth are things inherent to the existence of His Eminence and all other human beings. The blessings to which the Imam refers are general rather than individual, since all those favors are designed for all human beings, both men and women, albeit manifesting in different ways for each, a point to which the

١. ... فَقَالَ ﷺ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَنِي وَلَمْ أَكُ شَيْئاً مَذْكُوراً وَأَنْ أَحْسَنَ بِي فَجَعَلَنِي حَيّاً لَا مَوْتاً... وَأَنْ سَخَّرَ لِي سَمَاءَهُ وَ أَرْضَهُ وَ مَا فِيهِمَا وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا مِنْ خَلْقِهِ...».

("...Then he (peace be upon him) said: Indeed, God created me when I was not a thing remembered, and He showed goodness to me, making me living rather than dead... and He subjected for me His heaven, His earth, and whatever is in them and between them of His creation...").

verse "سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ" (He has subjected for you) testifies. Another important point is that God does not speak solely of terrestrial subjugated entities—even though each is addressed partially in various verses—rather, He speaks of the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and other phenomena; things that, during the time of the Prophet, could only be gazed upon.

However, "«سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ»" means: you, O human being, can benefit from them, even gain mastery over them, provide the means to travel to them, and free yourself from the Earth's gravity. Today, we easily understand the meaning of such verses—traveling to the Moon and other celestial bodies, and building land, marine, and space vehicles. But at that time, people only understood the taming of horses, camels, and certain animals, and considered the ultimate utilization of the sun, the moon, and the stars to be the calculation of night and day, seasons, and years.

As some ancient commentaries have interpreted "He has subjected for you" as the subjugation of the sun, the moon, the stars, and rain, and benefiting from them (Qomi, 1984 , vol. 2, p. 293; Tabarsi, 1993 , vol. 9, p. 112), they state that because they are of use to us, they are in our subjugation so that we may use them in any way we desire (Tabarsi, 1993 AD, vol. 9, p. 112). Some commentators have described celestial and terrestrial subjugated entities separately: what is subjugated to man from the heavens consists of the sun, the moon, the stars, clouds, and winds, while what is subjugated on earth consists of mountains, rivers, ships, trees, and vegetation. "«أَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ»" refers to the abundance of apparent blessings, namely the balanced nature of creation and provision (Muqatil ibn Sulayman, 2003 AD, vol. 3, p. 436; Tabari, 1992 AD, vol. 21, p. 49).

Allameh, in describing the meaning of subjugation, states that the entire universe flows with a single, unified order and is

interconnected, and all of them are connected and related to man in some way, such that man can benefit from them, both small and large. Allameh considers human utilization of terrestrial and celestial beings to be ever-increasing and expanding, and regards it as one of man's vital advantages (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 18, p. 246).

Al-Suyuti, by narrating a tradition from Ibn Abbas, has attributed the subjugation of the heavens and the earth to a man from the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet: «الرجل ما كان ليأتي بهذا الا رجل من أهل بيت النبي» "This man would not bring this forth except for a man from the Ahl al-Bayt of the Prophet" (Al-Suyuti, 1983, vol. 6, p. 34). Therefore, man has the ability to benefit from "«ما في السماوات وما في الارض»" whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth" by divine permission, and a fortiori, the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his reappearance) can have the greatest share of subjugation regarding these divine blessings. Imam Kazim, in interpreting the aforementioned verse, stated that the apparent blessing is the manifest Imam, and the hidden blessing is the absent Imam¹ (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 24, p. 53; Ibn Shahrashub, 1960, vol. 4, p. 180; Ibn Babawayh, 1976, vol. 2, p. 368). This narration indicates the necessity and presence of the blessing of Imamate in the human realm.

The subjugation of the entire existence, from the heavens and the earth, for human beings points to the immense knowledge that man is capable of attaining, as well as the know-how of utilizing each of them. Up to now, man has benefited from many of the resources that God has placed for him in the earth and the heavens, and has, so to speak, brought them into his subjugation. He uses electrons on a

١. «سَأَلْتُ عَنْ قَوْلِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ... الْبَاطِنَةُ الْإِمَامُ الْغَائِبُ».

"I asked about the statement of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious... 'the hidden [blessing] is the absent Imam.'"

vast scale, utilizes solar power to generate electricity, exploits various types of bacteria, microbes, and viruses as well as different types of waves, and there are still many blessings awaiting human discovery that remain unknown to us. Of course, it must be noted that the higher human knowledge becomes, the greater the utilization of these divine resources can be. Keeping in mind the narration (25 parts out of the 27 parts of knowledge that will be unlocked for humanity by the Imam of the Age, may Allah hasten his reappearance, in the end times), the greatest subjugation of the heavens and the earth belongs to a man from the progeny of the Prophet, to which numerous narrations have also pointed.

Among the traditions that express the scope of Imamate is the narration from Imam Sadiq who states: "Indeed, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, has twelve thousand worlds, each of which is larger than the seven heavens and the seven earths, and none of the worlds of Allah are aware of another, and I am the proof over all of them"¹ (Ibn Babawayh, 1983, vol. 2, p. 639; Majlisi, 1983, vol. 27, p. 41; Huwayzi, 1994, vol. 1, p. 16; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 16, p. 378).

The Imam is referring to other worlds, which likely means celestial bodies, and [indicating] that living and morally responsible beings live in them, and he is not only aware of them but is also the proof and Imam over all of them. The narration is cited in explanation of the verse: «سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ» "seven heavens and of the earth the like thereof" (At-Talaq: 12). Apparently, the narration states that twelve worlds actually exist, and in those worlds, there are people

١. «إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ أَلْفَ عَالَمٍ كُلُّ عَالَمٍ مِنْهُمْ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ سَبْعِ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَ سَبْعِ أَرْضِينَ مَا تَرَى عَالَمٌ مِنْهُمْ أَنَّ لِلَّهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ عَالَمًا غَيْرَهُمْ وَأَنَا الْحُجَّةُ عَلَيْهِمْ».

"Indeed, Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, has twelve thousand worlds, each of which is larger than the seven heavens and the seven earths. None of those worlds see that Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, has a world other than them, and I am the proof over them."

of insight who have no news of the other worlds. However, it is not stated whether these worlds are material or immaterial. Since immaterial worlds are aware of each other and of the material world, the material world must be intended. Another point is that, based on the principles of Imami theology, the moral responsibility (taklif) of a rational and free-willed being is intertwined with divine guidance, the completion of proof, and the appointment of a divine proof; therefore, if there are rational and morally responsible beings in other worlds, the fundamental need of theirs for a proof is defensible.

The exegetical work of Ibn Abbas states in the commentary on verse 12 of Surah At-Talaq: "In each of the seven earths, there has been a prophet like your prophet throughout time"¹ (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 57, p. 92; Al-Suyuti, 1983, vol. 6, p. 238). In addition to indicating the existence of rational beings, this narration also confirms the dispatching of messengers and the utilization of prophets, which is followed by the Imamate of the Infallible Imams. Therefore, one group of narrations speaks of extraterrestrial beings—some of whom are rational—while another group emphasizes the authority (hujiyyah) of the Imams, including the Mahdi, the Master of the Age (may Allah hasten his reappearance), over all inhabitants of the earth and the heavens, meaning all planets.

Furthermore, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali, speaks of a world beyond Mount Qaf, over which His Eminence encompasses, guards, witnesses, and transcends. He states that just as he is aware of our world, if he wishes, he can monitor or be present in the entire world and across the seven heavens and the earth in less than the

١. «قَالَ سَبْعُ أَرْضِينَ فِي كُلِّ أَرْضٍ نَبِيٌّ كَنَبِيِّكُمْ وَآدَمُ كَأَدَمَ وَنُوحٌ كَنُوحٍ وَإِبْرَاهِيمُ كِإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَعِيسَى كَعِيسَى».

"He said: 'Seven earths; in every earth there is a prophet like your prophet, an Adam like your Adam, a Noah like your Noah, an Abraham like your Abraham, and a Jesus like your Jesus.'"

twinkling of an eye (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 54, p. 336). A narration close to this one from the Noble Messenger, in the commentary on the final part of verse 8 of Surah An-Nahl, mentions extraterrestrial beings beyond Mount Qaf, each having a distinct form of their own and living a life different from us humans, with various natures, not being created from clay like us. His descriptions of those beings are so clear and vivid that no doubt remains in the human mind regarding the existence of those beings (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 54, p. 348; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 7, p. 602), and it can serve as corroboration for the narration of Imam Ali. The Commander of the Faithful did not make reference to the inhabitants of the heavens, and the narration demonstrates the Imam's epistemic encompassing and a type of existential dominance over the worlds beyond the human realm.

Among the traditions that discuss how the Infallible communicates with other rational beings who have a language other than Arabic is the narration of al-Salt, who asked Imam al-Rida: "How do you know all languages and speak with everyone in their own language?" The Imam replied: "I am God's proof among the people, and how could a person be God's proof over the people while not knowing their languages? Has the statement of the Commander of the Faithful not reached you, where he says, 'I have been granted *fasl al-khitab* (decisive speech).' The meaning of *fasl al-khitab* is knowledge of all languages"¹(Majlisi, 1983, vol. 26, p. 190; Majlisi, 1992, vol. 22, p. 145;

١. «إِنَّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ قَافٍ عَالَمًا لَا يَصِلُ إِلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ غَيْرِي وَ أَنَا الْمُحِيطُ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَ عَلِمِي بِهِ كَعَلِمِي بِدُنْيَاكُمْ هَذِهِ.. السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَ الْأَرْضِينَ فِي أَقَلِّ مِنْ طَرْفَةِ عَيْنٍ لَفَعَلْتُ».

"Al-Rida (PBUH) used to speak to people in their languages, and by God, he was the most eloquent of people and the most knowledgeable of every tongue and language... 'I am Allah's proof over His creation, and He would not take a proof over a people while not knowing their languages...'"

Huwayzi, 1994, vol. 2, p. 444; Bahrani, 1994, vol. 4, p. 646; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 11, p. 458).

God considers different languages and dialects as among His signs (Ar-Rum: 22) and states in another verse that He bestowed *fasl al-khitab* upon Prophet David (Sad: 20). Imam al-Rida states that this knowledge, just as it was given to Imam Ali, has also been granted to him, interpreting *fasl al-khitab* as knowledge of all languages and reasoning: "How can I be the Imam of all the people of the world while not knowing their language?" He introduces the Commander of the Faithful¹ and himself as possessors of *fasl al-khitab*. Based on the Quranic verse, the *fasl al-khitab* granted to Prophet David is from *ladunni* (divine direct) knowledge, and Imam al-Rida introduces himself as one of the emerging and novel instances of *fasl al-khitab*, which is an exegetical flow of the type of *ta'wil al-misdaq* (extending the apparent meaning of the verse from its primary instances to its hidden and novel instances, which, by rescinding the particularity of time, place, and persons, is applied to new individuals) (Masoudi, 2016, vol. 1, p. 68).

Fasl al-khitab means the separation of speech (Khwarazmi, 2007, p. 49). Al-Tarihi has defined *fasl al-khitab* as the resolution between two individuals, and has mentioned the meaning of knowledge of all languages by quoting the narration of Imam al-Rida (Al-Tarihi, 1996, vol. 2, p. 51). Therefore, in the narration of Imam al-Rida, *fasl al-khitab* is applied or interpreted as knowledge of languages.

Consequently, Imam al-Rida has created a semantic expansion for *fasl al-khitab* in the sense of knowledge of all languages, and has applied this Quranic term to himself, which is an instance of *jary*

1. Amir al-Mu'minin

ta'wili (*jary ta'wili* means expanding the inner meaning of the verse and applying it to hidden and newly emerged individuals and instances) (Masoudi, 2016, vol. 1, p. 70). This is while most exegetes have considered *fasl al-khitab* to mean judgment based on the claimant's evidence and the defendant's oath (Muqatil, 2003, vol. 3, p. 139; Al-Farra, 1980, vol. 2, p. 401; Tabari, 1992, vol. 23, p. 89; Al-Jurjani, 2009, vol. 2, p. 522; Tusi, n.d., vol. 8, p. 550; Tabarsi, 1993, vol. 8, p. 732), which is in fact judgment itself, in accordance with verse 20 of Surah Sad.

Another point is that knowledge of all languages also includes the language of animals and other creatures, which God has recounted in verses of Surah An-Naml, expressing the ability of His special servants in this regard. The narration of the "Deer's Guarantor" (Zamin-e Ahoo) and other narrations concerning the Noble Messenger and the other Imams attest to this and are well-known among the Shia. Therefore, the Imam's knowledge of all languages—from humans and animals to other creatures on Earth and other planets—does not seem unlikely, since the Imam is the proof over them and their guide toward God. Given that the foundation of theological discussions is reason, and narrations either corroborate or are merely used to express the details of a subject—along with the rule of tolerance in the proofs of recommended acts and the narrations of *Man Balagha* (Ghazanfari, 2017, pp. 177-179)—what comes to the human mind and is also confirmed by reason is that when some of the Infallible Imams speak of being God's proof over all of existence, and in narrations speak of the existence of beings outside the Earth, then the possibility that the Imams are also proofs over them does not seem unlikely.

Another narration indicating the existence of civilization on other planets and the responsibility of guiding them by the Imam is the narration of Imam Hasan, who states: "Indeed, God has two cities, one in the East and the other in the West, both of which have an iron wall,

and each city has a thousand thousand doors of gold, and within them are seventy thousand languages, every language contrary to the other. I am knowledgeable of all the languages between them and within them, and there is no proof in those two cities other than me and my brother Hussein"¹ (Al-Kulayni, 1986, vol. 1, p. 462; Al-Rawandi, 1989, vol. 2, p. 753; Majlisi, 1983, vol. 26, p. 192; Bahrani Isfahani, 1993, vol. 20, p. 360; Al-Bahrani, 1994, vol. 1, p. 110; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 11, p. 458).

His Eminence expresses matters through allegory to demonstrate the existence of different languages in various locations, and it is not specified whether the inhabitants of these places are on Earth or in the heavens; the matter is expressed in a general and comprehensive manner. As Allameh, paying attention to the verse «رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ» "Lord of the East and the West" (Al-Muzzammil: 9), has stated, this phrase of the verse means the Lord of the entire universe, because the East and the West are two relative directions that encompass the entire visible world (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 20, p. 102).

God placed the ability to create various languages within humans, and people of every tribe and nation anywhere in the world brought about different languages. These diverse languages are not limited to our planet Earth; rather, on other planets, there are beings each of whom speaks in their own languages, just as some contemporary researchers have considered this narration adaptable to the existence of societies and civilizations beyond the known human environment (Rezaei, 2014, p. 239), even though the direct indication of the narration on such instances may not be definitive.

١. «إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَدِينَتَيْنِ إِحْدَاهُمَا بِالْمَشْرِقِ وَالْأُخْرَى بِالْمَغْرِبِ عَلَيْهِمَا سُورٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ.. وَ مَا فِيهِمَا وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَ مَا عَلَيْهِمَا حُجَّةٌ غَيْرِي وَ غَيْرُ أَخِي الْحُسَيْنِ».

"Indeed, Allah has two cities, one in the East and the other in the West, with a wall of iron upon them... and there is no proof in them, between them, and upon them except me and my brother Hussein."

In this case, apart from informing of the existence of rational and intellectual beings like humans with differing languages among them, the Imam also emphasizes their being the proof and Imam over them. This is because being God's proof has certain signs, among which are knowing the language of every person, group, city, country, and even every sphere and planet with which the Imam must communicate, guide them, and answer their questions. Therefore, knowing their language and dialect is one of the conditions for being a proof, Imam, and leader.

Imam Hasan introduces himself and his brother as knowledgeable of all those languages. We know that this is nothing other than divine grace bestowed upon them. Therefore, His Eminence likens the various languages of different nations and planets to two cities in the East and the West, expressing the matter through allegory. Afterward, he states instances of divine effusion, namely the divine proofs. What is evident from this narration is that this knowledge is not restricted to a specific Imam, but rather encompasses all the Imams, including the Imam of the Age (may Allah hasten his reappearance), who holds an even broader responsibility.

Another narration, similar to the previous one, has been recorded from Imam Sadiq which serves as confirmation of it, stating: "Indeed, Allah created two cities—one in the West and the other in the East—each populated by seventy thousand people. They have walls of iron, and each city has one million doors of gold, with each door having two leaves. These seventy thousand people speak various dialects, and I know all their dialects. In those two cities, there is no proof except me, my fathers, and my sons after me" ¹ (Majlisi, 1983, vol.

١. « قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَلَقَ مَدِينَتَيْنِ... وَأَنَا أَعْرِفُ جَمِيعَ تِلْكَ اللُّغَاتِ وَ مَا فِيهَا وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا حُجَّةٌ غَيْرِي وَ غَيْرَ آبَائِي وَ غَيْرِ أَبْنَائِي بَعْدِي ».

"He said: 'Indeed, Allah created two cities... and I know all those languages, and

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47, p. 119; Bahrani Isfahani, 1993, vol. 20, p. 360; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 11, p. 458).

This narration also points allegorically to various languages and dialects whose precise location is not explicitly specified, yet it states the instances of those who possess all these languages. Since acquiring a language other than one's mother tongue requires teaching and learning, mastering all languages and dialects demands a science beyond natural knowledge. Therefore, it must be through divine grace and *ladunni* (direct divine) knowledge, indicating that their possessors are God's proofs and signs of the Exalted Creator.

Among the traditions that illustrate the Imam's knowledge, mastery, and consequently his status as the proof, are the narrations of his debates. Imam al-Rida has seven famous debates with scholars of various religions, the most renowned of which are the debates with the Christian Catholicos (*Jathaliq*) and the Jewish Exilarch (*Ras al-Jalut*), which took place in one of the grand assemblies of al-Ma'mun. Nawfali stated that al-Ma'mun wanted to test the Imam's knowledge, and thus invited all scholars from other religions. In response to Nawfali's anxiety, Imam al-Rida stated: "When you hear my arguments against the people of the Torah using their Torah, and against the people of the Gospel using their Gospel, and against the people of the Psalms using their Psalms, and against the Sabians in their Hebrew language, and against the Magian mobeds in their Persian language, and against the Romans in the Roman language, and against the followers of various schools in their own languages—yes, when I invalidate the proof of each group individually such that they abandon their school of thought and accept my words, then al-Ma'mun

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there is no proof in what is within them and between them except me, my fathers, and my sons after me."

will realize that he is not deserving of the position he is seeking! At that time, he will regret it.

The assembly was convened, and it turned out precisely as the Imam had stated. There, he presented the words of John of Daylam—endorsed by two scholars from the Jews and the Christians—stating that Jesus the Messiah, in the third book of the Gospel, foretold the advent of Muhammad, the Ahl al-Bayt, and his community, a meaning which the Glorious Quran also quotes from Jesus in verse 6 of Surah As-Saff (Sobhani, 1982, pp. 97-133). There, the Imam spoke about the Gospel, the loss of the original Gospel, and its authorship by four individuals: Mark, Luke, John, and Matthew, pointing out the contradictions in the Catholicos's words and leaving him helpless (Pishva'i, 2007, p. 526). Through these debates, Imam al-Rida demonstrated his knowledge, awareness, power, and capability over all those present and various religions, thereby reminding them of his authority (hujiyyah) over all of them and their respective faiths.

Imam Sajjad, in interpreting verse 65 of Surah Al-Hajj, states: "We are the Imams of the Muslims, the proofs of God over all the worlds, the masters of the believers, the leaders of the bright-faced ones, and the masters of the people of faith; we are the cause of security for the inhabitants of the earth, just as the stars are the cause of security for the inhabitants of the heavens; we are those through whom God holds the sky so that it does not fall upon the earth except by His permission, and we are those through whom God holds the earth so that it does not shake its inhabitants"¹ (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 23, p. 5; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 9, p. 716).

١. «أَنَحْنُ أَيْمَنَةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَحُجَجُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ...».

"We are the Imams of the Muslims and the proofs of God over the worlds..."

The overall conclusion of these narrations is that, from the perspective of Imami theology, the Imams possess a knowledge that transcends acquired learning, are cognizant of languages, and are introduced as divine proofs over expansive realms of the universe. The narration of the two cities speaks of the Imam's authority over unknown communities with diverse languages, even though the terrestrial or extraterrestrial nature of those communities is not explicitly stated. Furthermore, the narration of Imam Sajjad with the expression "the proofs of God over all the worlds" reinforces the comprehensive scope of this discussion.

Therefore, this collection of narrations can serve as corroboration for the possibility that the Imam's knowledge and authority encompass realms and beings beyond known human society. Consequently, the Infallible Imams, حجج الله على العالمين, each in their own time, were God's proofs on Earth and beyond, aware of humans, jinn, and other rational and non-rational beings, and—due to the responsibility of the Imamate and guidance—were in communication with them. A fortiori, the Promised Mahdi, the Proof of God (may Allah hasten his reappearance), also bears this momentous responsibility.

3. Al-Mahdi(PBUH), the Proof of God

Since the Prophet is the Seal of the Prophets (Al-Ahzab: 40) and no prophet will come after him, he has twelve successors, the last of whom is the Promised Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance). He is an Imam sharing the Prophet's name, possessing characteristics like his, and having capabilities identical to those of his fathers. The existence and responsibility of the Savior of the world have been articulated in traditions, including the narration of the Noble Messenger on the night of the Mi'raj, where God, after naming the twelve Imams and showing them in a halo of light to him while they

were standing in prayer, with Al-Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) shining among them like a radiant star, stated: "O Muhammad, these are My proofs, and the Qa'im is from your lineage and progeny. By My majesty and glory! He is the proof whom My friends are obligated to follow, and he is the avenger against My enemies. Through them, God holds the heavens so that they do not fall upon the earth except by His permission" (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 27, p. 199; Barazesh, 2015, vol. 9, p. 716). Numerous traditions from the Noble Messenger, the Imams, and even other religions have stated the Imamate of the Promised Mahdi (may Allah hasten his reappearance) through various expressions and await his reappearance, and in some traditions, remarks have also been made directly and indirectly regarding the scope of his Imamate.

Governing a country as vast as the entire world is a difficult task that is only possible by enjoying divine leadership, compassionate and committed agents who believe in the divine system and the sovereignty of Islam—especially under conditions where the world has inherited a multitude of disorders, including oppression, tyranny, and injustice, and some cities have been turned into ruins as a result of war and combat, accompanied by environmental pollution, successive droughts, and subsequent shortages of provisions and food supplies.

Despite all the afflictions and miseries that have entrapped humanity and mankind, a time will ultimately arrive when justice and equity are implemented on the earth—dead from oppression and injustice—by the capable hand of the divine man and peerless dispenser of justice through the will and decree of God. As Imam Sadiq stated in the commentary of the verse, «وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا» *"And know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death"* (Al-Hadid: 17): «العدل بعد الجور» *"Justice after injustice"* (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 72, p. 353; Al-Huwayzi, 1994, vol. 5, p. 243); and in another narration, he states:

"God revives the earth through the Qa'im, meaning when it had died through the disbelief of its people" (Al-Huwayzi, 1994, vol. 5, p. 242). His Eminence will act with justice and revive the earth by spreading justice after it had died due to the spread of tyranny. He also stated:

"When our Qa'im rises... the wave of his justice and equity will penetrate into their houses and rooms, just as cold and heat enter them" (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 52, p. 362). Although the initial focus of these traditions is on reforming earthly affairs, given the theological foundations of the necessity of the Proof and the intermediary of grace, this dissemination of justice is not necessarily restricted to planet Earth and can encompass all realms under the governance of the Imam.

His Eminence, the Proof, possesses an exceedingly high spiritual perfection and continues to ascend in perfection. Despite having lived for approximately 1200 years, by benefiting from divine power to preserve his physical capabilities over time, he does not suffer from senility. As stated, the Prophet and the Imams, due to their Imamate, have dominance over all the heavens and are aware of their creatures and galaxies, and 1400 years ago, according to traditions, they spoke of these creatures and their habitation in galactic spheres, expressing a discourse far broader than what the scientists of that time stated. A fortiori, this compassionate End-of-Time Imam (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is also aware of all of them, and considering the scope of the Imam's knowledge and authority, the plausibility of His Eminence's communication with rational beings in other realms can be raised; although proving the actual occurrence of such communication requires clearer texts.

According to incoming traditions, all sciences are with him, for a human being with his capabilities—if knowledge consists of twenty-seven parts, and until the time of his reappearance only two

parts thereof have been uncovered for mankind by the prophets—when he comes, he will unfold the remaining sciences for human beings, and they will utilize them (Majlisi, 1983, vol. 52, p. 336). This colossal transformation in sciences does not merely mean technological advancement, but rather encompasses spiritual, moral, and cosmological sciences, as well as the various dimensions of existence. The Pole of the Universe of Possibility (may Allah hasten his reappearance), as the manifestation of the divine names, is the intermediary of grace throughout all existence. His Eminence (may Allah hasten his reappearance) is the intermediary for the flow of life and the order of the heavens and the earth, because the universe of possibility cannot receive the grace of existence from God without an intermediary and the Proof of God.

The Imam ((PBUH)), with his infallible leadership, lofty spirit, scientific and spiritual perfections, and immense moral virtues, monitors all events and currents of the earth and beyond, and all its points are as manifest to him as the palm of his hand. With the knowledge and science that God has bestowed upon him, and with his peerless management and administration, he will not only have apparent dominance and sovereignty over the world and its people, but he will also rule over hearts, as narrated from the Messenger of God who said: "I give you the glad tidings of a man from Quraysh whose caliphate and rule the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth are pleased with" (Ibn Tawus, n.d., p. 70). Abdullah ibn Umar says: "A man from the descendants of Hussein will emerge from the direction of the East such that if the mountains confront him (to obstruct him), he will level them and make them his path," and he says: "Al-Mahdi is the one behind whom Jesus son of Mary will descend and pray" (Ibn Tawus, *ibid.*).

He will speak with all strata of people, wherever they may be

in the world—whether on Earth, in the heavens, or on other planets—in their own languages. Therefore, by God's permission, no one will experience any difficulty in communicating with this capable Imam. Thus, he is the most knowledgeable human being on Earth, who is alive right now and in communication with all people, yet they do not recognize him, and this unfamiliarity is solely for the preservation of his life¹.

Therefore, the Mahdi whom the Jews, Christians, and even the Ahl al-Sunnah are awaiting is the Mahdi, the Master of the Command, from the lineage of the Noble Messenger and Imam Hussein, who has no enmity with anyone and is not pursuing power. He carries a momentous responsibility placed upon his shoulders by God: to rescue the entire universe (Earth and beyond) from bloodshed and discord, to bring it under the command of God, to establish peace so that all divine creatures may live in security and tranquility, to benefit from divine bounties, and to know and praise their Lord.

Thus, he is the Proof of God over all religions and terrestrial and extraterrestrial creatures, bringing everyone under a complete religion that God approves of. As stated, like his fathers, he is more knowledgeable of all the books of the People of the Book than they are themselves, for he is the Proof of God and the vicegerent of God on Earth with a compassionate heart, and he can easily prove his authority, just as his fathers and the Noble Messenger were likewise.

Conclusion

1. As the divine scholar Ayatollah Bahjat used to state: "That Eminence is veiled from the eyes of the oppressors, but those who are neither oppressors, nor companions of the oppressors, nor associates with oppressors... are not veiled from his noble presence" (Hazrat-e Hujjat: Collection of Statements by Mr. Bahjat, p. 56).

The existence of extraterrestrial beings in other spheres, some of whom are endowed with intellect, cannot be overlooked, as it has been indicated in many verses and traditions. Therefore:

1. The existence of verses that use terms such as *dabbah* (creature) or the pronoun *man* (who/those) for the inhabitants of the heavens.
2. The expression of extraterrestrial traditions by the Infallibles, confirming the heavenly realms and asserting themselves as divine proofs over all existing beings in the universe, both terrestrial and celestial.
3. The various disputations of the Imams with the People of the Book—both Jews and Christians—using their own scriptures, showing that the Infallibles, while believing in all prophets, were also cognizant of their scriptures and the content of their esoteric teachings.
4. Traditions that cite knowledge of all the languages of the universe as evidence of the capacity to communicate with all morally responsible creatures of God in the earth and the heavens.
5. Traditions in which the Imam, through the proofs he presents, establishes his leadership over God's creatures in the earth and the heavens, designating himself as the Proof of God.
6. Traditions that declare the Savior of the world to be the Promised Mahdi, the final Imam, and the Proof of God.

All of these collectively indicate that Al-Mahdi, the Master of the Age (may Allah hasten his reappearance), is the final Imam chosen by God for the guidance of humanity, and this leadership is not restricted solely to terrestrial creatures; rather, it encompasses every morally responsible being residing in celestial spheres who is in need of divine guidance.

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Elucidating the Illuminationist Model of the Relationship Between Spirituality and Security in Islamic Governance*

Siamak Bagheri Chokami¹

Isa Molavi Vardanjani²

1. Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Institute of Political Studies, Imam Sadiq Research Institute for Islamic Sciences, Qom, Iran (**Corresponding Author**).
s.bagheri@isri.ac.ir

2. Researcher, Imam Sadiq Institute of Islamic Sciences, Qom, Iran.
molavi131@gmail.com

Abstract

The relationship between spirituality and security is one of the foundational issues in the domain of Islamic governance, regarding which various approaches have been presented. Some perspectives do not recognize a relationship between these two categories, some emphasize their mutual influence or synergy, and others consider security as arising solely from material and structural factors. The main problem of this research is to elucidate the nature of the relationship between spirituality and security within the framework of Islamic governance. The present study has been conducted using a descriptive-analytical method based on the study of Islamic sources, verses of the Holy Quran, traditions, and the views of Islamic thinkers. The findings of the research indicate that the

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relationship between spirituality and security in Islamic governance is of an "illuminationist" (Ishraqi) type; meaning that security is neither a phenomenon independent of spirituality nor merely affected by it, but rather considered as a level of manifestation and social emergence of spirituality. This model is grounded in the ontological, anthropological, epistemological, and teleological foundations of Islam, and its logic follows the chain of "spirituality, faith and piety, secure human, secure society, secure governance, and reassuring security". Accordingly, sustainable security in Islamic governance, more than being the product of power and control mechanisms, is the result of the expansion of faith, piety, justice, and spiritual values at individual, social, and institutional levels.

Keywords

Spirituality, Security, Islamic Governance, Illuminationist Model, Reassuring Security.

Problem Statement

Security is one of the foundational goals of any political system and among the most vital needs of human societies. A significant portion of contemporary security theories explains security based on factors such as political power, military capability, economic development, institutional efficiency, and social control. However, developments over recent decades and the expansion of soft, cognitive, cultural, and identity threats have shown that security is not merely the product of hard and structural components; semantic, evaluative, and normative factors also play an essential role in its formation and sustainability. Therefore, alongside conventional security studies approaches, attending to cultural and spiritual capacities in the production of security has become a major subject in governance and security studies.

In this context, spirituality—as a fundamental component of human and social life—holds a special place in Islamic thought. By generating inner peace, strengthening self-control, deepening responsibility, expanding social trust, consolidating moral capital, and reinforcing social solidarity, spirituality can play a constructive role in reducing social harms and threats, thereby promoting security. Despite this, there is no consensus on the type and nature of the relationship between spirituality and security, and various perspectives have been put forward in this regard.

Some approaches treat security as a category independent of spirituality, considering it to be mainly the product of power, interests, and political and security mechanisms. Conversely, others establish an interactive relationship between spirituality and security, emphasizing their mutual influence. A third group speaks of a synergistic relationship, believing that increased spirituality leads to enhanced security, although security cannot be considered solely arising from

spirituality. Consequently, despite numerous studies on the security effects of religion and spirituality, the very nature and quality of the relationship between spirituality and security still face theoretical ambiguity, and a cohesive framework to explain this relationship has not been provided.

This theoretical vacuum becomes even more significant in the domain of Islamic governance because, in the epistemic constellation of Islam, security is not merely defined as the absence of threats or the preservation of social order; rather, it has a close nexus with concepts such as faith, piety, justice, peace, assurance, and the good life (*hayat-e tayyebah*). Quranic and traditional teachings introduce faith as the source of peace and security on the one hand, and depict the desirable Islamic society as one possessing comprehensive security across doctrinal, moral, cultural, political, and economic dimensions on the other. Nevertheless, a clear theoretical model capable of explaining how spirituality and security interconnect within the framework of Islamic governance has not yet been presented.

It appears that restricting the relationship between spirituality and security to separatist, interactive, or synergistic models does not fully reveal the explanatory capacity of Islamic thought. In Islamic governance, security is not merely a secondary byproduct of spirituality; rather, it originates from the bedrock of spirituality and manifests across various levels of social life. Accordingly, one can speak of an "illuminationist model" of the relationship between spirituality and security—a model in which security does not lie parallel to spirituality, but rather longitudinally (*tooli*), emerging as a ray of the society's spiritual truth. From this perspective, just as light radiates from a luminous source, security also originates from faith, piety, justice, and spiritual values, becoming manifest in various arenas of governance.

Based on this, the main problem of the present research is: What are the foundations, components, and mechanisms of the illuminationist model of the relationship between spirituality and security in Islamic governance, and how can this model explain the relationship between spirituality and security within the framework of Islamic thought? By analyzing the Islamic foundations of security and spirituality and critiquing existing approaches, this study aims to present the theoretical framework of the illuminationist model and reveal its capacities for explaining sustainable security in Islamic governance.

1. Research Background

Studies conducted on spirituality and security can be classified into two general categories: the first comprises research considering security as a groundwork for the growth of spirituality, and the second consists of studies addressing the role of spirituality in producing or strengthening security.

In the first category, Qomi et al. (2023), drawing upon Quranic teachings, investigated the impact of various dimensions of security on promoting spirituality. Their findings indicate that security across military, economic, political, judicial, intellectual, cultural, and religious dimensions can provide the groundwork for spiritual growth. Similarly, Shafieinia and Farsi (2020), in studying the role of security in the Iranian-Islamic model of progress, considered security as an effective factor in developing the realm of spirituality, emphasizing the two-way relationship between security and spiritual progress.

In the second category, Kazemi and Bahrami (2015), studying spirituality-oriented lifestyles, examined the impact of spiritual beliefs on psychological security and social health. Komeijani (2023), in exploring the role of spirituality in individual and social crisis

management, introduced spirituality as an effective factor in increasing resilience, psychological peace, and crisis management, which indirectly plays a role in enhancing social security.

Certain studies have also addressed the concept of spiritual security. Seyyed Kalal and Asadzandi (2025), through a comparative review of the theories of the "sound heart" (*qalb-e salim*) and "religious coping," introduced spiritual security as a protective factor against military personnel's psychological and spiritual harms. Furthermore, Safavi and Mohaghegh (2000), in their study on spiritual health and sustainable national security, emphasized the reciprocal relationship of spiritual health and sustainable security, identifying faith and righteous deeds as the primary origin of security-generating actions.

In the field of theoretical security studies, Gherayagh Zandi (2010), by introducing the concept of "moral security," attempted to explain the link between moral values and security studies, showing that ethics can act as a reference point and framework for achieving sustainable security. Additionally, Najaf Lakzaee (2015) conducted a study titled "The Transcendent Security School with a View to Imam Khomeini's Thought," formulated on the basis of Imam Khomeini's theory of the dual-nature. Moreover, Lakzaee (2025) published a study entitled "A Modern Approach to Transcendent Security," articulating the conceptual and theoretical foundations of transcendent security based on dual-nature frameworks. The concept, aspects, reference, and levels of security, the concepts of friend and enemy, and approaches to acquiring security are defined based on the aforementioned framework.

Despite the scientific value of these studies, most existing research has either addressed the impact of security on spirituality or focused on the role of spirituality in enhancing security. Furthermore, a portion of research has been dedicated to explaining spiritual

security, spiritual health, or moral security. Nevertheless, the issue of the "nature of the relationship between spirituality and security" and how to theoretically formulate this relationship within the framework of Islamic governance has received less attention. In other words, a cohesive theoretical model capable of explaining the fundamental correlation between these two categories has not been provided.

2. Research Methodology

This research is fundamental in terms of purpose and qualitative in nature. The research method is descriptive-analytical, and the required data was gathered through library research. In this study, the theoretical literature related to spirituality, security, and Islamic governance was first reviewed, and then, utilizing conceptual and inferential analysis, existing approaches in explaining the relationship between spirituality and security were analyzed. Subsequently, by referring to verses of the Holy Quran, traditions, and the views of Islamic thinkers—particularly the perspectives of Imam Khomeini (RA) and the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution—the foundations, logic, and implications of the illuminationist model of the relationship between spirituality and security were extracted and explained. The unit of analysis in this research consists of theoretical propositions and concepts related to spirituality and security within the epistemic constellation of Islam.

3. Conceptualization

3-1. Model

In the humanities and social sciences, a model refers to a conceptual and systematic framework that explains the relationships among the elements and components of a phenomenon and reveals the governing logic of their interaction. Beyond a simple description, a model

provides a theoretical picture of reality and aids in understanding how a phenomenon forms, persists, and functions. Therefore, a model is considered a tool for organizing concepts, explaining relationships among variables, and presenting a cohesive picture of a social or intellectual reality.

Accordingly, the intended "model" in the present research is a theoretical framework for explaining the type and nature of the relationship between spirituality and security in Islamic governance. This model seeks to explain the origin, mechanism, and manner of spirituality's impact on security, revealing the logic governing this relationship within the epistemic constellation of Islam. Thus, "model" in this research signifies not an ideal type or executive blueprint, but rather a conceptual and explanatory framework for understanding the ratio between spirituality and security.

The illuminationist model in this research refers to a theoretical framework viewing the relationship between spirituality and security as a longitudinal, originating, and manifestation-oriented relationship. In this model, security is not merely a consequence, dependent variable, or side effect of spirituality, but rather its social emergence and manifestation. In other words, just as light radiates and illuminates from a luminous source, security likewise originates from faith, piety, justice, and other spiritual components, manifesting in individual and social arenas. Hence, in the illuminationist model, spirituality is the origin and security is its manifestation, establishing a relationship between the two that goes beyond mutual influence or synergy.

3-2. Spirituality

In contemporary literature, spirituality is derived from the Latin word *spirituality* and refers to the spiritual, inner, and non-material dimension

of human beings. In the Persian language as well, spirituality is used in contrast to materiality, exteriority, and formalism, observing the truth, inner essence, and spiritual aspects of human life. In Islamic texts, concepts such as *rouhaniyat* (spirituality/clergy), *hayat-e tayyebah* (the good life), faith, piety, and divine proximity are closely linked to the domain of spirituality.

Muslim thinkers have provided multiple definitions of spirituality. Allamah Tabatabai considers spirituality to be observant of "humanity's true life" and its inner perfections, presenting spiritual life as the transcendent rank of human living (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 4, p. 567). Shahid Motahhari also views spirituality as observing the inner and interior dimensions of human existence, including faith, pure sentiments, heavenly emotions, and the transcendence of the soul (Motahhari, 2014, vol. 1, p. 11; vol. 13, p. 376; vol. 16, p. 531). Imam Khomeini regards spirituality as the product of self-purification and the divine upbringing of humanity, introducing it as a factor elevating the existential value of human beings (Khomeini, 1999, vol. 10, p. 245). Ayatollah Khamenei also defines spirituality as "heart attachment and intimacy with God" and adorning oneself with values such as faith, sincerity, trust, and self-sacrifice (The "Second Step of the Genuinely Islamic Revolution" Statement addressed to the Iranian nation, February 10, 2019).

An examination of these definitions indicates that in Islamic thought, spirituality is not merely an inner experience or individual feeling; rather, it is grounded in monotheistic cognition, heart-felt faith, and righteous deeds, which manifest in both individual and social arenas. In this regard, some researchers have categorized the dimensions of spirituality into cognitive (insightful), attitudinal (dispositional), and behavioral dimensions. "Belief and faith in God, connection with Him, and performing acts corresponding to this belief and connection—in other words, faith in God (cognitive-intellectual

dimension) and a dynamic, persistent, jihadist, transcendent, monotheistic, and conscious connection with God, oneself, society, and the world through the righteous Sharia of Muhammad and the guidance and leadership of the Imam and Wali in various spheres of life (attitudinal-dispositional dimension)—manifest in sincere and righteous deeds and culminate in the good life (*hayat-e tayyebah*) (Roudgar, December 17, 2019)."

Accordingly, in the present research, spirituality is defined as: A collection of beliefs, orientations, and behaviors based on faith in God and revelatory teachings, which manifest in the form of values such as faith, piety, sincerity, trust in God, self-sacrifice, and responsibility, providing the groundwork for individual and social *hayat-e tayyebah*.

3-3. Security

Security is derived from the root "*amn*", meaning peace, reassurance, and freedom from fear and threat (Qorayshi, 1973, p. 123). In security studies, numerous definitions of this term have been presented. Some have defined security negatively as the absence of threats to vital values and interests, while others, with a positive approach, have considered it a state of satisfaction, peace, and the possibility of individual and societal flourishing (Eftekhari, 2012, pp. 22-23).

In Islamic thought, security is a concept transcending the mere absence of threats, intricately linked with faith, peace, justice, and human felicity. The shared root of the words "*amn*" (security) and "*iman*" (faith) in the Holy Quran indicates a profound connection between security and a faithful life. Allamah Tabatabai, in defining faith, does not accept mere verbal confirmation and deems practical commitment to at least some implications of faith necessary. He cites

verses that point to the integration of faith and righteous deeds (Quran 2:25, 62, 82). From his perspective, an individual is called a believer only if they act upon their faith to some degree (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 15, p. 6).

From this standpoint, security is not merely the protection of life, property, and territory, but rather a peace and reassurance that provides the foundation for human material and spiritual growth.

Security in the present research is defined as: A state of individual and social peace, reassurance, immunity, and satisfaction which, while securing vital needs and removing threats, provides the necessary platform for realizing divine values and human spiritual transcendence.

4. Theoretical Approaches to the Relationship Between Spirituality and Security

Elucidating the relationship between spirituality and security is one of the foundational issues in security, social, and political thought. Differences in ontological, anthropological, and epistemological foundations have led thinkers to offer varying understandings of how these two categories interrelate. Reviewing the theoretical literature shows that existing approaches can be classified into four general categories: the separatist approach, the interactive approach, the synergistic approach, and the illuminationist approach.

4-1. The Separatist Approach

In this approach, spirituality and security are treated as two independent categories, and no meaningful relationship is established between them. The foundation of this outlook can be traced within materialist and realist approaches, which primarily view security as

originating from political power, military capability, economic wealth, and institutional mechanisms. Based on this viewpoint, security is a function of power, and spiritual factors play no determining role in producing or preserving it (cf. Lakzaee, 2013).

The extreme form of this approach evaluates the relationship between spirituality and security not only as independent but as inverse. According to this interpretation, increasing spiritual and religious tendencies can reduce the efficiency of social and political structures and be regarded as an obstacle to development and security. This perspective, the roots of which can be observed in certain post-Renaissance secularist readings, considers religion and spirituality as personal matters and avoids their entry into the public and governance arenas (cf. Kiani et al., 2015).

4-2. The Interactive Approach

The interactive approach is based on the assumption that a two-way relationship exists between spirituality and security, and each of these two categories can affect the other. According to this viewpoint, spirituality and security are two independent phenomena, but their conceptual independence does not prevent the formation of a relationship and mutual influence between them. In this approach, spirituality helps consolidate security by strengthening moral values, social norms, accountability, and self-control; conversely, the presence of security provides the necessary foundation for the growth and flourishing of spirituality.

Proponents of this approach believe that spirituality and security are linked across three levels: cognitive, evaluative, and behavioral. At the cognitive level, spiritual beliefs are effective in shaping individuals' attitudes toward social order and security; at the

evaluative level, religious and moral values enhance social trust and cohesion; and at the behavioral level, actions arising from spirituality can prevent the occurrence of many abnormalities and security threats. On the other hand, social and political security also provides the possibility for realizing and deepening these spiritual values and behaviors.

Some thinkers have considered this relationship to be of the nature of accompaniment and mutual influence. Khajeh Nezam al-Molk writes in this regard: "Whenever turmoil arises in the kingdom, disruption enters the religion as well" (Khajeh Nezam al-Molk, 1955, p. 82). This proposition indicates that from his perspective, disruption in social and political security leaves direct impacts on the religious and spiritual life of society. Similarly, in Islamic sources, a kind of accompaniment between religion and security is emphasized. Imam Ali (AS) states: "*Anna mufaraqata al-dini mufaraqatu al-amn*"; meaning that separation from religion is separation from security (Yaqub Kulayni, 1407 AH, vol. 1, p. 27). Citing this narration, Shahid Motahhari considers security as accompanying religion and spirituality, which originate from faith and adherence to divine values (Motahhari, 2014, vol. 26, p. 564).

Based on this approach, to whatever extent society's spiritual foundations are strengthened, the grounds for security increase, and whenever security is disrupted, the possibility of the growth and continuity of spiritual life decreases. Therefore, the relationship between spirituality and security is not of the kind of contrast and separation, but rather of interaction and mutual impact.

Nonetheless, the interactive approach still treats spirituality and security as two independent categories that merely affect one

another. Hence, although this approach establishes a deeper link between the two categories than the separatist approach, it is still incapable of explaining the origin and source of security in Islam's intellectual constellation and does not establish a longitudinal relationship between spirituality and security.

4-3. The Synergistic Approach

The synergistic approach is based on the assumption that a reinforcing and additive relationship exists between spirituality and security, such that the growth of each provides the grounds for the growth of the other (Lakzaee, 2015, p. 163). According to this viewpoint, spirituality and security are two independent categories, but within a continuous cycle, they mutually promote one another.

The foundation of this approach can be traced within certain Quranic teachings. In the verse, "It is He Who sent down tranquility (sakinah) into the hearts of the believers, so that they may increase in faith along with their faith" (Quran 48:4), God speaks of the relationship between tranquility, peace, and the increase of faith. Furthermore, in the verse, "God has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds... and He will surely replace their fear with security after their fear" (Quran 24:55), faith and righteous deeds are introduced as the origin of achieving security.

Some thinkers have considered this process to be a type of iterative or cyclical relationship; meaning that faith and spirituality lead to security, and the resulting security in turn provides the ground for deepening faith and expanding spiritual life. Consequently, spirituality and security, in a synergistic process, continuously reinforce one another (Eftekhari, 2012, pp. 115-116).

Although this approach establishes a deeper connection between spirituality and security compared to the interactive approach, it still treats these two categories as possessing independent identities and does not consider security as a rank of spirituality's manifestation.

4-4. The Illuminationist Approach

If there is a relationship between two categories, such as "Hasan's book," three independent elements constitute this issue: the book, Hasan, and the relation that attaches the book to Hasan. That is, even if this relation is removed, no flaw is caused to the existence and independence of the two elements of the book and Hasan. However, sometimes in the relationship between two categories, certain constituent elements do not possess an independent existence; rather, one of the categories is pure relation (*ayn-e rabt*) to the other, much like sunlight. Of course, this longitudinal ratio does not mean ignoring the role of material power and legal structures; rather, these elements are defined longitudinally to spirituality as grounds and tools for realizing reassuring security (*amniyat-e motma'enneh*), and their function is to create a secure environment for the growth and deepening of spirituality. In this relation, light is neither an independent and separate element from the sun nor a separate relation existing between these two elements; rather, the existence-giving luminosity is pure relation to the sun, which exists with the sun's existence and becomes non-existent upon its absence. The relation intended between spirituality and security is an illuminationist relation; meaning that the existence of security is pure relation to the sun [of spirituality], and with separation from spirituality, its non-existent state is realized. In this relation, spirituality comprehensively encompasses security, a reciprocal impact relationship exists, and synergy is also established.

Table 1: The Four Approaches to the Relationship Between
Spirituality and Security

Approach	Type of Relationship Between Spirituality and Security	Place of Spirituality	Place of Security	Governing Logic
Separatist (No Relation / Inverse)	Contrast or contradiction	Independent of security and sometimes an obstacle to it	Dependent on power and material mechanisms	Security is the product of power, wealth, and authority, and spirituality plays no role in it.
Interactive (Impact and Reciprocal Effect)	Reciprocal and two-way relationship	Affects security and is affected by it	Affects spirituality and is affected by it	A correlation and interaction are established between spirituality and security.
Synergistic (Reinforcement)	Reinforcing relationship	Increasing spirituality strengthens security	Increasing security provides the ground for the growth of spirituality	Spirituality and security cyclically promote each other's growth.

Approach	Type of Relationship Between Spirituality and Security	Place of Spirituality	Place of Security	Governing Logic
Illuminationist	Longitudinal and originating relationship	Origin, cause, and source of security	Manifestation, emergence, and epiphany of spirituality	Security is a rank of spirituality's manifestation in individual and social life.

5. Elucidating the Illuminationist Model of the Relationship Between Spirituality and Security

5-1. Foundations of the Illuminationist Model of the Relationship Between Spirituality and Security

5-1-1. The Foundation of Monotheistic Worldview

The relationship between spirituality and security in Islamic governance is grounded in a monotheistic worldview. In this perspective, the universe is not merely a collection of material and natural relations, but a reality possessing hierarchical levels of existence (Riahi & Vasei, 2011, p. 10) in which individual and social arenas are influenced by the spiritual and divine realm. Accordingly, security is not simply the product of power, wealth, or material mechanisms, but is tied to the degree of divine values present in individual and social life. From this standpoint, security is rooted in the spiritual order of the cosmos and possesses a foundation beyond the dynamics of power. In the monotheistic worldview, God is the origin of existence, guidance, and peace, and the closer an individual and society draw to the Ultimate Origin, the more the grounds of fear, anxiety, conflict, and insecurity diminish. In this framework, true security is realized when human

beings define their relationship with God on the basis of servitude . In the monotheistic logic, servitude is not limited merely to performing ritual acts; rather, it oversees directing all dimensions of individual and social life according to divine will and monotheistic values (Lakzaee, May 19, 2026). Therefore, monotheism is not only the foundation for the formation of spirituality, but is also considered the source of sustainable security, explaining the nexus between spirituality and security at the individual, social, and governance levels.

5-1-2. The Anthropological Foundation

In Islamic thought, humans are dual-dimensional beings endowed with both material and spiritual dimensions (Motahhari, 1993, p. 32; Ayatollah Khamenei, October 11, 2012). Consequently, their behaviors, actions, and social relations are not solely influenced by material needs; rather, beliefs, values, and spiritual orientations also play a foundational role in shaping their individual and social lives. Emphasizing the rational, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of humans, Imam Khomeini considers spirituality as the infrastructure for the reform of the individual and society (Mousavi Khomeini, 2008, vol. 18, p. 241). Accordingly, faith, piety, and self-purification are not merely individual virtues; rather, they provide the groundwork for self-control, responsibility, justice-seeking, and respect for the rights of others—factors that shape the foundations of individual and social security. Ayatollah Khamenei also emphasizes that "human comfort stems from that spirit and morality which must be sought and derived from religion" (January 9, 1992), introducing spirituality as the "spirit governing all individual and social arenas of the human world" (December 1, 2010). Therefore, from the perspective of Islamic anthropology, sustainable security begins from within the faithful and purified human being and extends in proportion to the deepening of

faith and spirituality in the individual and society.

5-1-3. The Epistemological Foundation

The illuminationist model of the relationship between spirituality and security rests upon a type of monotheistic epistemology that does not restrict sources of knowledge to sense and experience, but also recognizes intellect, revelation, and divine knowledge as valid sources of cognition. Based on this outlook, many foundational realities of individual and social life, including security, cannot be understood solely through material and empirical indicators, but must be elucidated in the light of faith and divine knowledge. In this framework, security is not merely an external state resulting from a balance of power, but is rooted in humanity's worldview regarding existence, God, and their place in the universe.

Imam Khomeini considers the root of many individual and social disruptions to be the lack of divine knowledge, stating explicitly: "All human miseries stem from forgetting God and negligence of divine teachings" (Mousavi Khomeini, 2016, pp. 123-124). Accordingly, true security is achieved when human understanding of self and God is shaped on the basis of divine teachings and guides individual and social behavior. In this view, purification and self-edification are most essential for rulers and holders of power, because their existential and behavioral impacts are not restricted to themselves and can influence the destiny of societies. The rebellion of an ordinary individual usually remains limited in scope, but deviation at the apex of power can plunge a nation or even the world into corruption and crisis (Mousavi Khomeini, 1999, vol. 14, pp. 391-392). Therefore, moral purification and edification must begin with elites and rulers, because their reform or deviation has a direct and determining effect on the destiny of society and even broader expanses of

human societies, steering a nation's path toward righteousness or corruption.

The Holy Quran also links security with faith and divine knowledge, stating: *"Those who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—for them is security"* (Quran 6:82). Furthermore, it introduces peace and reassurance as the result of remembering God: *"Unquestionably, by the remembrance of God hearts are assured"* (Quran 13:28). Therefore, in the illuminationist model, security before being a product of external measures, stems from humanity's type of knowledge and worldview; and the more monotheistic knowledge is deepened in the individual and society, the more the grounds for realizing sustainable security will be provided.

5-1-4. The Foundation of the Ontological Priority of Spirituality

The most important foundation of the illuminationist model is that spirituality plays an originating and foundational role in relation to security. In this outlook, spirituality is not merely one of the factors of security, but rather its source and origin. Quranic teachings such as *"Unquestionably, by the remembrance of God hearts are assured"* (Quran 13:28) and *"And whoever turns away from My remembrance—indeed, he will have a depressed life"* (Quran 20:124) indicate that human peace, reassurance, and security have a direct connection with the extent of one's benefit from spirituality. Therefore, security in its various ranks originates from spirituality and becomes disrupted upon its weakening. Wherever there is faith, there is security as well, and faith is the cause of security's existence (Shariatmadari Jazaeri et al., 2006, p. 17).

Based on these foundations, the relationship between spirituality and security in Islamic governance is of the type of illuminationist relation. In this relationship, security is neither a phenomenon independent of spirituality nor merely affected by it, but

rather considered as a rank of social manifestation and emergence of spirituality. Just as light radiates from the sun and possesses no independent existence from it, security likewise originates from faith, piety, justice, and divine values, and emerges in the various arenas of individual, social, and governmental life. Therefore, the ratio between spirituality and security in Islamic governance is a longitudinal, originating, and illuminationist ratio.

5-1-5. The Foundation of the Concurrency of Material Power and Spirituality

The illuminationist model by no means implies ignoring or eliminating material power and governmental structures. In Islamic political thought, material power and spirituality are defined in a longitudinal and complementary ratio. By introducing the theory of the unity of politics and spirituality, Imam Khomeini puts forward the integration of power with Islamic ethics and mysticism, such that material power serves as the groundwork and tool for realizing spiritual and divine objectives in society (cf. Ghanbari, 2005). From this perspective, material power—including military capability, economic wealth, and legal and institutional structures—is considered the infrastructure and guarantor of a secure environment for the growth and expansion of spirituality in society. The Holy Quran also emphasizes material preparedness and defensive power, stating: "*And prepare against them whatever you are able of power*" (Quran 8:60). Therefore, in the illuminationist model, material power is defined longitudinally to spirituality, and its function is to create a secure environment for realizing the ultimate goal, namely the good life (*hayat-e tayyebah*) and reassuring security (*amniyat-e motma'enneh*). To be more precise, spirituality is the ultimate goal and director of power, while material power and legal structures serve as the infrastructure and guarantor of the secure space for spiritual

growth.

5-2. The Logic of the Illuminationist Model

The illuminationist model of the relationship between spirituality and security is grounded on the principle that security in Islamic governance is not merely a political, law enforcement, or legal phenomenon, but rather the manifestation and emergence of a deeper truth called spirituality within the arena of human individual and social life. In this model, spirituality holds a foundational, originating, and existence-giving place relative to security; meaning that security does not lie parallel to spirituality, but rather longitudinally to it, illuminating from it. Hence, the relationship between these two categories is neither of the type of contrast and separation, nor merely interaction and mutual impact, nor solely synergy, but rather an illuminationist relationship in which security is considered a rank of spirituality's manifestation in individual and social life.

Based on the aforementioned foundations, the relationship between spirituality and security in Islamic governance follows a specific logic that can be termed the "illuminationist logic." In this logic, security is neither a phenomenon independent of spirituality nor merely affected by it, but rather a rank of the manifestation and emergence of spirituality in individual and social life. The Holy Quran introduces security in linkage with faith, stating: *"Those who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—for them is security"* (Quran 6:82). In this verse, security is presented as the fruit and consequence of faith. Furthermore, God considers peace and heart reassurance—which is the most foundational level of human security—to be in the light of divine remembrance: *"Unquestionably, by the remembrance of God hearts are assured"* (Quran 13:28). Accordingly, before being sought in external structures, security is rooted in human internal and spiritual

transformation.

In the illuminationist model, the starting point of security is spirituality and faith. Spirituality, through creating monotheistic knowledge, strengthening faith, self-purification, and shaping the human value system, provides the groundwork for self-control and accountability. An individual trained in the light of faith and piety refrains from oppression, transgression, betrayal, corruption, and security-threatening behaviors; because the control of their behavior stems not merely from external monitoring, but from internal beliefs and moral commitment. Thus, spirituality produces the "secure human," and the secure human is the primary link in the chain of security in Islamic society.

The second stage of the illuminationist model is the transmission of spirituality's effects from the individual level to the social level. When spiritual virtues such as honesty, trustworthiness, justice, self-sacrifice, accountability, and respect for the rights of others spread among members of society, social trust, collective solidarity, and social capital are reinforced. Under such conditions, many factors of insecurity—such as corruption, distrust, social conflicts, and lawlessness—decrease, providing the groundwork for realizing social security. Ayatollah Khamenei asserts in this regard: *"When spirituality does not exist in society, economic prosperity is of no avail either; it does not eliminate discrimination, does not bring about social justice, does not eradicate hunger, and does not destroy corruption"* (Ayatollah Khamenei, October 14, 1995).

Accordingly, social security in the illuminationist model is not merely the product of external monitoring, but the fruit of spreading spirituality within human relations and establishing moral virtues at the core of society. In other words, the growth of moral and spiritual values drives humans toward self-control and responsibility, thereby

providing the foundation for forming a secure society endowed with peace and mutual trust (Bakhshi Nahavandi, 2013, pp. 88-90).

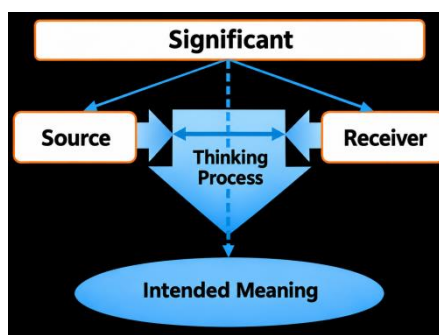
In the third stage, spirituality manifests in the structures and institutions of governance. Islamic governance is not limited merely to managing public order; rather, it undertakes the task of guiding society toward material and spiritual transcendence. Therefore, values such as justice, trustworthiness, service, combating corruption, respecting the rights of the people, and the accountability of officials constitute the institutional manifestations of spirituality in the arena of governance. The more these values are present in the governance process, the more political, cultural, economic, and social security will enjoy firmness and sustainability. In fact, spirituality provides the groundwork for realizing social justice by nurturing just and committed humans, and justice in turn is among the most important foundations of public security (Lakzaee, 2010, pp. 94-95). For this very reason, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasizes that *"if there is no justice, there will be no security in society"* (June 28, 1998), and Imam Ali (AS) also states: *"Nothing preserves and guards governments quite like justice"* (Nahjul Balagha, Letter 53). The Holy Quran also elucidates the nexus between faith and security thus: *"Those who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—for them is security, and they are the guided"* (Quran 6:82). Accordingly, political and social security in Islamic governance is a rank of the manifestation of spirituality, faith, and justice in the arena of collective life.

Based on the illuminationist model, security possesses various ranks and levels, all of which feed from a single origin, namely spirituality. Psychological security is achieved through the remembrance of God and heart reassurance; moral security is shaped through piety and self-purification; social security is the result of spreading trust, cooperation, and mutual rights; organizational security stems from individuals' moral commitment and accountability; and political and

national security is realized in the light of justice, legitimacy, and adherence to divine values. Therefore, all ranks of security can be considered the multiplex manifestations of a single truth rooted in spirituality.

In this framework, the ultimate goal of Islamic governance is to achieve "reassuring security" (*amniyat-e motma'enneh*)—security that is not limited merely to the absence of threats, but encompasses peace, stability, justice, trust, and comprehensive human growth. The Holy Quran refers to such a state with the expression: "A city which was safe and secure" (Quran 16:112). Therefore, in the illuminationist model, sustainable security is derived not from the accumulation of power and control instruments, but from the expansion of faith, piety, justice, and spirituality at individual, social, and institutional levels.

Accordingly, the illuminationist model of the relationship between spirituality and security can be considered a longitudinal and origin-oriented model in which spirituality is the foundational cause and security is its effect and social manifestation. Just as light radiates from the sun and possesses no independent existence from it, security in Islamic governance likewise illuminates from faith and spirituality, and in proportion to the presence and deepening of spirituality in society, it enjoys greater depth, breadth, and sustainability.



5-3. Implications of the Illuminationist Model in Islamic Governance

The illuminationist model of the relationship between spirituality and security is based on the presupposition that security in Islamic governance is not merely the product of power, law, oversight, and control mechanisms, but is considered a manifestation of realizing spirituality in individual, social, and institutional arenas. In this model, spirituality plays the role of origin and infrastructure, and security emerges as one of its most important fruits and manifestations in the arena of human life. Accordingly, accepting the illuminationist model entails numerous theoretical and practical implications for Islamic governance, the most important of which are:

5-3-1. Priority of Human-Making Over Security Tool-Making

The first implication of the illuminationist model is that security, before being a security and law-enforcement issue, is an educational and human-making matter. From this perspective, the root of many security threats lies in the weakness of faith, the collapse of moral values, and the dominance of carnal desires. Therefore, instead of focusing solely on the external control of individuals, Islamic governance emphasizes the inner reform of humans and the strengthening of faith, piety, and self-control. On this basis, the more committed and purified a human is from within, the more the need for external mechanisms of control and coercion decreases, and security spreads naturally in society. This implication is rooted in Islamic teachings that consider security to be the result of faith and righteousness. The Holy Quran states: *"Those who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice—for them is security"* (Quran 6:82). Accordingly, the more the spiritual capital of society increases, the grounds for insecurity decrease, and security will spread naturally throughout

society.

5-3-2. Redefining Security as a Multi-Dimensional Category

The second implication of the illuminationist model is that security cannot be reduced to a political or military dimension. In Islamic thought, security is a comprehensive and multi-faceted concept encompassing doctrinal, moral, psychological, cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions. Therefore, a society that is merely immune from military threats yet faces moral, cultural, or doctrinal crises is not considered from an Islamic standpoint to possess complete security.

The Holy Quran recalls the desirable society with the expression "*A city which was safe and secure*" (Quran 16:112), which indicates the realization of security across various dimensions of social life. Accordingly, the illuminationist model views security as a comprehensive reality that is realized only in the light of the harmony between the material and spiritual dimensions of human life.

5-3-3. The Nexus of Sustainable Security with Justice and Spirituality

Another foundational implication of the illuminationist model is that sustainable security cannot be realized without justice and morality. According to Master Motahhari, individual justice is the foundation of social justice, and divine justice is also the foundation of individual justice (Motahhari, 2024, p. 16). In this outlook, oppression, discrimination, corruption, and injustice are among the most important factors weakening security, because they reduce public trust and undermine social cohesion. Conversely, justice is considered one of the most important social manifestations of spirituality, providing the groundwork for establishing sustainable security.

In expressing the divine promise to the believers, the Holy

Quran states: *"God has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds... and He will surely replace their fear with security after their fear"* (Quran 24:55). Elucidating this truth under the noble verse *"and He will surely replace their fear with security,"* Ayatollah Javadi Amoli explains that the realization of divine security depends on the empowerment of religion in the individual and social arena; meaning that religious teachings are correctly understood, believed in, acted upon, and spread throughout society. In such an atmosphere, security is not limited merely to removing external threats; rather, inner fear and anxiety are also eradicated, and society reaches a rank of peace where it is neither internally ruptured and insecure nor externally exposed to the greed and domination of enemies. From this standpoint, the robustness and authority of Islamic society also rest not merely on material capability, but upon faith, servitude, and the establishment of divine values; just as he interprets the complete realization of this divine promise in the light of religion's governance and the spread of servitude to God (Javadi Amoli, 2010, vol. 14, pp. 548-550).

Therefore, security in Islamic governance, more than being a product of material authority, is the result of realizing faith, justice, and spirituality in society. The closer society draws to monotheism, divine servitude, and righteous deeds, the more the grounds of fear, distrust, corruption, and insecurity decrease, and a sustainable security—both internal and external—is shaped.

5-3-4. The Presence of Spirituality in the Structure of Governance

The illuminationist model does not consider spirituality merely as an individual virtue or a matter limited to the private sphere; rather, it regards it as the spirit governing the governance system. Accordingly, sustainable security is realized when spiritual values manifest in policy-making, legislation, public management, and the behavior of

officials. Trustworthiness, honesty, justice-centrism, accountability, public service, and avoiding corruption are the most important institutional manifestations of spirituality in the arena of governance.

Imam Khomeini considers the reform of society and the political system to depend on the inner reform of humans, especially officials and managers, and asserts: *"Until we reform ourselves, we cannot reform our country"* (Imam Khomeini, 2008, vol. 15, pp. 69-70). He also emphasizes that *"the origin of reform must also start from oneself"* (Mousavi Khomeini, 1999, vol. 17, p. 194). Based on this logic, the spiritual health of officials provides the groundwork for the health of governance institutions and the strengthening of public trust. Therefore, the closer managers and governance structures are to spiritual values, the more the grounds of corruption, discrimination, and distrust will decrease, and political and social security will enjoy greater firmness and sustainability. Consequently, from the perspective of the illuminationist model, "secure governance" relies upon spirituality, self-building, and the moral commitment of officials, before resting on external authority and control.

5-3-5. The Formation of a Secure Organization and a Secure State

From the perspective of the illuminationist model, security is not limited solely to the level of the individual and society; rather, it also manifests at the level of governmental organizations and institutions. An organization whose members possess spiritual and moral capital is less exposed to corruption, abuse of power, administrative betrayal, and the squandering of public rights. For this reason, spirituality is counted among the most important sources of organizational security (Moini Kia et al., 2019, pp. 96-97).

In this framework, a secure state is also a state that earns its efficiency and legitimacy from adherence to moral and divine values.

The more officials and agents adhere to principles such as justice, trustworthiness, and sincere service, the more social capital and public trust will increase, and political and social security will enjoy greater firmness (Roudgar, 2007, pp. 43-52).

5-3-6. The Civilizational Manifestation of the Relationship Between Spirituality and Security

The illuminationist model shows that the more spirituality is deepened in individual, social, and governance levels, the more security transcends law-enforcement and temporary levels, transforming into sustainable and civilizational security. In this outlook, civilizational security is the result of spreading faith, justice, ethics, and divine values in society—elements that constitute the software component and true core of Islamic civilization (Hemmati & Qomi, 2019, p. 674). Therefore, civilizational security is not merely the product of political and military authority, but a manifestation of spirituality's presence in the collective life of the Islamic *Ummah*. The stronger society's nexus with spiritual foundations is, the greater its capacity to preserve its identity, resist cultural and civilizational threats, and sustain the path of civilizational transcendence will be. Thus, in the illuminationist model, civilizational security can be considered one of the highest ranks of spirituality's social emergence and manifestation.

5-3-7. The Role of Legal Structures and Material Power in Guaranteeing Security

From the perspective of the illuminationist model, although the ultimate origin of security is spirituality and faith, its objective and sustainable realization in society is impossible without legal structures, material power, and efficient institutions. In other words, spirituality without power and law turns into an unattainable ideal, and

power without spirituality leads to tyranny and corruption. In this view, law and governmental structures play the role of conduits for realizing spirituality in the social arena. Just as the body without the soul is a lifeless corpse, the soul without the material vessel of law and power will not possess the capability to exert influence in the social arena. Therefore, for the realization of reassuring security (*amniyat-e motma'enneh*), Islamic governance needs material power, defensive capability, an efficient judicial system, and transparent legal structures, in addition to strengthening spiritual foundations, so that while securing safety, it provides the necessary groundwork for the growth and deepening of spirituality. Pointing to this ratio, Imam Khomeini divides power into two types: "legitimate-divine" and "illegitimate-satanic," considering legitimate power to be power that is placed at the service of divine and spiritual goals. On this basis, the illuminationist model by no means implies ignoring material power and legal mechanisms; rather, it defines these elements as instruments and tools for realizing the spiritual ultimate goal (Hassani Tabar, 2023, pp. 109-111).

Table 2: Implications of the Illuminationist Model in Islamic Governance

Description of Implication	Security Outcome	Level of Spirituality Manifestation
Spirituality creates internal and behavioral security for the individual by strengthening faith, piety, and self-control.	Secure Human	Individual
The expansion of spiritual virtues leads to trust, solidarity, and the reduction of social conflicts.	Social Security	Society
Moral commitment and trustworthiness	Secure	Organization

ensure administrative health and reduce organizational corruption.	Organization	
The presence of spiritual values among officials and institutional management strengthens efficiency, public trust, and legitimacy.	Secure Governance	Government and Sovereignty
The deepening of faith and Islamic identity increases cultural sustainability and resistance against civilizational threats.	Civilizational Security	Islamic Civilization
The establishment of spirituality in all dimensions of life guides society to the rank of reassuring security and provides the ground for the sustainable realization of the good life (<i>hayat-e tayyebah</i>).	Reassuring Security and Good Life	Ultimate Goal

Based on the illuminationist model, security is not a phenomenon independent of spirituality, but rather a rank of its emergence and manifestation in individual, social, and institutional arenas. Therefore, the essential strategy of Islamic governance to achieve sustainable security is to strengthen faith, ethics, justice, and spirituality across various levels of society. In this framework, the "secure human," "secure society," "secure organization," and "secure governance" are various ranks of spirituality's manifestation that ultimately provide the groundwork for realizing "reassuring security"—security which the Holy Quran introduces as one of the most important manifestations of the desirable human life.

Conclusion

The present research was conducted with the objective of elucidating the illuminationist model of the relationship between spirituality and security in Islamic governance. The main issue of the research was

how the ratio between spirituality and security can be explained in the intellectual system of Islam and what status this relationship holds in Islamic governance. The review of theoretical literature showed that regarding the relationship between spirituality and security, multiple approaches have been proposed, including the approach of no relationship, inverse relationship, mutual impact, incremental relationship, and the illuminationist relationship. Each of these approaches is grounded on specific epistemological and anthropological foundations and explains this ratio from a different angle.

The main finding of the research is that in Islamic political thought, and especially in the intellectual system of Imam Khomeini and the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the relationship between spirituality and security cannot be explained merely in the framework of mutual impact or synergy; rather, this relationship has an "illuminationist" nature. In this model, spirituality holds an originating, foundational, and existence-giving status relative to security, and security is considered a rank of spirituality's manifestation and emergence in individual, social, and political life. In other words, security in Islamic governance is not a phenomenon independent of spirituality, but one of the fruits and consequences of realizing faith, piety, justice, and divine values in society.

The analysis of the foundations of the illuminationist model showed that this model rests upon four essential foundations: monotheistic worldview, Islamic anthropology, a comprehensive conception of security, and the ontological and functional priority of spirituality over security. Based on these foundations, the inner logic of the model consists of a longitudinal and continuous chain that begins with spirituality and, after passing through faith and piety, leads to the formation of the secure human, secure society, secure

governance, and ultimately reassuring security. In this framework, security is not merely the result of applying political power and control instruments, but the product of internalizing divine values within the arena of the individual and society.

Furthermore, the research findings showed that the illuminationist model carries important implications for Islamic governance. The priority of human-making over security tool-making, the redefinition of security in a multi-dimensional framework, the nexus of sustainable security with justice and spirituality, the necessity of spirituality's presence in the structure of governance, the formation of a secure organization and state, and the civilizational orientation of security are among the most important results of this model. Accordingly, to achieve sustainable security, Islamic governance cannot rely solely on legal, law-enforcement, and political tools, but must place the development of spirituality and the strengthening of the society's faith-based and moral capital at the center of its policy-making.

The innovation of this research lies in presenting a theoretical framework to explain the ratio of spirituality and security based on the "illuminationist model." Moving beyond common security-study approaches, this model analyzes security in a longitudinal and ontological bond with spirituality, showing that the more spirituality is deepened in individual, social, and institutional levels, the greater depth, breadth, and sustainability security will enjoy. From this perspective, the realization of reassuring security in Islamic governance depends less on the accumulation of power and external control mechanisms, and more on the expansion of faith, piety, justice, and spirituality within the texture of individual and social life.

The essential point that must be attended to in future research is the precise elucidation of the ratio between the spiritual goal and the material means within the illuminationist model. The illuminationist

model by no means implies the negation or marginalization of material power, legal structures, and governmental institutions. In this model, spirituality is the ultimate goal and director of power, while material power and legal structures are considered the infrastructure and guarantor of the secure space for spiritual growth. In other words, sustainable security in Islamic governance is achieved when spirituality and legitimate material power stand alongside one another: spirituality determines the direction and ultimate goal, while legitimate material power provides the groundwork and possibility for realizing that goal. This dual outlook transforms the illuminationist model from a mere idealism into a spiritual realism that is both loyal to divine ideals and attentive to the material and structural requirements of governance.

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Infanticide and the Question of Personhood: A Critique of the View of Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva*

Fatemeh Jamshidi¹

Alireza Alebouyeh²

1. PhD. Researcher, Department of Philosophy and Theology (Imami Kalam), Faculty of Islamic Studies, University of Quran and Hadith, Qom, Iran (**Responsible author**).

f.jamshidi@whc.ir

2. Assistant professor, Department of Moral Philosophy, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, Research Center, Qom, Iran.

a.alebouyeh@isca.ac.ir

Abstract

Infanticide is a fundamental issue in bioethics and the philosophy of law, one that depends on how “personhood” is defined and on the basis upon which the “right to life” is recognized. The importance of this issue lies in the fact that any redefinition of the concept of personhood may alter the scope of the right to life and the moral and legal protection granted to human beings. This article aims to examine and criticize the view of Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva regarding the permissibility of infanticide. By distinguishing between a “biological human being” and a “moral person,” they argue that newborn infants, like fetuses, lack the characteristics necessary for personhood because they are neither

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capable of valuing their own existence nor capable of being harmed by being deprived of that existence. They therefore maintain that the reasons used to justify abortion may also be applied to newborn infants. Using an analytical-critical method, the present study examines the philosophical foundations and ethical consequences of this theory and analyzes the arguments for and against it. The findings indicate that the criterion of an “actual person” leads to the denial of the right to life to certain human beings, including infants and individuals with severe intellectual disabilities, and makes human dignity dependent on temporary mental capacities. Moreover, restricting the concept of harm to its conscious experience encounters serious logical and ethical objections. The study concludes that Giubilini and Minerva’s theory lacks sufficient coherence and cannot preserve the connection among equality, dignity, and the right to life. Recognizing the right to life on the basis of intrinsic dignity and membership in humanity therefore provides a more reasonable framework for addressing the issue of infanticide.

Keywords

personhood; infanticide; abortion; Giubilini; Minerva; human dignity; bioethics.

Introduction

Infanticide is one of the most controversial issues in ethics and law. Throughout history, it has consistently been a matter of dispute, and different societies have adopted different approaches toward it, ranging from legitimization in certain cultures to prohibition in the Abrahamic religions and modern criminal law.

In ancient Rome, the killing of unwanted infants was regarded as an accepted practice (Camosy, 2013, p. 296). In the contemporary world, however, infanticide is generally recognized as a clear violation of the right to life and human dignity. Nevertheless, historical and social reports indicate that the practice continues to occur in some societies under the influence of economic and cultural pressures or population-control policies. For example, some studies have reported cases of infanticide linked to China's one-child policy (Kaczor, 2012).

In recent decades, advances in the biological and medical sciences have moved debates concerning the beginning of morally significant human life and the criteria for possessing the right to life into a new phase. Within this context, the concept of personhood has become one of the most central topics in bioethics and has assumed a decisive role in the moral assessment of issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide. The importance of this debate increased when Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva published their article, "After-Birth Abortion: Why Should the Baby Live?" in 2012/2013. They argued that because a newborn infant lacks certain cognitive capacities, it does not yet satisfy the conditions for personhood and that, under certain circumstances, killing the infant may therefore be morally justified.

This position provoked extensive reactions among moral

philosophers, legal scholars, and theologians. Critics argued that accepting such reasoning would not only erase the boundary between abortion and infanticide but would also pose a serious challenge to the foundations of human dignity and fundamental human rights. Examining the theoretical foundations of this position and assessing its compatibility with moral and legal principles is therefore especially important.

Focusing on the theory of personhood in the thought of Giubilini and Minerva, the present study seeks to explain and criticize their argument in defense of the permissibility of infanticide. Its principal research question is whether their personhood-based argument is compatible with the principle of human dignity and the moral rights of all human beings.

Review of the Literature

The debate concerning the relationship between personhood and the right to life has a long history in moral philosophy and bioethics. A significant portion of the contemporary literature in this field is devoted to identifying criteria by which it can be determined which beings possess full moral status and the right to life. Personhood-based theories have played a particularly prominent role in shaping discussions of abortion, euthanasia, and infanticide.

Some moral philosophers, including (Warren, 1973, 1993, 1997), (Tooley, 1972), (Singer, 1993), and (Fletcher, 1974), distinguish between two meanings of “human being”: first, a human being in the biological sense, who does not possess moral status and dignity merely by virtue of biological humanity; and second, a human being in the social or personal sense, who possesses moral status and fundamental rights, including the right to life, and is consequently called a “person.” Tooley, emphasizing the capacity for self-awareness and the desire to

continue living, argues that newborn infants do not yet possess the characteristics necessary for personhood and that infanticide may therefore be morally justified under certain circumstances (Tooley, 1972, p. 44). On this basis, Tooley permits infanticide up to one week after birth, whereas Singer considers it justifiable up to one month after birth (Singer, 1993).

Continuing this approach, Giubilini and Minerva (2013) introduced the concept of “after-birth abortion.” They argued that if abortion is permissible under certain conditions, infanticide should also be considered permissible under those same conditions, because an infant, like a fetus, does not yet possess the characteristics necessary for personhood. Their article has become one of the most controversial works in contemporary bioethics and has generated a broad wave of responses and criticisms.

Much of the critical literature concerning this position emphasizes the inadequacy of functional criteria as an explanation of the intrinsic value of human beings. These studies argue that making the right to life dependent on actual cognitive capacities places not only infants but also other human beings who lack certain mental capacities, including individuals with severe intellectual disabilities or dementia, at risk of losing moral protection. From this perspective, human dignity is intrinsic and independent of an individual’s degree of cognitive functioning.

In Persian-language scholarship, independent studies devoted specifically to infanticide are limited, although related subjects have been examined in discussions of abortion, bioethics, the right to life, and personal identity. Examples include book *Abortion from an Ethical Perspective* (al-bouyeh, 2019) and article on "personal identity in bioethics (Alipour and Mohammadi, 2019)". In addition, (Jamshidi and colleagues, 2024) in “A Critical Examination of Functional Criteria of

Personhood in Bioethics,” examine two principal approaches to the concept of a person in bioethics: the bestowed-status approach, which emphasizes the intrinsic value of all human beings, and the functional approach, according to which only human beings possessing particular characteristics have moral status. They argue that personhood should not be reduced solely to present mental and functional capacities and that reducing human moral worth to functional characteristics yields unacceptable consequences in bioethics.

Despite previous scholarship on the question of personhood, the literature indicates that, compared with the extensive discussions found in the Western philosophical tradition, serious theoretical gaps remain in Persian scholarship. The present study seeks to address this deficiency by critically examining Giubilini and Minerva’s position and its ethical consequences, especially with respect to infanticide.

Giubilini and Minerva’s View

In their influential article, “After-Birth Abortion: Why Should the Baby Live?,” Giubilini and Minerva argue that a newborn infant, like a fetus, lacks the characteristics necessary to be a “person” (Giubilini & Minerva, 2013). In their view, a person is an individual capable of assigning at least basic value to their own existence such that deprivation of that existence would count as harm to them. By contrast, “human being” refers merely to a biological category and does not inherently entail possession of fundamental moral rights.

On the basis of this distinction, Giubilini and Minerva conclude that because an infant is unable to value its own life and lacks self-awareness, it does not belong to the category of “actual persons.” Accordingly, the same reasons used to justify abortion before birth can also justify killing an infant after birth. To emphasize the similarity between a fetus and a newborn, and the moral continuity

between their conditions, they use the expression “after-birth abortion” instead of “infanticide.”

Their argument rests on two main assumptions. First, there is a moral equivalence between the fetus and the newborn infant, since neither possesses an actual capacity to value its own existence and therefore neither qualifies as a person. Second, potential persons cannot be harmed in the morally relevant sense, because fetuses and infants are incapable of consciously experiencing deprivation; therefore, depriving them of life is not considered a moral harm.

Giubilini and Minerva provide examples of abortions that, in their view, are morally justified. These include cases in which fetal abnormalities or defects are not discovered until after birth, as well as disorders that may emerge during pregnancy or childbirth. They also cite social considerations, such as the loss of employment or changes in the status of a couple’s relationship, as possible grounds for abortion. They explicitly state that “the same arguments that are used to justify the killing of a human fetus can also be consistently applied to the killing of a newborn human” (Giubilini & Minerva, 2013, p. 1).

These arguments justify killing an infant after birth for as long as neurologists and psychologists determine that the child is incapable of valuing its own existence. On this basis, the argument would not only justify killing infants with serious medical conditions but could also potentially legitimate the elective killing of healthy infants whose upbringing imposes a burden on their parents.

The Distinction Between the Biological Human Being and the Moral Person

Giubilini and Minerva maintain that moral rights, including the right to life, arise not from “being human,” which is a biological concept, but from “being a person,” which is a moral concept. In other words,

merely being human does not entail possession of all moral rights. They argue that many human beings, such as fetuses and infants, fall outside the category of persons and therefore outside the group of beings possessing a right to life, because they lack the specific psychological capacities required for personhood.

According to them, humanity is merely a biological fact defined by the biological sciences. To be human is simply to be a member of the biological species *Homo sapiens*. A person, by contrast, has a normative and moral status defined by a set of specific psychological capacities. Moral rights, including a strong right to life, arise not from humanity but from personhood.

They write that merely being human is not, in itself, a sufficient reason for ascribing a right to life, and they point to embryos used in stem-cell research, fetuses whose abortion is legally permitted¹, and criminals subject to capital punishment as examples invoked in support of this claim (Giubilini & Minerva, 2013, p. 3). They further argue that a necessary condition for a being to possess a right to something is that the being be capable of being harmed by a decision depriving it of that thing. Consequently, in their framework, mere humanity does not entail all moral rights.

Criteria of Personhood

Giubilini and Minerva define a person as someone capable of attributing at least basic value to their own existence, such that

1. One of the cases in which abortion is permissible is fetal craniotomy—a rare case in which the fetus obstructs labor and cannot be delivered through the birth canal. If the fetus is not delivered, there is a risk of uterine rupture in the pregnant woman. The fetal head must be crushed in order to save the mother's life (Savulescu, 2002, pp. 515–516).

deprivation of that existence counts as harm (Giubilini & Minerva, 2013, p. 2). Their account rests on two related criteria:

1. the ability to assign value to one's own existence;
2. the capacity to be harmed by being deprived of that existence.

According to this framework, fetuses and newborns may be “potential persons” in a biological sense, but they are not “actual persons,” because potentiality alone does not confer moral status.

Several consequences follow from this view. First, personhood implies the right to life, whereas being biologically human does not. Second, the criterion could extend personhood to some non-human animals with complex cognition. Third, human beings lacking the relevant psychological capacities, such as individuals with severe intellectual disabilities or those in persistent vegetative states, would not count as persons.

On this view, fetuses and newborns are not harmed by being killed because harm requires the capacity to experience deprivation. If the child never becomes a person, then, according to this argument, there is no subject who can be harmed.

Giubilini and Minerva also distinguish between a right not to suffer pain and a right to life. They allow that fetuses or newborns capable of pain and pleasure may have a right not to be made to suffer, but still not a right to life unless they can pursue and value goals. They further advance a social-consequentialist argument: because newborns may impose burdens on parents and society, “after-birth abortion” could be morally permissible if the infant is not yet a person.

They also suggest that infanticide may be considered when parents cannot or do not want to care for the child, especially if the

“potential person” cannot be expected to enjoy a worthwhile life. In such cases, they prioritize the interests of “actual persons,” especially the parents, over those of the infant as a “potential person.” If adoption is rejected due to anticipated psychological distress or practical inability to cope, they regard after-birth abortion as a more defensible option (Giubilini & Minerva, 2013, p. 4).

Critical Evaluation

There are several problems with this view. Many individuals and human rights groups, and even some advocates of abortion, have reacted strongly to this view. **Bertha Alvarez Manninen** writes in refuting this view: “I am not in favor of the right to life of the fetus, I believe that women have the right to have an abortion, because I believe that every person has the right to decide whether or not to use their body to save the lives of others. However, the view of Jubilini and Minerva is deeply troubling” (Manninen, 2013, p. 330). Some of the problems include:

1. The Change of Title and the “Burden of Proof” Against the Infant: Erasing the Subject through Wordplay

In his critique of the article by Giubilini and Minerva, Finnis pays particular attention to the change of title from “Should the Baby Be Allowed to Die?” to “Why Should the Baby Live?” (Finnis, 2013, p. 282). In his view, this change is not merely a verbal shift but a philosophical and ethical strategy with significant consequences. In the first title, “Should the Baby Be Allowed to Die?”, the question carries a relatively neutral tone and allows for the examination of arguments for and against. In the second title, however, “Why Should the Baby Live?”, there is an implicit assumption that the infant has no presumptive right to life and must “provide reasons” in order to live.

In this way, the burden of proving the right to life is shifted from society or the parents onto the infant itself.

When a human being must “provide reasons” in order to live, they are effectively stripped of their status as a rights-bearing subject and transformed into something akin to an “object of evaluation.” Finnis regards this approach as consistent with the authors’ central thesis, according to which the infant or fetus is deemed to lack personhood and rights, since, in their view, the infant “has no experiences of harm or purpose” (Finnis, 2013, p. 282). Finnis warns that such a strategy not only excludes infants from the sphere of rights but also carries dangerous implications for people with severe disabilities, elderly individuals suffering from cognitive decline, or those in a state of unconsciousness. For if the criterion of a right is “actual awareness,” then these groups too can easily be stripped of their status as rights-bearing subjects. In other words, Finnis demonstrates that the change of title is not a simple rhetorical move but rather reveals the theoretical foundation of the article: the denial of the existence of the human subject in the early stages of life, and the imposition of the duty to prove the right to life upon a being that fundamentally cannot provide such proof. This is what he calls “the denial of the status of a rights-bearing subject” (Finnis, 2013, p. 282).

2. The Reliance of the Argument on Contested Premises

To defend infanticide, Giubilini and Minerva presuppose the permissibility of actions such as prenatal abortion, lethal fetal research, and capital punishment. These are themselves among the most controversial ethical issues in contemporary society. The first structural objection to Giubilini and Minerva’s argument (in defense of infanticide) is that they have committed a rhetorical and methodological error, because they have based their argument on

premises that are themselves deeply contested in order to justify an even more intensely contested conclusion (Kaczor , 2018, pp. 132–133). argues that appealing to controversial positions (premises) in order to prove a more controversial conclusion (infanticide) is, from the standpoint of argumentative structure, dubious and weak.

3. The Problem with the Human–Person Distinction

The most important criticism returns to the very definition of “person.” If “personhood” means the ability to “value one’s own existence,” then this definition is extremely limited and unusable. Many individuals, even adults, under certain conditions (such as severe mental illness, coma, or even profound depression) may be unable to continuously value their own existence. Does this mean that they are no longer “persons” and have no right to life? This logic can easily be extended to the most vulnerable members of society. This distinction creates dangerous boundaries for the definition of the “value of life” and can serve as a basis for discrimination and the disregard of the rights of vulnerable groups (Finnis , 2013, p. 282). criticizes the philosophical foundation of theories that regard “personhood” as conditional upon actual awareness and direct experience of harm. He shows that such a criterion of awareness is, in its very nature, not only vague and arbitrary but also incompatible with our human existence. Throughout everyday life, a human being spends many moments and hours in a state devoid of reflective awareness or self-consciousness—such as sleep, coma, or non-reflective concentration—yet no one claims that a person’s “personhood” is suspended in such states. Therefore, if we take actual awareness as the criterion of personhood, the consequence would be the removal of a vast range of human experience from the domain of ethics and law.

To avoid this groundlessness, Finnis proposes an alternative concept: actual capacity or, more precisely, *radical capacity*. In his view, from the very moment of its biological beginning, the human being possesses an internal structure and orientation on the basis of which the capacities for understanding, reasoning, and self-awareness are actualized in the future. This capacity is present not merely in the active, conscious brain but in the biological–genetic organization of the human being from the moment of conception. To explain this meaning, Finnis employs the phrase “the epigenetic foundations of human development,” meaning that the embryo from the very outset carries capacities which, in the course of development, make possible the manifestation of personal acts—from subjective experience to laughter or grief.

From this perspective, the human being is one and the same individual from the beginning to the end of his or her natural life; the moment of existence does not change, but the manner in which capacities are actualized does. Therefore, fundamental human rights, such as the right not to be killed, belong to this very real subject, not to a particular stage of self-conscious experience. Finnis concludes that depriving an embryo or an unconscious person of these rights, by invoking the “absence of the experience of harm,” is defensible neither philosophically nor ethically. Such an approach, in his terms, reduces human dignity to a fleeting level of subjective experience and ultimately violates the principles of human equality and dignity. Finnis precisely emphasizes that basic rights arise not from the experience of harm but from the identity and natural capacity of the human subject, because personhood is a biological–moral fact, not a conventional attribute or a stage of consciousness (Finnis, 2013, p. 282).

4. The Problem of “Harm” and “Experience”

The argument that “being killed is not a harm because the person does

not experience it” is highly reductionistic. “Harm” can be understood beyond the individual’s direct experience. The loss of the opportunity to live, the loss of any possibility of future experience, and the destruction of the potential for growth and flourishing are all forms of harm, even if the individual cannot perceive them. We protect a living person’s right on the basis of their future interests (which they may not currently be capable of understanding); why should this principle not apply to infants? This approach reduces the concept of “harm” to momentary subjective experience and ignores the potential and future value of a life.

John Finnis, in his article, offers a serious critique of Giubilini and Minerva’s view. He shows that if right and personhood are dependent on the “experience of harm,” then no one has a right not to be killed in their sleep or without warning, because in such a state the person has no experience of harm (Finnis, 2013, p. 281). Finnis considers this consequence “absurd and repugnant” and likens it to the view of Jeffrey Reiman, who regards infants as lacking the right to life for years after birth. Finnis explains that even in a state of unconsciousness or sleep, the individual has the *actual capacity* for awareness and experience, and it is this capacity that forms the basis of human rights (Finnis, 2013, p. 282).

(Finnis , 2013, pp. 281–282) reconstructs Giubilini and Minerva’s central thesis as follows: They claim that an individual possesses a right only if they can experience some harm from being deprived of that right—that is, there must be a being in a state of “experiencing loss” for a right to be said to have been violated. By juxtaposing these two premises, Finnis draws a patently unreasonable conclusion: if someone is killed while asleep or in a state of complete unconsciousness, because they have no experience of suffering or loss, their right has in fact not been violated. In other words, according to their logic, a

human being does not even have “the right not to be killed in one’s sleep.” Finnis takes this conclusion as evidence of the invalidity of that foundation and presents it as a *reductio ad absurdum* against the theory of “experienced harm” as a necessary condition for rights and personhood.

Finnis seeks to expose the internal inconsistency of this view and its ethically unacceptable consequences. Giubilini and Minerva claim that only a being capable of actually experiencing the harm resulting from the violation of a right can be said to possess that right; therefore, one who cannot feel suffering or deprivation is, in the precise sense, not a right-holder whose rights could be violated. Finnis regards this foundation as fundamentally mistaken because if we accept it, we arrive at conclusions inconsistent with moral intuitions. For example, if someone is killed while asleep or under deep anesthesia, since they experience no “harm,” no violation of the right to life has occurred.

From Finnis’s perspective, this conclusion is not only unacceptable but also a sign of the mistaken reduction of rights to temporary subjective experiences. He emphasizes that rights and “personhood” are matters dependent on the reality of the human being’s essence and their fundamental capacity for self-awareness and reasoning, not on their current state of awareness or ability to experience harm. In other words, the moral and juridical value of a human being is inherent, not contingent on their momentary psychological or physiological state. Thus, Finnis’s argument shows that if we take the criterion of experienced harm as the basis for possessing rights, we must ultimately accept that anesthetizing and then killing human beings does not violate their rights—a conclusion that no acceptable moral or legal system would endorse. Therefore, Finnis concludes that the theory of “experienced harm” is not only

inadequate but fundamentally mistaken and cannot serve as a valid foundation for personhood and human rights.

5. Intrinsic Worth and Risk of Abuse

Many ethical and legal traditions maintain that human beings possess intrinsic worth and dignity independent of their functional capacities (Beckwith, 2007, p. 132). If “after-birth abortion” were accepted, this principle could easily be abused and extended to justify broader forms of discrimination, rights violations, and moral decline.

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The condition of “parental unwillingness” is itself troubling. Parents may come under pressure not to express a desire to care for a newborn, especially if the child is premature, ill, or disabled. Such pressure may be direct or indirect, and may be especially dangerous for single mothers, impoverished families, or those living in societies with weak social-support systems.

The most serious social consequence would be a decline in society’s recognition of the intrinsic value of human life. Once it is accepted that ending the life of a human being, even a newborn, may be “ethical” under certain circumstances, society receives the message that life is a conditional commodity rather than a basic and inviolable right.

This logic may gradually expand to other vulnerable groups: today a newborn, tomorrow an ill older person, a person with a severe disability, or someone deemed economically “unproductive.” A society that can easily justify ending human life will place less value on protecting life and supporting the vulnerable.

6. Personism as Discriminatory and Contrary to Human Dignity

Giubilini and Minerva’s claim that human beings derive their value not from their humanity but from their personhood has been strongly

criticized. Critics argue that this approach assigns value to human beings solely on the basis of certain functions and capacities and thereby leads to morally unacceptable results.

Jacqueline Anne Laing raises two major objections. First, by equating the moral standing and dignity of some animals with that of human individuals with intellectual disabilities, the theory conflicts with the principle of intrinsic human dignity. According to this principle, all human beings possess dignity by virtue of their shared humanity, regardless of disability, age, consciousness, illness, productivity, or rationality.

Experiencing illness or lacking higher mental functions does not reduce a human being to the level of vegetation or animality. A human being's moral value and status within the human species remain independent of fluctuations in individual abilities. Laing calls this principle "equal dignity" (Laing, 2013, p. 337). This principle prevents moral discrimination on the basis of disability or lack of certain traits and locates human value in our shared humanity.

The intrinsic dignity of human beings and the concept of human rights are not recent inventions; they are deeply rooted in international human-rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. The twentieth century also demonstrates how the dehumanization of certain classes of human beings led to grave human-rights abuses. Treating some individuals as "nonpersons" or "subhuman" in the name of science or social utility is a profoundly dangerous path (Laing, 2013, p. 337).

7. Ethical Functionalism and Its Limitations

Another objection concerns ethical functionalism. Under this approach, moral significance is attributed only to those who presently possess the capacities necessary to function as persons.

Giubilini and Minerva hold that after-birth abortion is permissible for “potential persons” who will never be capable of living a worthwhile life. They argue that the interests of potential persons cannot outweigh the interests of actual persons. More radically, they state that no matter how weak the interests of actual people may be, those interests always outweigh the alleged interests of potential people in becoming actual people, because the latter interests amount to zero (Giubilini & Minerva, 2013, pp. 2–3).

This approach raises serious questions about what it means to possess a “capacity to function.” Human beings move through different conditions in the course of life: dependence, sleep, unconsciousness, infancy, old age, disability. Giubilini and Minerva define a person as “an individual who is able to attribute at least a basic value to their own existence such that being deprived of this existence represents a harm to them” (Giubilini & Minerva, 2013, p. 2). But this definition does not satisfactorily explain the status of people who are asleep, in a coma, or temporarily unable to value their own existence. Would such persons cease to be persons? (Laing, 2013, p. 337).

Temporary incapacity does not entail the loss of dignity or status. Our capacities may fluctuate, but our moral worth does not. Potentiality and actuality are both dimensions of the human condition, and grounding moral value in such temporary states remains ethically controversial (Laing, 2013, p. 338).

8. Ambiguity About the Beginning of Personhood

A further weakness in Giubilini and Minerva’s argument is their failure to specify the threshold at which a human being becomes a person. Instead, they leave this determination to neuroscientists and psychologists, thereby generating highly controversial and counterintuitive consequences.

The central question is: when does a human being become capable of valuing their own existence? Psychological research, including the work of **Philippe Rochat**, suggests that self-awareness of one's own existence, expressed through signs such as the first social smile, first independent steps, first words, or reactions of embarrassment and pride in front of a mirror, generally appears around two years of age. If that assessment is correct, then under Giubilini and Minerva's logic, infanticide would remain morally permissible until roughly the age of two (Kaczor, 2012).

Although consulting experts to determine when the characteristics of personhood emerge is not inherently objectionable, the crucial point is that the resulting threshold directly conflicts with ordinary moral judgment. Most people would regard the killing of a two-year-old child, or even a younger child, simply because of parental unwillingness or economic costs, as obviously and gravely wrong.

Reasons such as a mother's unwillingness or the high costs of care cannot morally justify killing newborns. Such arguments are widely regarded as abhorrent and provoke strong negative moral reactions. The failure to establish a transparent threshold for personhood, combined with exclusive reliance on functional criteria that may not emerge until years after birth, leaves the theory open to serious criticism.

9. Violation of Human Equality

Basic moral principles maintain that all human beings possess equal fundamental rights, including the right to life, and that depriving them of these rights is unethical. According to Giubilini and Minerva's

position, however, human beings do not possess equal rights; instead, rights appear to exist on a sliding scale.

Would a one-year-old child then possess less of a right to life than a five-year-old, but more than a newborn? If an older person develops Alzheimer's disease, would that person's right to life gradually weaken? Since the characteristics associated with personhood develop gradually, basing rights on those characteristics leads naturally to a gradational understanding of human worth. As (Manninen , 2013, p. 333) writes, the characteristics that Giubilini and Minerva consider necessary for the right to life neither appear overnight nor disappear instantaneously.

If moral rights are allocated on the basis of qualities that exist by degree, then those who possess more of the relevant capacities would have greater value and a stronger right to life. This is incompatible with the principle that all human beings possess equal fundamental rights (Kaczor, 2012). Whatever grounds personhood cannot plausibly be a merely graduated quality if equality is to be preserved.

10. Internal Contradiction in the Definition of Harm

Another serious objection is that Giubilini and Minerva define harm too narrowly, confining it to subjective experience. This creates a contradiction in their account of killing actual persons.

They argue that harm occurs only when an individual exists and is able to experience a loss or deprivation. Yet if an adult is killed suddenly and painlessly, for example by gunshot or an instantaneous accident, that person does not consciously experience the loss. On this reasoning, the person has suffered no harm. But this directly conflicts

with the very idea that actual persons merit moral protection, because the gravest loss, the permanent deprivation of life and the destruction of one's future, is excluded from their definition of harm.

In cases involving the deprivation of liberty or autonomy, the person remains alive and can experience the loss. In a painless killing, however, no such experience occurs. Their theory therefore cannot consistently explain why killing actual persons is wrong and, in effect, opens the way to justifying sudden and painless killings. For this reason, the framework lacks the coherence required to explain the nature of the harm caused by killing.

A: The Questions of Consensus and Parental Psychological Harm

Although parents' psychological concerns are real, relying on them to justify ending the life of a healthy newborn is deeply problematic. There are other ways to support parents in confronting such difficulties, including stronger adoption-support systems, specialist counseling, and social assistance.

Instead of focusing on life-preserving solutions that assist the parents, the argument treats ending the infant's life as the final solution. This is ethically indefensible. Moreover, the assumption that all parents would necessarily experience intense distress in cases of adoption is an unwarranted generalization.

B: Comparison Between Infants and Animals

The comparison between the value of infants' lives and that of animals is itself ethically contentious. Even if some animals possess a greater degree of self-awareness or experiential capacity, the conclusion that infants' lives are therefore less valuable and may permissibly be ended remains unacceptable to many. This comparison

promotes a hierarchical valuation of human life and leads toward a deeply troubling moral outlook.

Conclusion

In “After-Birth Abortion: Why Should the Baby Live?,” Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva argue that fetuses and newborns are not persons because neither possesses the characteristics required for personhood. Since they believe there is no morally significant difference between a fetus and a newborn infant, they conclude that any reason that justifies abortion may also justify killing a newborn. To underscore their position, they prefer the expression “after-birth abortion” to “infanticide.”

The present article has explained, examined, and criticized their position on the permissibility of infanticide. Several objections may be raised against this controversial view. One implication of their personist theory is that it equates the status and dignity of some animals with that of some human beings, including infants and persons with disabilities. This is incompatible with the principle of human dignity.

Ethical functionalism is another major consequence of personism: only those who are presently capable of attributing value to their own existence are recognized as possessing a right to life. Additional problems include the failure to determine the exact period during which infanticide would remain permissible and the decision to leave the point at which infants become persons to psychological and neurological experts. The theory also relies on controversial assumptions and morally dangerous implications. For these reasons, the article concludes that Giubilini and Minerva’s defense of the permissibility of infanticide is untenable.

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The Theocentric Identity of the Human Embryo in Confronting the Challenge of Abortion: An Analysis Based on the Qur'anic Verses*

Maryam Alizadeh 

Assistant Professor, Department of Qur'anic Studies and Islamic Texts, Faculty of
Islamic Studies and Thought, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.
alizadeh62@ut.ac.ir

Abstract

The identity of the human embryo as a human being has become the subject of fundamental challenges in the contemporary era due to remarkable advances in biotechnology. Rooted in the political, economic, and cultural discourses of modern societies, these challenges have reduced the embryo's identity to such notions as objectification, viewing it merely as biological tissue, a commercial commodity, or a part of the mother's body lacking independent existence. The present study seeks to reinterpret the identity of the embryo through the theocentric worldview of the Holy Qur'an. Employing a descriptive-analytical approach, it addresses the following fundamental question: What are the essential components of the embryo's theocentric identity from the perspective of the Qur'an, and how can these components

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provide both theoretical and practical responses to modern bioethical challenges? The Holy Qur'an elaborates on the stages of embryonic creation in numerous verses. A systematic analysis of these verses reveals a set of enduring principles, including the principle of divine creation, the principle of divine ownership, the principle of purposiveness in creation, the principle of the infusion of the divine spirit, the principle of inherent human dignity, and the principle of the sanctity of human life. Collectively, these principles establish the embryo as an entity possessing an independent identity. The findings demonstrate that these six foundational principles provide a coherent and well-substantiated framework for addressing the contemporary challenge of abortion.

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Embryonic Identity, Modern Bioethical Challenges, Theocentric Identity, the Holy Qur'an.

Introduction

Over recent decades, the human embryo has become the focal point of extensive bioethical, jurisprudential, and legal debates. Scientific breakthroughs, including the discovery of stem cells, cloning technologies, surrogacy, and prenatal diagnosis of congenital abnormalities, have offered unprecedented opportunities for treating incurable diseases and providing hope to infertile families. At the same time, however, emerging legal and ethical paradigms, shaped by humanism, secular thought, and feminist movements, have challenged the identity of the embryo by raising the question: Does the embryo possess an independent human identity endowed with inherent dignity from the very beginning of its existence? Such perspectives have weakened legal and moral protections for the embryo and have increasingly facilitated the legalization and justification of abortion.

Within the dominant discourse of modern biomedicine, the embryo is frequently reduced either to "A collection of undifferentiated cells" or regarded as an entity whose identity is entirely contingent upon the "Rights of the mother" or the "Agreement of the parents." These reductionist conceptions stand in sharp contrast to the rich theocentric anthropology of the Qur'an, which emphasizes the authenticity, intrinsic dignity, and purposeful creation of the human being. The central issue, therefore, is whether a coherent theory of embryonic identity can be derived from the Qur'anic teachings, one that is both compatible with established scientific knowledge and capable of addressing emerging bioethical challenges.

The primary objective of this study is to identify the fundamental components of the embryo's theocentric identity based on Qur'anic verses and subsequently evaluate the effectiveness of these components in confronting modern bioethical issues, with particular emphasis on abortion. Previous studies have generally concentrated either on

jurisprudential discussions, primarily based on traditions concerning the ensoulment, or on scientific analyses grounded in embryological findings. At the same time, relatively little attention has been devoted to a direct Qur'anic examination of embryonic identity. This gap underscores the necessity of investigating the Qur'anic discourse on this issue.

Moreover, contemporary bioethical challenges are predominantly grounded in non-religious conceptions of the embryo. In such an intellectual context, presenting a theocentric model firmly rooted in the Qur'anic text, one that recognizes the embryo as possessing an independent identity, can provide a robust foundation for protecting embryonic life and constitutes an indispensable contribution to Islamic bioethics.

Accordingly, employing a descriptive-analytical methodology, this study seeks to answer the following question: From the perspective of the Qur'an, what are the principal components of the embryo's theocentric identity, and how can they respond to modern bioethical challenges?

The conceptual framework adopted in this study is based upon a coherent system of well-established Qur'anic principles that simultaneously emphasize two fundamental dimensions of existence. The first concerns the divine dimension of creation, which can be theoretically explained through the three principles of Divine Creatorship, God's Absolute Ownership, and the Purposefulness of Creation. The second pertains to the human dimension, manifested through such concepts as the infusion of the divine spirit, inherent ontological dignity, and the sanctity of human life. The convergence of these divine and human dimensions forms a coherent and comprehensive identity framework for the embryo, providing substantial

theological and ethical grounds for safeguarding embryonic life against contemporary challenges, particularly the rapidly increasing phenomenon of abortion.

Research conducted on the human embryo has generally fallen into two broad categories. The first comprises jurisprudential studies focusing on abortion and its legal consequences, particularly compensation. Among these is the study by (Nikzad & Joursaraei, 2014) entitled "An Examination of Abortion from a Jurisprudential Perspective," which offers a comprehensive analysis of the jurisprudential and hadith-based dimensions of abortion and emphasizes that the prohibition of abortion may admit exceptions in cases of severe hardship. Nevertheless, its treatment of the Qur'anic foundations of embryonic dignity requires further development.

Similarly, (Keramati et al, 2018) investigated the jurisprudential foundations for the permissibility of abortion with particular emphasis on the legal principle of conflict between competing obligations. While their study successfully systematizes the views of Imami jurists regarding the prioritization of the mother's life over that of the embryo, it pays little attention to the psychological and social dimensions associated with the application of this principle.

A second group of studies has addressed the legal aspects of abortion in Iran and in the international arena. An example is (Hariri & Shokrbeygi's, 2022) article, "An Examination of the Process of Abortion in Iranian Law and Imami Jurisprudence with a Comparative Perspective on International Law." Although this comparative study provides a relatively comprehensive examination of Iranian law, Imami jurisprudence, and international legal instruments, its analysis of certain jurisprudential evidence, particularly concerning the permissibility of abortion after ensoulment, appears overly simplified.

Likewise, the study "A Comparative Study of Abortion Laws around the World" by (Rostami et al, 2013) examines the problem of abortion and its legal challenges in different countries, particularly those with large populations. While the article provides a comprehensive survey of the abortion laws of various jurisdictions and offers a clear picture of global legal approaches, it does not sufficiently explore the jurisprudential foundations of these laws or their adaptation to the Iranian legal system. Similarly, the article by (Taheri et al, 2022) entitled "Identifying the Jurisprudential Foundations of Criminal Punishment for Offenses Against the Fetus in Sunni and Shi'a Jurisprudence" presents a careful analysis of the evidence supporting retaliation and blood money in both schools of Islamic law and effectively explains the differences of opinion among jurists. Nevertheless, its critique of the arguments advanced by proponents of retaliation does not sufficiently employ principles of Islamic legal theory.

In addition, (Rezvani Mofrad & Nourahmadi ,2022), in their article "An Examination of the Time of Ensoulment in the Human Embryo with Emphasis on the Verses of the Holy Qur'an," employ a descriptive-analytical methodology, drawing upon Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions to investigate the timing of ensoulment. Their study convincingly emphasizes the fourth month of pregnancy as the legal presumption for ensoulment; however, it does not address the practical application of this conclusion within statutory law or the challenges associated with its implementation.

Taken together, although these studies make valuable contributions to the literature, they generally do not address the issue at its most fundamental level. The present study, while complementing previous scholarship, seeks to provide a stable theoretical foundation

for addressing the issue of abortion by formulating a Qur'an-based identity framework for the human embryo. By identifying the embryo's essential identity principles from the Qur'anic perspective and applying them to contemporary bioethical issues, this study aims to reduce the existing conceptual uncertainty surrounding the protection of embryonic life.

1. The Concept of the Embryo

In examining the embryo's theocentric identity, it is first necessary to clarify what the Qur'anic worldview means by the term "Embryo." The Arabic word "*Janīn*" is derived from the triliteral root (j-n-n), whose primary meaning is "To conceal" or "To cover." (Ibn Fāris, 1983, vol. 1, p. 421) Anything hidden from human sight is described by the expression "*Junna 'Anka*." Likewise, "*Janna al-Janīnu*" signifies that the embryo has entered the womb and become concealed (Ibn Manzūr, n.d., vol. 13, p. 92). From the same linguistic root derive the words "Jinn," referring to beings hidden from human perception, and *janīn*, denoting a child concealed within its mother's womb (Farāhīdī, 1988, vol. 6, p. 21). Although "*Janīn*" follows the morphological pattern "*Fa'īl*," it functions semantically in the passive sense (*Maḍ'ūl*), referring to the child in the mother's womb until birth (Rāghib Iṣḥānī, 1991, p. 204).

Although the noun "*Janīn*" does not appear independently in the Qur'an, the verse, "When you were embryos in your mothers' wombs," (al-Najm, 32) clearly refers to the embryo as a human being residing in the womb. This verse constitutes the first textual indication of the embryo's identity within the Qur'an's theocentric worldview. Moreover, numerous other verses explicitly describe the successive stages of embryonic development and present them as among the signs of God's creative power, as will be discussed below.

2. The Stages of Embryonic Development in the Holy Qur'an

Within the Qur'anic worldview, the embryo is not merely a collection of biological cells but the beginning of a distinct human identity that, from the moment of conception, possesses inherent dignity and the right to life. In numerous verses, God recounts the creation of humankind, from clay, then from a drop of fluid, and subsequently through successive stages of embryonic development within a secure abode, namely the womb. Accordingly, the embryo's identity in the Qur'an transcends both a purely linguistic concept and a merely biological phenomenon; from the very outset, it bears intrinsic dignity and the potential for the divine caliphate.

The Holy Qur'an describes, with remarkable precision, the process of human embryonic formation through a sequence of clearly defined developmental stages:

"Indeed, We created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of fluid in a secure resting place. Then We created the drop into a clinging substance, then We created the clinging substance into a chewed-like lump, then We created the lump into bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and thereafter We produced him as another creation. So blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators" (al-Mu'minūn, 12-14).

This noble verse outlines six principal stages of embryonic development: "The fertilized drop, the clinging substance, the chewed-like lump, the formation of bones, the covering of the bones with flesh, and finally the another creation." At the conclusion of this developmental sequence, God glorifies Himself by declaring: "So blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators" (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 14, p. 89).

Commenting on this verse, Makarem Shirazi writes: "How magnificent is this unparalleled manifestation of divine power, which

fashions within the darkness of the womb such a wondrous creation, with all its marvels, from a mere drop of water. Blessed is that knowledge and wisdom which endows such an insignificant being with such immense capacities, talents, and worthiness. Glory be to Him and to His incomparable creation" (Makarem Shirazi, 1995 ,vol. 14, p. 209).

Thus, from the Qur'anic perspective, the embryo possesses an independent, dignified, and purpose-oriented identity and enjoys God's special care from the earliest moments of its existence.

In addition to describing the embryo's morphological development, the Qur'an also refers to the environment in which this development takes place:

"He creates you in your mothers' wombs, creation after creation, within three layers of darkness" (al-Zumar, 6).

According to Qur'anic exegetes, the phrase "Creation after creation" refers to the embryo's gradual developmental process from the stage of the germ until it reaches the stage of "Another creation." (Sadeghi Tehrani, 1986 ,vol. 25, p. 294) The "Three layers of darkness," according to authoritative Qur'anic commentaries and consistent with modern embryological knowledge, refer to the abdominal wall, the uterine wall, and the embryonic (amniotic) sac or membrane (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, vol. 2, p. 517). This remarkably precise description of the embryo's multilayered protection against external influences demonstrates a striking correspondence between the Qur'anic account and scientific discoveries made many centuries later through empirical research (Dīyāb & Qarqūz, 1983, p. 93).

Ultimately, these verses present a dynamic and developmental account of embryonic identity. This identity begins with the germ and progresses purposefully toward the stage of "Another Creation," understood as the infusion of the soul and the emergence of complete

human identity. Qur'anic exegetes have emphasized that the detailed mention of these developmental stages serves not only as evidence of the Qur'an's scientific precision but also conveys a profound theological message concerning the dignity and noble status of the human being. Accordingly, from the Islamic perspective, the embryo is a being that possesses inherent human dignity from the very beginning of its existence and remains under God's special care throughout its development.

3. The Identity Components of the Embryo in the Qur'an's Theocentric Perspective

The theocentric identity of the human embryo in the Holy Qur'an can be inferred through a systematic examination of the Qur'anic verses concerning human creation. Collectively, these verses establish a coherent and enduring set of principles that portray the embryo as an independent being endowed with inherent dignity and a purposeful existence.

3.1. The Principle of Divine Creation

The first component of the embryo's theocentric identity is that its creation is directly attributed to God. In numerous verses, the Holy Qur'an presents the formation of the human being in the mother's womb not as a merely natural or accidental biological process but as an act of divine creation and origination. As God declares: "He who created death and life..." (al-Mulk, 2).

This verse affirms that both life and death lie entirely within God's will and authority, and that no created being possesses the power either to create life or to bestow death independently. In other words, both the beginning and the end of life depend exclusively upon

the divine will; human beings exercise no independent authority over the creation or termination of life.

Accordingly, from the very moment of its existence, the embryo falls under God's ownership and lordship. Any violation of embryonic life therefore constitutes, in reality, an infringement upon God's sovereign right over human life. God has created the human being as a creature endowed with extraordinary physical and spiritual capacities and with the potential to attain the highest levels of perfection (Khajeh Piri, 2013 , p. 12).

In describing the creation of the human being, even during the earliest embryonic stages, the Qur'an attributes the entire process directly to God's power and will:

"He is the One who perfected everything He created. He began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his progeny from an extract of a humble fluid. Then He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him of His Spirit..." (al-Sajdah, 7-9).

Likewise, referring to the act of shaping human beings, God states: "It is Allah who made the earth a resting place for you and the sky a canopy, and He formed you and perfected your forms..." (al-Ghāfir, 64).

These verses demonstrate that God not only prepared the earth and the heavens as a suitable environment for human life but also personally fashioned the human form most excellently. They clearly indicate that the human being, from the very beginning of existence, is a divine creation brought into being by God's will and endowed with the right to life. Consequently, any aggression against this creation constitutes an assault upon the will of its Creator.

This understanding fundamentally differs from the materialistic

worldview. From the theocentric perspective, the embryo is not merely the product of the biological union of sperm and ovum; rather, it is a creature of God, who employs natural causes as instruments for the realization of His creative will. Consequently, the embryo possesses an identity grounded in its relationship with God and cannot be regarded merely as the property of the parents or as a biological commodity. This principle constitutes the foundation of the embryo's sanctity and dignity, for whatever is directly created by God may neither be destroyed nor exploited by human beings.

As a foundational identity principle, the doctrine of divine creation provides a firm and enduring basis for confronting the complex challenges of the modern age concerning the protection of embryonic life. The embryo is neither the possession of its parents nor merely a biological phenomenon; rather, it is a divine creation whose protection is an undeniable moral obligation. Accordingly, safeguarding embryonic life is not merely an individual or familial duty but also a social and religious responsibility that binds both society and its governing authorities. This perspective provides a robust ethical and legal foundation for addressing contemporary challenges in protecting the embryo and preserving human dignity.

3.2. The Principle of Divine Ownership

The second component of the embryo's theocentric identity is its complete belonging to God in terms of ownership and lordship. The Holy Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes that everything in the heavens and the earth, including human beings and all stages of their existence, belongs exclusively to God:

"To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth" (al-Nisā', 131).

This verse affirms that everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to God because He is the Creator of all beings. The expression "Whatever" encompasses both rational and non-rational creatures, including angels, human beings, jinn, animals, plants, and inanimate objects (Andālūsī, 2001, 1, p. 389). According to Qur'anic exegetes, God's ownership extends to creation, possession, and absolute authority of disposition (Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 2, p. 243; Baydāwī, 1997, vol. 1, p. 165). Consequently, both the human body and soul are under God's exclusive ownership.

To further illustrate this principle of ownership, the Qur'an refers to the creation of the embryo and the determination of its sex: "To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He creates whatever He wills. He grants females to whom He wills, and He grants males to whom He wills; or He grants both males and females, and He renders whom He wills infertile. Surely He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful" (al-Shūrā, 49-50).

The connection between this verse and the preceding verses lies in their discussion of divine provision, with children being presented here as one of God's blessings and provisions (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 18, p. 68). Accordingly, both offspring and their sex fall entirely within God's ownership and sovereign will, beyond the power of human beings to determine independently.

Indeed, this verse provides a clear manifestation of God's ownership, since determining the sex of a child is a matter over which no human being possesses absolute control. Despite scientific advancements, no one can determine the sex of a child with complete certainty. Although certain biological factors may influence the probability of conceiving a male or female child, none can guarantee the outcome (Makarem Shirazi, 1995, vol. 20, p. 483).

This same truth is reflected in the verse: "Your wives are a field for you; therefore approach your field as you wish" (al-Baqarah, 223).

Here, the Qur'an likens the womb of a woman to cultivated land prepared for sowing. Just as the soil itself does not determine the nature of the seed planted within it, the mother's womb does not determine the sex of the embryo. Rather, this is associated with the male reproductive fluid. This point is further emphasized in the verse:

"And that He created the two mates, male and female, from a drop of semen when it is emitted" (al-Najm, 45-46) (Esmi Qayah Bashi, 2024, p. 13).

Despite the extensive efforts of infertility specialists, there remain individuals who are unable to conceive, and scientific advances have not succeeded in granting them children. This reality demonstrates that God Almighty is the absolute Owner of all creation. He alone grants offspring and determines their sex according to His will, for "Indeed, He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful."

God possesses complete knowledge of all the causes and forces operating in the universe. He knows how these causes sometimes work in harmony and at other times in opposition, and He knows how every creature comes into existence according to His predetermined plan. These realities are manifestations of God's infinite knowledge in creation and His sovereign power in governing the universe in accordance with His wisdom (Ibn 'Āshūr, n.d., 25, p. 194).

The principle of divine ownership removes the embryo's identity from the sphere of human ownership and contractual arrangements and places it within the domain of divine lordship. Based on this identity principle, it can be argued that if the embryo belongs exclusively to God, then the parents are merely trustees of a divine trust. As trustees, they possess no proprietary right over God's

creation and therefore have no authority to destroy it according to their personal wishes.

3.3. The Principle of Purposiveness

The third component of the embryo's theocentric identity is the principle of purposiveness (teleology) governing its development. The Holy Qur'an presents the stages of human creation, from the fertilized drop to full development, with remarkable precision, portraying this developmental process as a manifestation of God's infinite power and wise governance:

"Indeed, We created man from an extract of clay. Then We placed him as a drop of fluid in a secure resting place. Then We created the drop into a clinging substance; then We created the clinging substance into a chewed-like lump; then We created the lump into bones; then We clothed the bones with flesh; thereafter We produced him as another creation. So blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators" (al-Mu'minūn, 12-14).

The Qur'an narrates the stages of embryonic development in such a way that each stage appears to serve as a preparation for the next, with the entire process advancing toward the stage described as "Another creation":

"...Then We produced him as another creation. So blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators" (al-Mu'minūn, 14).

The repeated use of the conjunction "Then" throughout these verses indicates a purposeful and sequential order in which each developmental stage is qualitatively distinct from the preceding one (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 15, p. 21).

Within the Qur'an's theocentric worldview, the embryo is not merely a purposeless mass of cells but a being progressing along a

divinely ordained path toward human perfection. According to classical exegetes, the phrase "Another creation" refers to the infusion of the soul, at which point the embryo becomes a human being in the full sense of the term (Ṭabarī, 1991, vol. 18, p. 8). This understanding constitutes a pivotal element in the embryo's identity within the Qur'anic worldview. Even before ensoulment, the embryo possesses inherent dignity and participates in a purposeful process of creation. It is potentially human from the moment of conception; however, following the infusion of the soul, it attains complete human personhood, at which point the legal rulings concerning the inviolability of human life become fully applicable, as will be discussed later.

God Almighty has appointed a definite course for the embryo to fulfill its divinely intended purpose. He states: "...And We cause to remain in the wombs whatever We will until an appointed term..."

According to *Ṭabāṭabā'ī*, this means: We establish in the womb whatever embryo We will and do not allow it to miscarry until its appointed period of gestation has been completed; thereafter We bring you forth as infants (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 14, p. 344). The fact that God has prepared a secure place for the embryo to remain until the completion of its designated term clearly demonstrates the purposive nature of its growth and development (Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. 7, p. 354).

Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the detailed description of embryonic development and subsequent human growth serves a broader educational purpose. Through these verses, the Qur'an removes human beings from the familiarity of everyday experience and invites them to contemplate the profound mysteries of existence. The purpose is to keep humanity continually mindful of the wonders of creation, which in turn remind them of God's greatness and sustain an enduring relationship with Him. Such a worldview establishes a

firm foundation for human commitment to the divinely ordained order governing life. As one's awareness of God's presence increases, one's sense of responsibility before Him likewise becomes deeper and more profound (Faḍlullāh, 1998, vol. 16, p. 139).

The Holy Qur'an further portrays the complete cycle of human existence in the following verse:

"O humankind! If you are in doubt concerning the Resurrection, then indeed We created you from dust, then from a drop of fluid, then from a clinging substance, then from a chewed-like lump, partly formed and partly unformed, so that We may make clear to you. And We cause to remain in the wombs whatever We will until an appointed term. Then We bring you forth as infants; then We nurture you until you reach your full strength. Among you are those who die, and among you are those who are returned to the feeblest stage of old age, so that after having possessed knowledge they know nothing" (al-Ḥajj, 5).

This verse presents the entire course of human life, from the implantation of the embryo in the womb, through birth, childhood, maturity, intellectual perfection, and finally death or senility. This purposeful narrative demonstrates that not only embryonic development but every stage of human existence unfolds according to a divinely ordained plan established by the "Best of Creators." Thus, the governing order of creation is fundamentally teleological and directed toward a specific purpose (Makarem Shirazi, 1995, 14, p. 22). From this perspective, abortion represents not merely the interruption of embryonic development but the disruption of the purposeful order of life that God has established within the womb "Until an appointed term."

Protecting the embryo therefore means protecting a sacred

divine process. The distinction made in Islamic law between normative obligations and legal consequences reflects the depth and realism of the *Shari'ah* in safeguarding embryonic life. In light of the principle of purposiveness, the embryo, even in its earliest developmental stages, is not a being devoid of sanctity or one whose life may be terminated without justification. By concluding the account of embryonic creation with the declaration "So blessed is Allah, the Best of Creators," the Qur'an confers value and sacredness upon every stage of embryonic development. Accordingly, abortion at any stage constitutes the interruption of a developmental process that God Himself has created with purpose and wisdom.

As noted earlier, God attributes the formation of the human being directly to Himself:

"It is Allah who made the earth a resting place for you and the sky a canopy, and He formed you and perfected your forms..." (Ghāfir, 64).

According to Qur'anic commentators, the expression the "Perfection of your forms" signifies the harmony, balance, and proportionality of all aspects of human existence, such that every component works together in enabling the human being to attain ultimate happiness and perfection (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 16, p. 249). Thus, in the Qur'anic worldview, creation and perfection are inseparable concepts. Every human being enjoys this divine gift from the very beginning of existence, that is, from the embryonic stage. In other words, the embryo develops through a purposeful process in which every aspect of its being is fashioned in proper proportion and harmony, preparing it for the journey of earthly life and the attainment of its ultimate perfection.

This principle provides the Qur'anic response to the challenge

of abortion because a pregnancy is "Unwanted." If the embryo's developmental course is purposeful and has been designed by the Best of Creators, it cannot be terminated without a legitimate justification merely because of financial hardship, lack of preparedness, or similar considerations. Thus, abortion is not simply the destruction of a biological entity; rather, it is the interruption of a divinely ordained, purpose-driven process of creation.

3.4. The Principle of the Infusion of the Soul

One of the fundamental, and perhaps the most significant, principles in the theocentric identity of the embryo concerns the manner of human creation and the feature that distinguishes human beings from all other creatures. According to this principle, after completing the material creation of the human being, God bestows upon it a unique mode of existence that is exclusive to human dignity: the infusion of the divine spirit.

God Almighty states: "Then He fashioned him in due proportion and breathed into him of His Spirit" (al-Sajdah, 9).

This verse refers to a stage of creation that occurs after the completion of the embryo's physical formation. It marks the transition from the embryo's biological identity to its metaphysical identity. According to Qur'anic exegetes, the phrase "He breathed into him of His Spirit" is a metaphorical expression, drawing an analogy with the act of breathing (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 16, p. 250). Exegetes further explain that the attribution of the spirit to God constitutes an honorific attribution, indicating that the human spirit possesses a noble and distinguished status by virtue of its special relationship to God (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 19, p. 139).

This attribution signifies God's exclusive ownership of the

human spirit and constitutes the basis of humanity's ontological distinction from all other creatures. Likewise, the divine command requiring the angels to prostrate before Adam after this event, "So when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit, fall before him in prostration," (al-Hijr, 29) symbolizes the acknowledgment of this unique dignity. From the theocentric perspective, the infusion of the spirit establishes an existential connection between the immaterial soul and the material body (Tabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 12, p. 154), transforming the human being into a creature endowed with intrinsic dignity. Consequently, abortion after this stage is unquestionably prohibited because it constitutes an assault upon a being that possesses the divine spirit.

From the standpoint of theocentric identity, the infusion of the spirit conveys two fundamental messages. First, even before ensoulment, the embryo possesses identity and dignity, albeit in a gradational and developing form that reaches its perfection through the infusion of the spirit. Second, ensoulment represents God's formal declaration inaugurating a mode of life whose sanctity and inviolability become equivalent to those of a fully developed human being.

To understand the Qur'anic position accurately, it is necessary to distinguish between biological life and the human spirit. Life itself exists in different degrees: vegetative life, animal life, and human life. From the moment of fertilization, the embryo possesses vegetative life and gradually acquires animal life; accordingly, it is recognized as a living being (Shakerin, 2010, p. 86). Thus, being alive is not synonymous with possessing the human spirit. The Qur'anic verses describing embryonic development emphasize both the gradual nature of life and the intrinsic significance of each developmental stage. Consequently, even before the infusion of the spirit, the embryo, as the earliest and

potential stage of human life, enjoys sanctity and the right to life.

Islamic jurisprudence, drawing upon this Qur'anic principle of embryonic identity, distinguishes between two legal dimensions. The majority of Imami jurists, relying on Qur'anic verses and prophetic traditions, maintain that abortion is prohibited from the moment of fertilization and that anyone who intentionally terminates the embryo commits a sinful act (Nourahmadi et al., 2020, p. 65), since such an act constitutes an assault upon developing life and a potential human being.

This prohibition represents a normative ruling rooted in the intrinsic dignity of the earliest stages of human creation. By contrast, the positive legal ruling, namely the determination of the amount of financial compensation, depends upon the precise timing of ensoulment, which is generally regarded as occurring after four months of gestation. Accordingly, the majority of jurists consider the completion of four lunar months after conception to be the time when the soul is infused into the embryo, a determination primarily relevant for calculating the applicable (Jahaniyan & Farhudi, 2009, p. 163).

In Islamic law, the compensation for the death of an embryo after ensoulment is equivalent to the full blood money. In contrast, before ensoulment the amount varies according to the embryo's stage of development (Hashemi Shahroudi, 2011, vol. 9, p. 65). Consequently, abortion before ensoulment does not incur the full amount of blood money (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 7, p. 343); rather, according to a narration from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS), the amount of compensation differs at each developmental stage of the embryo.¹

¹. A narration from *ʿAbdullāh ibn Muskān* from Imam *Ṣādiq* (AS), who said: "The blood money of the fetus is divided into five parts: One-fifth for the semen (is twenty dinars), two-fifths for the clot (is forty dinars), three-fifths for the lump of

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This distinction demonstrates that Islamic jurisprudence simultaneously emphasizes the intrinsic prohibition of abortion while also taking into account the objective stages of embryonic development when determining legal compensation. Therefore, scholarly disagreement regarding the precise moment of ensoulment should never be interpreted as denying the embryo's right to life from the beginning of its existence.

Indeed, the Qur'anic expression: "Then We produced him as another creation" (al-Mu'minūn, 14) with reference to the creation of the spirit indicates that the infusion of the soul is fundamentally different from ordinary biological development. It does not belong to the realm of natural physical processes, nor can its true nature be fully comprehended through empirical knowledge (Rezaei Isfahani, 2007, 2, p. 559). For this reason, ensoulment is regarded as a metaphysical phenomenon that lies beyond the scope of medical science. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of medicine, the embryo has been a living organism from the moment of fertilization, possessing vegetative and subsequently animal life (Rezvani Mofrad & Nourahmadi, 2022, p. 4).

Accordingly, the relationship between the infusion of the divine spirit and the embryo's theocentric identity demonstrates that the embryo is far more than a biological phenomenon or a part of the mother's body. Rather, it is a being that, on the one hand, advances through a divinely ordained and purposeful process of creation and, on

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flesh (is sixty dinars), and four-fifths for the bones (is eighty dinars). Once the fetus is complete, its compensation is one hundred dinars. However, once the soul is breathed into it, its blood money becomes one thousand dinars, or ten thousand dirhams if it is a male; and if it is a female, then five hundred dinars" (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, vol. 29, p. 229).

the other, through the infusion of the spirit attains the status of God's vicegerent and the fullness of human dignity. Consequently, protecting the embryo, both before and after ensoulment, is a religious, ethical, and human obligation. The difference is that after ensoulment, the embryo's sanctity and the legal consequences attached to its protection become considerably stronger and more categorical. This gradational yet dignity-centered understanding represents one of the most distinctive features of Qur'anic bioethics in contrast to the reductionist approaches characteristic of much contemporary bioethical discourse.

3.5. The Principle of Inherent Human Dignity

Another fundamental component of the embryo's identity within the Qur'an's epistemological framework is the principle of inherent human dignity. Within this framework, the human being, as a creature of God, possesses a set of fundamental rights that are all grounded in a single foundational principle. Foremost among these is the right to life, which constitutes the prerequisite for the realization of every other right, since all rights and obligations presuppose the existence of a living human person. In this respect, the Qur'anic perspective is consistent with the foundations of modern international human rights, which are likewise built upon the concept of the inherent dignity of the human person. Human dignity arises from God's infusion of the divine spirit into humanity and, as previously discussed, encompasses every stage of human existence, including the embryonic stage.

The Holy Qur'an explicitly affirms the exalted status of humanity based on this inherent dignity: "Indeed, We have honored the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, and provided them with good and lawful provisions." (al-Isrā': 70)

It is noteworthy that the expression "We have honored" refers

to a positive divine act rather than a response to human conduct or reciprocal respect. In other words, God created human nature itself as inherently noble and dignified. This dignity is a divine gift implanted within human nature, not an acquired or conventional status (Motahhari, 1988, p. 230). It is this inherent nobility that grants humanity superiority over the rest of creation.

This ontological dignity rests upon two divine endowments. The first is the infusion of the divine spirit, emphasized in the verse: "...I breathed into him of My Spirit" (al-Sajdah, 9).

The second is the conferral of the office of caliphate upon humanity: "And when your Lord said to the angels: "Indeed, I am placing upon the earth a vicegerent" (al-Baqarah, 30).

These two characteristics rendered the human being worthy of the angels' prostration and elevated humanity above many other created beings (Salimi, 2015, p. 254). The phrase "And We favored them" in the continuation of the verse expresses the logical consequence of this dignity: "And We favored them greatly over many of those whom We created" (al-Isrā', 70).

Thus, it is humanity's inherent dignity that forms the basis of its superiority over other creatures.

The expressions the "Children of Adam" and "Them" in this verse are universal and unrestricted. Their generality indicates that inherent dignity is not limited by race, gender, religion, or any particular stage of human development. Rather, being human alone is the sole criterion for possessing this dignity. Accordingly, every being that belongs to the human family falls within the scope of this divine honor. Since the embryo constitutes the earliest and indispensable stage in the biological existence of the children of Adam, it cannot

reasonably be excluded from the universal application of this Qur'anic principle.

The universality of this principle extends even beyond the stage of ensoulment. Although some scholars maintain that the infusion of the spirit is the direct source of human dignity, the present approach regards dignity as an intrinsic quality inseparable from human nature itself, encompassing even the stages preceding ensoulment, which represent the preparatory process for receiving the fullness of that dignity (Mesbah, 2007, p. 362). Consequently, any assault upon the embryo, including abortion before the infusion of the spirit, constitutes an assault upon the inherent dignity of the human being.

A subtle yet important aspect of this principle concerns its relationship to the earlier stages of creation. To affirm the embryo's inherent dignity does not imply that, at the moment of fertilization, it possesses all the characteristics of a fully developed human being. Rather, it means that, because the embryo is a being progressing toward full humanity, its status and sanctity require protection from every form of aggression and objectification. This understanding stands in direct contrast to theories that make human dignity contingent upon self-consciousness, actual legal personhood, or similar functional criteria.

For this reason, within the theocentric worldview, protecting the embryo is not merely a matter of jurisprudence or medicine; it is a practical commitment to the Qur'anic conception of the human being as an inherently dignified creature whose existence transcends the purely material. Accordingly, respect and protection must be accorded to the embryo from the very moment of fertilization. Promoting this perspective not only provides a coherent foundation for protective legislation within Islamic societies but also contributes to intercultural

dialogue on human rights by offering a profound and internally consistent answer to the question of the origin of human dignity.

3.6. The Principle of the Sanctity of Human Life

The sixth and final Qur'anic component of the embryo's theocentric identity is the principle of the sanctity of human life. As discussed previously, Qur'anic anthropology regards the right to life as a divine gift and the most fundamental of all human rights, upon which every other right and obligation depends. This right constitutes the outward expression of the inherent dignity embedded within human nature. From this perspective, the deliberate taking of the life of an innocent human being is not merely an individual crime but an assault upon the very reality of humanity and a threat to the moral foundations of society. The Holy Qur'an explains both the sanctity of this right and the consequences of violating it, extending even to embryonic life, within the framework of both worldly legislation and divine justice in the Hereafter.

It is important to distinguish between the principle of the sanctity of life and the previously discussed principle of inherent dignity. Inherent dignity primarily concerns the intrinsic worth of the human being, whereas the sanctity of life concerns the normative legal and moral prohibition against violating that worth. Put differently, inherent dignity affirms that the "Embryo possesses value." At the same time, the sanctity of life declares that "Abortion and any assault upon the embryo constitute a sinful act and entail legal liability, including financial compensation."

On this basis, the Qur'an emphasizes the gravity of unlawfully taking innocent life:

"Whoever kills a person, unless in retribution for another life

or for spreading corruption in the land, it is as though he has killed all of mankind" (al-Mā'idah, 32).

This verse equates the killing of a single innocent person with the destruction of all humanity. Such an expression indicates that the existence of every individual human being symbolizes the entirety of humanity and that every human life represents a manifestation of the single reality called humanity. Consequently, destroying one manifestation is, in effect, an affront to humanity itself.

To safeguard this fundamental right, the Qur'an prescribes severe consequences in both this world and the Hereafter. The worldly punishment for unlawful killing is retaliation (retaliation), as stated:

"And there is life for you in retaliation, O people of understanding, so that you may become God-conscious" (al-Baqarah, 179).

Likewise, the Qur'an describes the punishment in the Hereafter:

"Whoever intentionally kills a believer, his recompense is Hell, wherein he shall abide eternally; Allah's wrath and curse are upon him, and He has prepared for him a tremendous punishment" (al-Nisā', 93).

The promise of eternal punishment for intentional murder demonstrates the supreme value accorded to human life within the Islamic moral order. It underscores the gravity and irreparability of this offense before God.

Furthermore, given the general and unrestricted use of the word "Person" in the verse "Whoever kills a person...", the sanctity of life is not confined to mature or adult individuals. Rather, it extends to the human embryo, which acquires the right to life from the moment it comes into existence as a fertilized ovum within the mother's womb. Accordingly, many Islamic jurists have held that abortion falls within

the scope of this Qur'anic principle and have regarded it as analogous to the unlawful taking of human life.

Because the Holy Qur'an not only refers in several verses to the pre-Islamic Arab practices of female infanticide and child-killing, as in the verses,

"And when the girl buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed," (al-Takwīr, 8-9), and "Thus, for many of the polytheists, their partners made the killing of their children seem fair...", (al-An'ām, 137) but also addresses the killing of unborn children, whether male or female,¹ in the verses, "Do not kill your children for fear of poverty," (al-Isrā': 31) and "Do not kill your children because of poverty; We provide for you and for them" (al-An'ām, 151).

In these verses, the Qur'an explicitly rejects poverty or fear of poverty as a legitimate justification for taking the life of one's children.

It is noteworthy that, in legal theory, legal personality, that is, the capacity to possess rights and obligations, is attributed to every living human being. Likewise, in Islamic jurisprudence, an embryo, provided that it is born alive, is recognized as possessing legal personality and is entitled to such rights as inheritance, testamentary benefits, and financial compensation (Saket, 1997, p. 49). Accordingly, abortion constitutes an infringement upon this developing legal personality.

Therefore, throughout every stage of its development, from implantation in the mother's womb and the commencement of embryonic growth until its complete formation before birth, the

¹. "The pronoun "*Kum*" (you all) indicates that the prohibition encompasses the killing of both girls and boys" (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 20, p. 331).

embryo possesses both the right to life and an independent identity. Within the theocentric worldview, aborting the embryo, even before birth, constitutes a form of unlawful killing of a life protected by law. Although spouses may lawfully take measures to achieve conception, once fertilization has occurred and pregnancy has been established, they no longer possess the right to terminate the embryo's life (Khajeh Piri, 2013, p. 36).

The Holy Qur'an further illustrates this principle in describing the women who pledged allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad. Among the conditions of their pledge was refraining from killing their children:

"O Prophet! When believing women come to you pledging allegiance... that they will not kill their children, nor fabricate falsehood..." (al-Mumtahanah, 12).

According to Qur'anic exegetes, the prohibition of killing one's children in this verse includes abortion as well (Hosseini Hamedani, 1983, vol. 16, p. 308). Thus, preserving the life of one's child, even before birth, is regarded as an integral component of a Muslim's religious and moral obligations.

In essence, by emphasizing the sanctity of human life and by outlining the severe worldly and eschatological consequences of violating it, the Holy Qur'an establishes a robust foundation both for recognizing the embryo's identity and for developing legislation and bioethical principles concerning embryonic life. The Qur'anic equation of killing one innocent person with killing all humanity underscores the inseparable relationship between individual human life and the collective dignity of humankind. Furthermore, the Qur'anic prohibition against killing one's children demonstrates that protecting embryonic life is the logical and necessary extension of the Qur'anic doctrine of the right to life.

4. Applying the Components of the Embryo's Theocentric Identity to Contemporary Bioethical Challenges

Having identified the six components of the embryo's theocentric identity based on the Qur'anic verses, this section examines their theoretical and practical application in addressing contemporary bioethical challenges.

Among the most controversial issues in contemporary bioethics concerning the embryo is abortion. Social, economic, and cultural transformations, together with scientific advances in medicine and biology, have generated new challenges regarding embryonic life. Economic hardship, fear of an uncertain future, and concerns about poverty are frequently advanced as justifications for abortion. Within this context, protecting the embryo as a human being who has not yet been born has become one of the most contentious issues of the modern world.

At times, this challenge has been presented as conflicting with concerns about population growth and has been viewed as an obstacle to the economic and social development of developing countries. Although advances in medical technology should ideally strengthen the protection of embryonic life by facilitating earlier diagnosis and more effective prenatal care, various approaches grounded in humanism, secularism, and certain radical interpretations of feminist thought have instead placed the preservation of embryonic life at risk and intensified ethical debates surrounding abortion. Rather than enhancing protection for embryonic life, these approaches have contributed to increasing numbers of elective abortions justified on diverse grounds. Consequently, many countries have adopted increasingly permissive abortion laws. For example, twenty-six countries, including the United Kingdom, Japan, and France, have

legalized abortion without substantial restriction (Hariri & Shokrbeygi, 2022, p. 2). United Kingdom Japan France

In reality, the dominant contemporary approach to abortion is fundamentally relative and context-dependent. National laws are generally shaped by changing social, political, and economic circumstances and therefore lack fixed philosophical or ethical foundations capable of universally determining the moral and legal status of the embryo. As a result, the absence of stable normative principles has produced contradictory and continually changing legal standards across the world. Within the modern relativist paradigm, abortion is viewed primarily as a multidimensional social issue that should be resolved by balancing the interests of the mother, demographic considerations, and individual freedoms. This perspective emphasizes utilitarianism, personal autonomy, and changing social conditions, while assigning the embryo a fluid and relative moral status. Consequently, the most fundamental ethical issue, the existence of an emerging human life, often remains insufficiently acknowledged.

In contrast to this relativistic approach, the Qur'an-based theocentric paradigm recognizes the embryo as possessing an independent identity, grounded in the principles of inherent human dignity and objective moral responsibility. The Islamic theocentric worldview, founded upon the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, provides fixed, universal, and immutable principles for understanding the embryo's independent identity. In practical application, these principles establish strong safeguards against unjustified abortions. From the very beginning of its existence in the mother's womb, the embryo is, by virtue of the principle of direct divine creation, under the absolute ownership of God. In accordance with the principle of the purposiveness of creation, it proceeds along a divinely ordained

developmental path designed to culminate in "Another creation." Accordingly, the principles of inherent dignity and the sanctity of human life characterize any abortion performed without a legitimate law-based justification as the unlawful taking of human life and explicitly prohibit it.

Unlike the uncertainty found in certain contemporary legal systems regarding the embryo's individuality, humanity, and legal personality (Rostami et al., 2013, p. 25), Islam, based on the Holy Qur'an, recognizes the embryo as a human being possessing the right to life from the earliest stages of its development and regards the sanctity of that life as inviolable.

Accordingly, abortion is regarded as categorically prohibited in Islamic jurisprudence. This prohibition applies in all circumstances, whether before or after the ensoulment of the fetus, whether the pregnancy results from lawful marriage or illicit intercourse, and whether the abortion is performed with or without the consent of the parents (Mazlounzadeh, 2023, p. 5).

The sole exception to this general rule is therapeutic abortion, which is permitted based on the Islamic legal principles of necessity and the negation of undue hardship, in situations where there is a conflict between preserving the life of the mother (who possesses a fully ensouled human life) and that of the fetus before ensoulment (Emami Qeshlaq et al., 2018, p. 4). In such cases, the Islamic legal system applies the principle of prioritizing the greater over the lesser interest, thereby permitting abortion to safeguard the mother's life, which is considered the overriding interest (A Group of Authors, 2007, 1, p. 240). This preference is justified not only because of the mother's established life but also because of her social and familial responsibilities (Hariri & Shokrbeygi, 2022, p. 5).

Research indicates that the primary reasons for abortion in the contemporary world are factors such as population control, economic concerns, limited resources, women's reproductive autonomy, maternal employment, the perceived burden of childrearing, and the preservation of physical appearance, rather than exceptional medical circumstances such as threats to the mother's life or severe fetal abnormalities (Nikzad & Joursaraei, 2014, p. 3). Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of the world's population currently live in countries where abortion is legally permitted either upon the woman's request or when her life is endangered (Akrami et al., 2010, p. 2). Addressing this deficiency in legal protection requires a return to more fundamental principles concerning the embryo's independent identity.

It is noteworthy that permissive approaches toward abortion are generally grounded in materialist, secular, humanistic, and radical feminist paradigms. Materialism and secularism reduce life to its purely physical dimensions or exclude religion from the sphere of legislation. By removing transcendent foundations from human existence, these approaches produce an ambiguous conception of embryonic identity. Since they define personhood according to such criteria as self-awareness, rationality, reasoning ability, autonomy, and purposive agency, they exclude the embryo from the category of legal and moral personhood. Consequently, decisions concerning abortion become purely human-centered and may disregard the embryo's right to life (Mashayekhi et al., 2019, p. 3).

Likewise, although humanism is ostensibly centered upon human beings and therefore should seek to preserve human life, its inadequate philosophical foundations and lack of reliance upon divine rights prevent it from defending the embryo's right to life unequivocally whenever competing interests arise.

Radical feminism, moreover, by insisting absolutely upon a

woman's ownership of her own body and her unrestricted right to autonomous choice, rejects any legal limitation on abortion. According to this perspective, the mother alone serves as the ultimate moral authority regarding abortion because her own life is intimately connected with the fate of the embryo (Alizadeh & Gharibbi, 2018, p. 4). A prominent illustration of this approach was the 1973 decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, which recognized abortion as falling within the constitutional right to privacy and declared restrictive abortion laws incompatible with women's liberty and personal autonomy (Milanlouei & Arab Asadi, 2025, p. 10). Supreme Court of the United States

By contrast, according to the principles established above, God possesses absolute ownership, and the embryo, as a divine creation, belongs to God. Consequently, women cannot terminate a pregnancy merely based on such claims as personal freedom or bodily ownership. These principles do not define the embryo as possessing an independent identity under the sovereignty of God, over which parents nor has any other individual unrestricted authority. Accordingly, depriving the embryo of life without a legitimate law-based and legal justification is impermissible.

Within the theocentric worldview, life is not merely a biological phenomenon but possesses spiritual and sacred dimensions. The spirit, as a divine element within the human being, constitutes an integral aspect of human existence and confers honor and dignity upon it. To ignore this spiritual dimension and reduce the human being solely to material existence is to deny authentic human nature and undermine the sanctity and dignity of humanity as the noblest of God's creatures. Consequently, the embryo deserves respect from the very beginning of its existence, while ensoulment represents a developmental stage that gives rise to particular juridical rulings.

Thus, the right to life is protected from the earliest moment of existence, whereas the stage of ensoulment enjoys a distinct and elevated legal status. Accordingly, the central challenge surrounding abortion is not merely a legal or medical issue; rather, it is fundamentally an anthropological and ethical question.

From this perspective, the teachings of the Holy Qur'an provide a systematic response to contemporary bioethical challenges. By establishing enduring metaphysical principles, including the inherent dignity of the human person, the sanctity of divinely bestowed life, and the purposiveness of creation, the theocentric worldview offers a profound answer to the questions of the embryo's identity and its rights. It thereby shifts decision-making concerning embryonic life from the realm of fluctuating social preferences to that of enduring moral obligations. Within this framework, protecting the embryo constitutes the logical extension of respect for human reality and the acceptance of responsibility toward God's design for human life. Consequently, legislation in Islamic societies should reflect these immutable and identity-defining principles.

Conclusion

The theocentric conception of embryonic identity in the Holy Qur'an extends far beyond a purely theological or juristic discussion. Rather, it offers a comprehensive and multilayered framework for addressing contemporary bioethical challenges. Employing a descriptive-analytical methodology and focusing on Qur'anic verses concerning embryonic development, this study concludes that the embryo's identity in the Qur'anic worldview rests upon six fundamental principles: "The principle of Divine Creation; the principle of Divine Ownership; the principle of the Purposiveness of Creation; the principle of the Infusion of the Divine Spirit; the principle of Inherent

Human Dignity; and the principle of the Sanctity of Human Life."

Taken together, these six principles constitute a coherent and multidimensional framework for understanding the embryo's theocentric identity. Within this framework, the embryo is neither an object, a commodity, nor merely a part of the mother's body. Rather, it is a being whose creation originates from God, whose ownership belongs to God, whose developmental course is divinely ordained toward perfection, into whom a divine spirit is breathed, and who therefore possesses an inviolable dignity and sanctity that no human being may violate except in cases of legally recognized necessity, such as saving the mother's life.

Applying these principles to the principal contemporary bioethical challenge, abortion, demonstrates that the Qur'anic perspective advocates neither unrestricted permissibility nor an entirely exceptionless prohibition. Instead, it presents a balanced position grounded in the inherent dignity of the human being and reverence for God's ordained order of creation. Within this framework, abortion is permissible only under the exceptional circumstance of choosing the greater over the lesser interest, namely, preserving the mother's life, and remains subject to the payment of the prescribed financial compensation.

The central finding of this study is that the embryo's theocentric identity is an identity in the process of becoming, rather than a static or merely biological identity. This graded understanding of embryonic identity, while consistently affirming its inherent dignity, provides a conceptual bridge between the findings of modern embryology and the ethical imperatives articulated in the Holy Qur'an.

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An Analysis of Institutional Responsibility for Safeguarding Fetal Health in Light of the Transition from Individualistic to Societal Ethics*

Mahmoud Abbasi¹  Meysam Kalhornia Golkar²

1. Professor and Director of the Medical Ethics and Law Research Center, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences; Head of the International Think Tank for Human Dignity; and Director of the Bioethics and Health Law Research Institute (**Corresponding Author**).
dr.abbasi@sbm.ac.ir
2. Researcher at the Bioethics and Health Law Research Institute and Associate Member of the Iranian Scientific Association of Children's Rights. kalthornia Golkar@gmail.com

Abstract

Background and Objective: In recent decades, the evolution of ethical and legal perspectives related to fetal health has caused traditional, individual-centered approaches to give way to broader concepts such as collective ethics and institutional responsibility. While individual ethics focuses mainly on the duties of the mother or physician, collective ethics redistributes responsibility at the level of policymaking institutions, the health system, and social structures. The present study aims to elucidate the foundations, dimensions, and necessities of this transition and to examine its implications in determining the

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responsibility of institutions toward fetal health.

Method: This study was conducted using a descriptive-analytical approach based on library resources. By analyzing the literature of bioethics and the philosophy of responsibility, the fundamental principles of collective ethics and its position in maternal-fetal health policies were examined, and then the role of various institutions—ranging from the government and legislative bodies to the health system, research, and cultural centers—was analyzed in light of these principles.

Findings: The findings indicate that within the framework of collective ethics, fetal health is not merely the responsibility of a single individual (the mother or physician), but rather the result of a systematic interaction among institutional, social, economic, and cultural factors. Therefore, realizing the notion of collective ethics regarding fetal health necessitates coordination among institutions responsible for health, legislation, economy, education, and the media. This perspective emphasizes the necessity of fair policymaking, professional ethics training, cultural development, social support for pregnant mothers, and multi-level ethical oversight.

Conclusion: The transition from individual ethics to collective ethics in the realm of fetal health is a strategic necessity in contemporary ethics that can provide the foundation for formulating preventive, fair, humane, and community-interest-based policies. Institutions, especially within the health system, are obligated to move beyond purely individual ethical frameworks and recognize their collective responsibility in safeguarding the health and dignity of the fetus and mother.

Keywords

Collective Ethics, Moral Communitarianism, Institutional Responsibility, Legislation, Cultural Development, Fetal Health.

Introduction

Fetal health, as one of the most fundamental moral issues in society and a enduring concern of the health system, has experienced remarkable transformations in recent decades. Traditional approaches mainly placed the responsibility of protecting fetal health on the individual; within this framework, the mother as the bearer of the fetus (Roshan and Abiri, 2022; Hajipour, 2025), and the physician and healthcare providers as the providers of service to the fetus (Karimzadeh, 2012), were placed at the center of moral and legal judgments. Although this individual-centered view had certain functions in its time and still requires attention, its exclusive sufficiency has gradually proven inefficient when facing emerging complexities in the realm of reproductive health. Today, it can be stated that the status of fetal health and its protection is the result of a set of structural, institutional, and social factors that operate beyond individual will and decision; factors such as health policymaking systems, social supports, welfare infrastructures, economic justice, educational systems, and even public culture.

The complex network of factors affecting fetal health has caused contemporary bioethics to move away from the individual-centered framework and lean toward collective ethics—an ethics that views responsibility not as directed toward an individual, but toward a set of institutions that shape the bioethical conditions of pregnant women and fetuses. In such an approach, fetal health is not treated as an individual and private matter, but is redefined as a public good and a socio-institutional concern. This transformation is the direct consequence of a change in the philosophy of responsibility, the strengthening of a communitarian perspective in ethics, and growing attention to the components of health justice; a domain where institutions—ranging from the government and legislative bodies to

the health system, media, research centers, and cultural structures—are recognized as moral agents, and their role in creating or eliminating deprivations, risks, and harms related to fetal health is precisely evaluated.

In contrast to individualist accounts, which ascribe moral responsibility exclusively to human individuals and view collective responsibility merely as the sum or interaction of individual responsibilities (Miller, 2006), adopting an institutionalist perspective argues that governing, health, and social institutions, as entities with continuous identity, structure, and function, bear primary moral responsibility regarding fetal health. This responsibility, although executed by individuals, is rooted in the institution's role, duty, and social power. Furthermore, the justification exists that social and collective ethics cannot be regarded entirely separate from individual ethics; rather, these types of ethics actually serve a kind of "transcendent individualism" (Falah and Karnokar, 2018).

The theoretical foundations of the distinction between "individual ethics" and "collective ethics" were first formulated in the late twentieth century within the literature of biostatistics. However, serious criticisms have been leveled against the conceptual ambiguity and lack of connection between this dichotomy and systematic ethical frameworks (Heilig and Charles, 2005). Of course, this research seeks to move beyond this conceptual challenge, and by focusing on the responsibility of institutions toward fetal health, it offers an objective and necessary instance for formulating a practical and responsible "collective ethics."

Within such a context, the transition from individual ethics to collective ethics is more than a theoretical choice; it is a practical necessity in health policymaking. Without accepting institutional responsibility, achieving fair care, supporting pregnant mothers,

reducing risk factors, and guaranteeing fetal dignity will not be possible. Therefore, analyzing this transition and clarifying its moral, legal, and policy dimensions is essential for designing preventive and humane strategies within the landscape of fetal protection approaches. With this exact objective, the present article examines the foundations and reasons for this transition, analyzes the role of various institutional levels in guaranteeing fetal health, and elucidates the prerequisites for realizing collective ethics within the health system.

1. Theoretical Foundations and Conceptual Framework of Collective Moral Responsibility for Fetal Health

Analyzing the responsibility of institutions regarding fetal health requires elucidating the epistemological contexts that have driven a shift in recent decades from individual-centered ethics toward collective ethics—or at least the interpretation of collective ethics as a bridge to a transcendent individual ethics (Falah and Karnokar, 2018), even while offering an individualistic account of collective moral responsibility (Miller, 2006) at the societal level.

In the context of the present research, the theoretical foundations of this transformation rest on several key axes: First, the evolution in the conceptualization of "fetal health" as a multi-level phenomenon that is not merely the product of individual decisions and behaviors, but rather the outcome of the processing and influence of a network of structural, institutional, and social factors. Second, the emergence of theories in ethics, the philosophy of responsibility, and public policy indicating that decisions concerning fetal health are shaped within a context determined by institutions, laws, welfare policies, public culture, and the facilities of the health system. Third, the expansion of the concept of moral responsibility from individual agents to collective and organizational agents, and consequently the necessity of

redefining the role of institutions that directly affect the health, economic, and cultural conditions of pregnancy.

Within this framework, individual ethics focuses on the personal responsibilities of the mother, family, physician or healthcare provider, and other persons, treating fetal health as the result of their moral and behavioral decisions. Although this approach plays a fundamental role in generating moral sensitivity and subsequent legal protection, it faces serious limitations and consequential inefficiencies; because the major portion of the conditions affecting fetal health—from norm-building for responsible persons to nutrition, occupational security, the quality of healthcare services, education, and social supports—lies beyond the sphere of individual agency and is determined by macro-structures. Therefore, contemporary theories of justice, public ethics, and institutional responsibility emphasize that fetal health is the product of harmonious interaction among public policymaking, the efficiency of the health system, the socio-economic environment, and individual behavior (Azizi, 2024; Dawson, 2011).

The concept of collective ethics and its manifestation in relation to institutional duties toward fetal health is defined based on three main components:

- A. Institutional responsibility, which means the obligation of legislative bodies, the health system, the social welfare sector, the media, and educational centers to create conditions that facilitate fetal health.
- B. Structural sensitivity, through and influenced by which individual choices and behaviors are shaped within a context that is itself the product of social structures and public policies.
- C. Multi-level accountability, meaning the redistribution of

responsibility from the individual to a coordinated set of institutions that must be held accountable for the consequences of their actions or omissions.

Accordingly, the conceptual framework of this research rests on the idea that fetal health is not merely an individual duty, but rather a collective commitment, and responsible institutions must move beyond a purely individual-centered ethical framework and, by adopting fair, aligned, and coordinated policies, provide conditions wherein individual moral decisions acquire true meaning and impact. Within such a framework, collective ethics complements individual ethics and, by creating supportive and dignity-affirming platforms, guarantees the health and future of the fetus and mother.

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2. The Necessity of Transitioning from Individual Ethics to Collective Ethics

The transition from individual ethics to collective ethics in the realm of fetal health is not merely a theoretical requirement or an abstract transformation; rather, it is a necessity rooted in the social and structural realities that determine the status of fetal health. In the individual-centered approach, the source of responsibility is largely reduced to the mother, the physician, or other relevant persons; whereas theoretical and empirical evidence shows that the major portion of risks and opportunities associated with health issues, and specifically fetal health, is shaped in an environment constructed by institutions, social structures, economic policies, and cultural norms (Marmot et al., 2008; Marmot & Wilkinson, 2005; Iacoban et al., 2024; Jafree et al., 2023; Nattell, 2024). Therefore, a threefold transformation—moral, social, and institutional—justifies the necessity of a paradigm shift from individual ethics to collective ethics. It should also be kept in mind what an important role infrastructural factors, influenced by the

collective ethics approach, play in improving the context for promoting fetal health.

2-1. Moral, Social, and Institutional Arguments for the Necessity of Paradigm Shift

From a moral perspective, responsibility for fetal health cannot be defined solely on the basis of individual action. First, many of the determinants of fetal health—such as proper nutrition, access to health services, maternal job security, environmental conditions, and exposure to hazards—are beyond the individual's control and are influenced by macro-structures. Therefore, moral justice demands that the burden of responsibility be placed upon the institution that possesses the power and authority to effect change in these conditions. Second, public ethics and the understanding of contemporary theories of responsibility, including institutional deontological perspectives as well as theories of health justice, lead to the important conclusion that if the moral consequences arising from individual decisions depend on structural contexts, ignoring the responsibility of those structures constitutes an instance of moral injustice. Third, fetal health is a "collective good"—a good whose effects extend beyond the individual and profoundly impact the future of society. According to the literature of public ethics, the attainment of a collective good necessitates "collective commitments" and cannot be supported and realized through individual responsibility alone.

In the social sphere, transformations such as urbanization, industrialization, rising economic inequalities, changing patterns of women's employment, and increasing environmental stressors (Azh et al., 2019; Kotha, 2025) have altered the structures affecting fetal health. Under such conditions, the possibility of making fetal health dependent

on individual choices and behaviors diminishes, and the role of social forces increases significantly.

Furthermore, social studies in the field of health indicate that "social determinants of health"—including poverty, insecure employment, substandard housing, gender disparities, discrimination, and a lack of support networks—have a direct and substantial effect on individuals' health from birth and throughout their life course (Marmot et al., 2008; Braveman & Gottlieb, 2014).

Therefore, a framework that imposes responsibility solely on the individual is incapable of explaining or compensating for these factors and ultimately results in the reproduction of disparities in fetal health. Social responsibility dictates that responses to these factors be sought at the level of policymaking institutions and structures.

Institutions—including the government, the health system, the social welfare system, the legislative apparatus, cultural institutions, and the media—play a foundational role in shaping the conditions under which fetal health is realized or impaired. In addition to the power of legislation and resource allocation, institutions possess the capacity to establish supportive standards, design preventive mechanisms, provide maternal and fetal services, promote a healthy culture, and build support networks.

Ignoring this macro-power and influence fosters isolated viewpoints, the erroneous attribution of responsibility to the individual, and the absolution of the institution that holds the greatest authority and capacity for intervention. Theories influenced by institutional responsibility also lead to the insight that "power is the basis of responsibility"; hence, any institution that possesses the power to influence fetal health bears primary moral responsibility.

Moreover, the complexity of problems related to fetal health

(such as malnutrition, air pollution, occupational stress, lack of social support, and pharmaceutical or environmental hazards) is inherently multi-factorial and cross-sectoral, and can only be managed through networked coordination among various institutions. This necessity in itself provides a clear rationale for shifting from individual duties to structural and institutional responsibilities.

2-2. The Role of Infrastructural Factors (Economic, Cultural, Social) in Fetal Health

Based on what has been stated, the issue of fetal health—in the face of a set of structural factors (as a basis for explaining the rationale of transitioning from individual ethics to collective ethics)—is shaped across four distinct categories.

First, economic factors, including poverty, job insecurity, insufficient income, lack of access to healthy nutrition, and the high costs of prenatal care and treatment, all of which are linked to fetal health. Unjust economic policies, even if correct individual approaches remain constant, can create serious hazards for the fetus. Therefore, "equitable prenatal care is of paramount importance" (Kotha, 2025).

Second, social factors, including education levels, support networks, access to health information, social security, and the experience of structural discrimination, are among the elements that influence maternal and fetal health. Undoubtedly, a society that fails to support a pregnant mother cannot guarantee the health of the fetus.

Third, cultural factors, including cultural norms, social beliefs regarding pregnancy, views on gender roles, the rate of acceptance of care-seeking behaviors, and even media discourse concerning maternal and fetal health, shape the moral and psychological conditions necessary for making healthy choices.

Fourth, institutional and organizational factors, which determine the quality and accessibility of healthcare services, the insurance and welfare system, support policies for pregnant mothers, labor laws, environmental standards, pharmaceutical policies, and the medical education system, all of which can influence the possibility of individual moral action to varying degrees.

This set of factors demonstrates that fetal health is inevitably dependent on structures rather than merely on individual choices; and this dependency constitutes the primary basis for the necessity of rethinking the issue of fetal health as a subject within the domain of collective ethics and institutional responsibility.

3. Institutional Responsibility for Fetal Health: An Analysis of Levels

Adopting the approach of collective ethics regarding fetal health requires identifying and distinguishing various levels of institutional responsibility; because institutions do not operate at a single level, and each level of the social structure possesses different duties, authorities, and capacities to influence the conditions of fetal health. From this perspective, institutional responsibility can be analyzed across three interconnected, synergistic, yet distinct levels: the macro level of policymaking and legislation, the intermediate level of the health system and medical centers, and the micro institutional levels encompassing education, research, the media, and social support systems. Coordination and coherence among these levels are prerequisites for the effective and efficient realization of the collective ethics approach in supporting fetal health and dignity.

3-1. The Macro Level: Policymaking and Legislation

At the macro level, the government and legislative bodies play a

fundamental role in shaping the structural frameworks that affect fetal health. Public policies in the areas of health, social welfare, employment, the environment, nutrition, insurance, and economic support directly or indirectly determine the conditions of pregnancy and the possibility of achieving healthy care. From the perspective of institutional ethics, this level of responsibility holds "primary responsibility" for fetal health due to possessing the greatest decision-making power and resource allocation.

As constitutions often provide a clear basis for identifying and establishing the institutional responsibility of governments for the health of citizens, including maternal and fetal health. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran also obligates the government to "establish a correct and just economy" with the aim of generating public welfare, eradicating poverty and deprivation, and securing basic needs, including nutrition, housing, employment, health, and the generalization of insurance. Furthermore, the emphasis on eliminating unjustified discrimination, creating fair opportunities for men and women in all material and spiritual spheres, women's participation in political, economic, social, and cultural self-determination, and guaranteeing free and universal education reflect the structural perspective of the constitution on health as a product of social justice and macro policymaking (Abbasi et al., 2014).

Consequently, health and wellness are not merely treated as individual or treatment-oriented matters; rather, they are the result of the government's institutional commitments in the realms of economic justice, social welfare, education, and equal opportunity—commitments whose realization ultimately plays a decisive role in safeguarding fetal health.

Just legislation regarding the protection of pregnant mothers, guaranteeing equal access to health services, anticipating occupational

and economic protections, and enacting preventive regulations against environmental hazards are among the prominent examples of the primary responsibility of governments and relevant institutions toward the fetus (Kotha, 2025; Braveman & Gottlieb, 2014). Within the framework of collective ethics, the failure or inefficiency of macro policymaking, even if individual duties are observed by agents and stakeholders, can lead to the indirect violation of the right to fetal health. Therefore, fetal health must be considered one of the criteria for evaluating the justice and efficiency of public policies.

3-2. The Intermediate Level: The Health System and Healthcare Centers

The intermediate level of institutional responsibility is dedicated to the health system and institutions providing medical and care services—institutions that are in direct contact with the mother and fetus and translate macro policies into practical actions. Hospitals, health centers, physicians, and treatment teams, in addition to individual professional commitments, bear a collective moral responsibility within the framework of an organizational structure; the more focus is placed on strengthening and encouraging this responsibility, the more evident the fruits of macro policies will become.

Despite development plans and government efforts, the health system in Iran, resulting from structural problems, weaknesses, and inadequate oversight, "as a whole, has not only distributed facilities unequally in preventing health problems and providing therapeutic services, but by turning specialists, physicians, and medical staff into workers of the health system who are obligated to follow pre-written guidelines, it has also placed the manner of engagement with clients within an imbalance of power mechanism."

Therefore, developments surrounding fetal health at the level

of the health system need to be contingent upon macro-level reforms in this domain. At this level, institutional responsibility toward the fetus includes guaranteeing the quality of prenatal care services, adhering to scientific and ethical standards, avoiding personal biases contrary to emerging models of collective ethics by health service providers, equitable distribution of services, continuous training in professional ethics, and establishing systems of oversight and accountability. It must be recognized that "moral sensitivity is a more important predictor of moral performance than moral awareness" (Sadeghi and Alavi, 2018). Therefore, mere ethics training cannot stimulate moral sensitivity, given that moral sensitivity is shaped in light of a set of actions that find meaning within a framework called ethical cultural development. Moreover, collective ethics dictates that medical centers should not merely suffice to provide clinical services; rather, they should play an active role in identifying social risk factors, providing supportive referrals for vulnerable mothers, and engaging in cross-sectoral collaboration with other institutions. The failure of the health system to perform these duties, even in the presence of good intentions from individual actors, signifies an institutional failure in safeguarding fetal health.

3-3. The Micro Institutional Levels: Education, Research, Media, and Social Supports

Although micro institutional levels lack direct policymaking power, they play a decisive role in shaping the cultural, knowledge, and social environment affecting fetal health. The designation "micro" in this context should not convey a lack of impact, because citizens' interactions with the health system—including mothers, physicians, and nurses—are fundamentally derived from feedbacks experienced in micro institutional environments within social life, which often shape their beliefs and approaches beyond instructions and scientific systems.

The educational system by promoting health literacy and moral education, research centers by producing applied and policy-oriented knowledge, the media by norm-building and directing public opinion, and supportive institutions by mitigating the social vulnerabilities of pregnant mothers all play a role in realizing or undermining the macro goal of fetal health. Meanwhile, "the positive and growing effects of education and public literacy on population health, especially women's health, are well known and researched" (Kickbusch, 2001).

Within the framework of the collective ethics perspective, these institutions are also recognized as moral agents and have a duty to avoid reproducing misinformation, harmful norms, or stigmatization regarding pregnancy and mothers. Effective social support, responsible awareness-raising, and research based on the real needs of society provide a context wherein individual moral decisions find meaning and the capability of realization. Neglecting these micro levels leads to a disconnect between official policies and the real life-world of mothers, ultimately weakening programs based on fetal health.

4. Policy and Ethical Implications of the Transition to Collective Ethics in Fetal Health

Adopting the transition from individual ethics to collective ethics in the realm of fetal health entails profound and multi-layered implications for health policymaking, social justice, and the organization of institutional responsibilities, transforming it from a mere moral theory into an operational program. This shift guides the logic of intervention by the state and public institutions away from a narrow focus on individual behavior toward structural risk management, institutionalized support for mothers, and the guarantee of equitable conditions for the initiation of human life.

4-1. The Approach of Health Justice, Maternal Support, and Systematic Risk Management

Within the framework of collective ethics, fetal health is treated as a prominent instance of "health justice" or "equitable health"—meaning that preventable disparities in pregnancy outcomes arising from social, economic, and institutional inequalities are morally unjustifiable. Although there are numerous challenges in equitably meeting health needs given familial, social, political, and geographical scales (Daniels, 2007), adopting fair approaches in this domain obligates policymakers to focus on reforming the structural determinants of health—including poverty, job insecurity, unequal access to health services, and social supports—rather than leaving the responsibility of fetal health to individual choices and capacities.

On the other hand, collective ethics provides a foundation for strengthening supportive policies for pregnant mothers, such as economic support, maternity leave, comprehensive insurance coverage, preventive care, and psychological and social services. In this framework, preventing harm to fetal health extends beyond a mere individual moral recommendation, becoming an institutional and policy commitment. Furthermore, managing risks related to pregnancy—whether environmental, occupational, social, or therapeutic—moves beyond a reactive and ad hoc state, being organized instead within preventive and evidence-based systems; systems that assign the responsibility of risk identification, mitigation, and monitoring to public structures and specialized institutions.

4-2. The Necessity of Institutional Coordination and the Redistribution of Responsibilities

One of the most significant consequences of transitioning to collective ethics is the redefinition of the map of responsibilities and the

necessity of coordination among various institutions. Relying on individual ethics and fragmented, sectoral views in the domain of fetal health causes obvious gaps in the performance of duties by relevant institutions, as well as fluctuations in the line of interaction between these institutions and the individuals concerned. However, fetal health is not the result of a single institution or a specific agent, but rather the outcome of the coordinated action of a set of policymaking institutions, the health system, the social welfare system, the educational system, and the media. Collective ethics dictates that responsibility be redistributed from the individual level to the institutional level, with each institution held accountable in proportion to its power, authority, and impact.

This redistribution of responsibility carries important practical consequences: first, preventing the moral blame of mothers or placing them in moral dilemmas in situations where structural factors play a dominant role; second, increasing the accountability of public institutions for policy and structural failures; and third, enhancing the efficiency of the health system through institutional synergy and cross-sectoral policymaking. In the absence of this coordination model, even the most advanced therapeutic interventions will be unable to compensate for fundamental inequalities in achieving the goal of fetal health. Therefore, collective ethics serves as a normative framework and, beyond that, a practical guide for designing a fair, preventive, and dignity-centered health governance regarding mothers and fetuses.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article demonstrated that continued exclusive reliance on individual ethics in explaining and guaranteeing fetal health faces serious conceptual and functional limitations when

confronting contemporary socio-biological complexities. Fetal health is not merely the product of individual choices and actions by the mother, medical staff, or other family and societal actors, but rather the outcome of a networked interaction of institutional, structural, social, economic, and cultural factors that take shape across various levels of policymaking, the health system, and socio-cultural platforms. Therefore, the transition from individual ethics to collective ethics must be recognized as a necessary response to the multi-level realities of health and an endeavor to align moral responsibility with the actual distribution of power and influence in society.

The descriptive findings of the present research indicate that collective ethics, without denying the importance of individual ethics, provides a complementary and efficient framework for redefining responsibility toward the realization of fetal health. Within this framework, responsibility is redistributed from the individual level to the institutional level, and institutions that play a role in shaping pregnancy conditions, access to health services, the economic and social security of mothers, and the management of environmental risks are recognized as accountable moral agents. This redistribution of responsibility prevents the unfair moral blaming of individuals under unequal structural conditions and enables the design of preventive, fair, and evidence-based policies.

The examination of various levels of institutional responsibility showed that achieving fetal health necessitates coordination among macro policymaking, the efficiency of the health system, and the roles played by educational, research, media, and supportive institutions, such that in the absence of this institutional coordination, even the most advanced therapeutic interventions will be unable to compensate for fundamental inequalities and structural risks. Therefore, collective ethics serves as a normative-practical approach and a guide for health

governance, wherein health justice, institutionalized prevention, and structural support for pregnant mothers take center stage.

Consequently, the transition to collective ethics regarding fetal health extends beyond a theoretical choice, representing a moral, social, and policy necessity commensurate with the requirements of contemporary societies, which can provide the foundation for more humane, just, and forward-looking policies in the realm of reproductive health. Recognizing institutional responsibility in this domain will constitute a fundamental step in simultaneously safeguarding the dignity of both mother and fetus and guaranteeing their right to health as one of the most fundamental human rights in contemporary society.

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The Environmental Ethical Crisis and Islamic Mysticism's Solutions for It*

Mohammad Soori¹  Mehdi Zakeri² 

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Research Institute of Philosophy and Theology,
Islamic Sciences and Culture Academy, Qom, Iran (**Corresponding Author**).
soori@isca.ac.ir

2. Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Farabi College, University of Tehran, Qom, Iran.
zaker@ut.ac.ir

Abstract

Environmental ethics is an area of ethics that faces two fundamental challenges. On the one hand, moral responsibility in other domains can be explained based on respecting the rights of human beings who possess rights; however, regarding the environment, the object of morality in this domain is human individual or collective behavior toward the environment. The question is: how can a status be established for the environment such that human beings have a moral responsibility toward it? On the other hand, the environmental crisis is essentially a consequence of human arrogance toward nature. This arrogance is rooted in an anthropocentric and dominating worldview, which stems from the notion that God created the heavens and the earth for human utility and dominion, and after creation, placed humanity as the master of all

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creatures. Islamic mysticism can address these two challenges. On the one hand, by presenting the theory of love for God and, consequently, love for all creation—including nature and the environment—Islamic mysticism teaches humans to love the environment and, just as a lover never harms the beloved, to care for and nurture the environment. On the other hand, by introducing the environment (inanimate nature, plants, and animals) as a manifestation of God, it helps secure the moral status and dignity of the environment. Furthermore, by rejecting the anthropocentrism of creation, Islamic mysticism interprets the station of human vicegerency of God not as ownership of the environment, but as its preservation, considering humans as guardians and responsible stewards of the universe.

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Introduction

In past intellectual and ethical schools of thought, human beings were not the only entities considered valuable; all components of nature, including animals, plants, and even inanimate objects, were deemed valuable and held sanctity and reverence. The entire universe was regarded as the creation of a Wise Creator who created everything according to His wisdom and placed it in its proper position. This view was not unique to monotheistic religions; other religions and non-religious schools also shared it (Eslami, 2013, p. 8). Among these, the Quran introduces animals as beings possessing comprehension and social life: «وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَلُكُمْ ... ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ» "There is no creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its wings, except that they are communities like you... Then to their Lord they will be gathered" (Quran 6:38), and it considers the entire nature as conscious and glorifying God: «تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ» "The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them glorify Him, and there is not a thing except that it glorifies [God] with His praise, but you [humans] do not understand their glorification" (Quran 17:44).

In contrast, in the modern era, nature loses its value, and the world becomes disenchanted. In this period, humanity is placed at the center of the universe, and life—or at least its superior and valuable rank—is exclusively attributed to human beings; consequently, other creatures are deemed worthless. Based on this shift in attitude, humanity, as the only rational being on earth, claims the right to take charge of its administration and manipulate it at will. From this perspective, nature and the living creatures within it are reduced to mere instruments for satisfying human needs, and the goal of science shifts from Aristotelian truth-seeking to the domination of the universe. At the end of the Renaissance and on the threshold of the

modern era, a clear and influential exemplar of anthropocentrism and the instrumental view of nature is Francis Bacon. Bacon explicitly regards humanity as the master of nature and presents the purpose of knowing natural laws as achieving dominion over it. He views nature as God's artifact, indicative of God's power, yet lacking any trace of a divine aspect within it (cf. Karbassizadeh & Shiravand, 2014, p. 476).

Bacon's perspective was pursued by subsequent thinkers and determined the future status of nature and the policies governing human behavior toward it. Descartes drove a wedge between humans and animals, denying the existence of a soul in other living creatures and reducing them to automata that operate meticulously yet without the need for a soul (Descartes, 1965, pp. 228–230). Kant advanced along this same path, establishing reason as the ultimate end and axis of value in ethics on the one hand, while denying the presence of reason in animals on the other (Kant, 2015, p. 93). Thus, according to Kant, humanity has duties solely toward other rational beings as independent ends, whereas animals and other components of nature possess no intrinsic value and serve merely as instruments for human ends; any obligations we may have regarding nature and animals stem from our duties toward other human beings.

Such attitudes persisted to the extent that some thinkers imagined certain animals or plants to be superfluous, believing that humanity must reform nature and purge it of redundant fauna and flora. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, manipulation of nature was facilitated; the earth's forests rapidly turned into deserts, factory toxic waste polluted the seas, and their dense smoke turned the blue skies gray (cf. Eslami, 2013, pp. 11–12).

Lynn White, in his famous and influential article "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" (Pojman, 2005, vol. 1), argues that the environmental crisis in the West is rooted in Judeo-Christian

thought, according to which humans are chosen and serve as masters of nature. This biblical doctrine states that humans were created in the image of God: *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him"* (Genesis 1:26–27; Siyar, 2014, p. 129). Alongside this gospel teaching that humans, following sin, were driven out of paradise to earth and condemned to live in this place of exile: *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned"* (The New Testament, 1895, p. 248, Romans 5:12), an anthropocentric outlook has been engendered in Judaism and Christianity, according to which humanity is permitted to manipulate nature at will.

Regardless of whether we accept or reject the existence and role of such a Judeo-Christian interpretation in the environmental crisis, the claim that the human environment has gradually faced destruction, and that anthropocentrism and the notion of human superiority over other creatures have played a fundamental role in this crisis, cannot be denied. In the second half of the twentieth century, alarm bells regarding the state of the environment began to ring, as thinkers warned about the fate of the environment and animals, gradually giving rise to environmental ethics. Regarding the formation of environmental ethics, there are three conceptions: first, our behavior toward the environment is a function of how we think about it and the status and position we attribute to it. Second, the current environmental crisis demonstrates that our mode of thinking about the environment is incorrect and has failed to protect it by assigning an improper status to it. Third, to recover the environment and resolve the crisis, we must change the mode of thinking and attitude that led to

it. However, this change in perspective and the establishment of a system of environmental ethics requires a foundation that, on the one hand, considers an appropriate status for the environment, and on the other hand, possesses an acceptability that can encourage human beings to follow this ethics. It appears that Islamic mysticism possesses these two features. Firstly, Islamic mysticism has gained immense appeal in the contemporary period, as evidenced by the growing number of people who become interested in or convert to Islam through this path. Secondly, we demonstrate in this article that some of the fundamental doctrines of Islamic mysticism can provide an appropriate moral status for the environment.

1. Solutions of Islamic Mysticism

Three fundamental doctrines of Islamic mysticism can serve as a foundation for establishing environmental ethics to help resolve the environmental crisis. The first doctrine is the transformation of the relationship between humans and God from a relationship of servitude into a relationship of love among early mystics. The second doctrine is that the entire universe is the manifestation (Tajalli) of the Truth, and such a status necessitates a specific mode of behavior toward the world. The third doctrine is the doctrine of divine vicegerency (Khilafah) and the Perfect Human (Insan al-Kamil), according to which the Perfect Human is both the intermediary of grace and entrusted with the duty of preserving and protecting all creatures. All three doctrines ultimately trace back to the specific understanding that Muslim mystics hold regarding the relationship between humans and God.

1-1 The Doctrine of Love

What has traditionally existed in the minds of us Muslims regarding the relationship between human beings and God is that we are

servants of God and God is our Master. In other words, the relationship between us and God is one of servitude and worship: we are the servants and God is the Worshipped; we are slaves and God is the Lord. This relationship is one-sided, meaning that God commands and we obey, and this constitutes our greatest honor in the station of His servitude. This theme has also appeared in religious texts, and the mindset of us Muslims has been shaped accordingly. We must follow God's commands so that, in return, we may enjoy divine reward and attain felicity. In the Holy Quran, numerous verses emphasize the relationship of servitude between God and man. For instance, God says: "O mankind, worship your Lord" ("يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ"), (Quran 2:21), and He also says: "So prostrate to God and worship [Him]" (Quran 53:62). This subject appears even more explicitly in the Holy Quran. God states: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me" ("فَأَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا"), (Quran 51:56). However, alongside this one-sided relationship, Muslim mystics proposed another relationship as well.

The numerous spiritual exercises and mystical experiences undergone by Muslim mystics over long periods enabled them to comprehend matters from the Holy Quran and other religious texts, such as the traditions of the Prophet and Imam Ali, which were not so evident to others. One of these matters is "divine love or affection," which Muslim mystics heavily emphasize and consider to be derived from verse 54 of Surah Al-Ma'idah. In this verse, God states: "O you who have believe, whoever of you turns back from his religion—God will bring forth a people He loves and who love Him" "يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا", (Quran 5:54). There are many opinions in the exegesis of this verse, including regarding the identity of those "other people," but the most significant inference Muslim mystics drew from this verse pertains to the final part where

God acknowledges that "He loves them and they love Him." Unlike servitude, loving is a two-way relationship. In a relationship based on servitude, we could only be obedient to God without being able to command Him, whereas in a relationship based on friendship and love, we too can love God and be in love with Him.

Although this interpretation of the verse did not initially provoke a negative reaction among the devout, as mystics gradually began using the word "love" ('ishq) to express the relationship between human beings and God, numerous negative reactions emerged. The primary objection raised against the mystics was, first, that in its etymological root, love was coined to express the relationship between a man and a woman, and applying it to humans and God constitutes a form of disrespect toward the Divine Realm. Second, since words and terms pertaining to God are restricted (tawqifi) and must be issued by the Lawgiver, we cannot use the term love—which has not been employed in religious texts—to describe the relationship with God (Pourjavady, 2003, vol. 7, pp. 385–386).

The application of the word love by mystics to express the relationship with God and to consider humanity and God as lover and beloved led to a situation where the entire collection of states, emotions, and consequences of love that arise for human beings was also envisioned and explained regarding God. In other words, once we establish that a lover-beloved relationship exists between God and His servant, we must accept the implications of love within the loving servant. For instance, the difficulties that lie in the path of the lover to attain the beloved also exist for the servant who loves God. For example, the lover becomes restless and sleepless, and life departs from its natural routine. Sa'di Shirazi uses the expression "yellow-facedness" (ruy-zardi) to describe the states of the lover: "Did you see how yellow-facedness resulted from the claim of love?" (Sa'di Shirazi,

2006, p. 1004). This term "yellow-facedness" symbolizes all the hardships that befall the lover on the way to reaching the beloved. Love creates troubles for the lover both outwardly and inwardly. As an example of outward troubles, one can point to the reproaches of those around them, yet none of these reproaches matter to the lover, and this issue goes so far that the lover is accused of madness and insanity by others. Perhaps this tradition (hadith) of the Prophet who stated: «أَكْثَرُوا ذِكْرَ اللَّهِ حَتَّى يَقُولُوا مَجْنُونٌ» "Remember God so much that others say, 'He is mad'" (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, 1996, vol. 18, p. 195) refers precisely to this stage of divine love.

Love also brings about changes within the lover, among which is the expansion of love. If up to this stage only the beloved mattered and was sacred to the lover, now all attachments related to the beloved also become sacred to him—anyone and anything crafted by the beloved or in some way connected to the beloved. In the story of Layla and Majnun, Majnun remarks at one point: "I pass by the dwellings, the dwellings of Layla, kissing this wall and that wall. (أَمُرُّ عَلَى الدِّيَارِ دِيَارِ لَيْلَى / أَقْبَلُ ذَا الْجِدَارِ وَذَا الْجِدَارِ / وَمَا حُبُّ الدِّيَارِ شَغَفَنَ قَلْبِي / وَلَكِنْ حُبُّ مَنْ سَكَنَ الدِّيَارِ) It is not love for the dwellings that has captivated my heart, but rather love for the one who dwells in the dwellings" (Qays ibn Mulawwah, 1979, p. 131). In our discussion as well, God possesses creations and artifacts. When an individual falls in love with God, these creations and artifacts also become the objects of this person's love. In our mystical literary tradition, among these creations, humans, animals, and plants have received the greatest attention. One who has reached the stage of divine love naturally loves all humans, animals, plants, and generally the entire nature; this very love prevents the mystic from making any inappropriate or undue interference in nature to the extent possible.

We have numerous anecdotes regarding the compassionate treatment of animals and plants by Muslim mystics. For instance, one of the companions of the Prophet named Abu Darda (died: 653 CE), who is counted among the early mystics in our mystical heritage (Abu Nu'aym, 1979, vol. 1, pp. 208–227), whenever he saw children shooting sparrows with bows and arrows, would run after them, buy the sparrows from the children, set them free, and tell them, "Sparrows, go and live" «وَعَنْ أَبِي الدَّرْدَاءِ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَشْتَرِي الْعَصَافِيرَ مِنَ الصَّبِيَّانِ فَيُرْسِلُهُنَّ وَيَقُولُ: «اذْهَبْنَ فَعِيشْنَ» And on the authority of Abu al-Darda', that he used to buy sparrows from the children, set them free, and say: 'Go and live.'" (Ibn Sa'd, 2001, vol. 4, p. 354). In another anecdote narrated about Sayyid Ahmad Rifa'i (died: 1182 CE), the founder of the Rifa'iyyah tariqa, it is related that once when he wanted to go to the mosque to perform prayer, he noticed a cat sleeping on the sleeve of his garment. He waited for it to wake up, but the cat did not wake, and the time for prayer was growing short. Rifa'i cut off his own sleeve with scissors, put on the sleeveless garment, and went to the mosque. When he returned home, he saw that the cat had left. He picked up the sleeve, sewed it back onto his garment, and said, "Nothing significant has happened" «وَقِيلَ: إِنَّ هَرَّةً نَامَتْ عَلَى كُمِ الشَّيْخِ وَجَاءَ وَقْتُ الصَّلَاةِ فَقَصَّ كُمَهُ وَلَمْ يَزْعَجْهَا وَعَادَ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ فَوَجَدَهَا قَدْ قَامَتْ فَوَصَلَ الْكُمَ بِالثَّوْبِ وَخَيْطَهُ وَقَالَ: مَا تَغْيِيرٌ» A cat fell asleep on the sleeve of the Sheikh, and the time for prayer arrived. He cut his sleeve so as not to disturb it, returned from the prayer and found that it had stood up, attached the sleeve back to the garment and sewed it, and said: 'Nothing has changed (Al-Subki, 1964, vol. 6, p. 24).

Regarding plants as well, there are many such anecdotes. Some mystics would not uproot or consume living plants, believing them to be living entities and glorifiers of the Truth. They would only make use of a plant once it had dried and was no longer alive. For

instance, Tusi (1957) in *Jami' al-Sitin*, in his exegesis of Surah Yusuf, recounts a narrative that serves as a fitting witness to our discussion. In this anecdote, Ibrahim ibn Shayban al-Kirmanshahi (died: 941 CE)—one of the great mystics of Kermanshah and a student of Abu Abdallah al-Maghribi (died: 912 CE)—relates: *"One day, I went out to the desert with Abu Abdallah al-Maghribi. I plucked a plant by its stalk, played with it for a bit, and then threw it away. Abu Abdallah al-Maghribi turned to me and said: 'Why did you do this? By disregarding and disrespecting the life of this plant, you have committed five errors: First, you engaged in playful amusement and a futile act. Second, this plant was alive and glorifying the Truth; you took its life, and the glorification of the Truth was severed, whereas "and there is not a thing except that it glorifies [God] with His praise" (Quran 17:44). [Note: the verse citation in the text refers to Quran 17:44, though cited as Muhammad: 13 in the source]]. Third, you are a prominent Sufi, and others imitate your actions; thus, you led others astray in a way. Fourth, you plucked that stalk without any need. Fifth, you threw that stalk away and derived no benefit from it."* Generally speaking, causing no harm to humans, animals, plants, and the environment was an axiomatic principle for Muslim mystics, and they could conceive of nothing other than this.

After being introduced by the mystics, the doctrine of love gradually influenced ordinary Muslims to varying degrees, gained widespread acceptance, and found its way into the realms of literature and art. Abundant evidence of this doctrine's impact can be found in literary works. For example, when Sa'di says:

I am happy with the world because the world is happy through Him;

I am in love with the entire universe because the entire universe belongs to Him (Sa'di Shirazi, 2006, p. 577)

The expression "I am in love with the entire universe" precisely evokes this very doctrine (for further insight into the doctrine of

love among early mystics and the course of its evolution, see: Pourjavady, 2007).

1-2. The Doctrine of Manifestation (Tajalli)

The mystics consider God to be an absolute reality beyond any determination and individuation, while viewing the universe as determined multiplicities and limited individuations. Therefore, to explain the relationship between the absolute Essence and the limited individuations and multiplicities of the universe, they propound the doctrine of manifestation and appearance. The meaning of God being absolute from individuations is that God, in the station of absoluteness, encompasses all individuations and perfections of existing things; however, in this station, no individuation exists distinct from another in such a way as to restrict the absolute Essence. In other words, in the station of absoluteness, none of the perfections take precedence over another. Then, whenever these perfections become manifest and reach the stage of tajalli, multiplicities emerge which are in fact the manifestations and appearances of that very single Reality. The meaning of appearance and manifestation is not that something separates from the Divine Essence and causes the generation of existents that possess meaning parallel to the existence of the Truth; rather, the very attributes and perfections that were present in a concentrated manner within the absolute Essence of the Truth unfold, and these multiplicities are His own states and appearances. Shams al-Din Lahiji (died: 1506 CE) writes in his commentary on Golshan-e Raz: "Know that the Essence of the Truth, by virtue of His manifestation and appearance in the loci of manifestation, is identical to all things, and all things exist through the Truth and are nonexistent without the Truth" (Lahiji, 2018, p. 525).

It is necessary to note here that what is intended is the

ontological meaning of the term *tajalli*, which corresponds to the downward arc (*qaws al-nuzul*) and relates to the external world, being independent of the mystic's perception and intuition. The term *tajalli* in the expression of the mystics has another meaning as well, which pertains to the upward arc and is an epistemological term; there is no need to explain that meaning here (for further study, see: Yazdanpanah, 2009, pp. 216–229).

Based on the doctrine of *tajalli*, all creatures are manifestations and appearances of God and possess no existence distinct from the Essence of the Truth. This matter is not exclusive to a specific creature; it includes animate and inanimate entities as well as the entire nature. All creatures are the various loci of manifestation for the singular names of the Truth; the only difference among creatures is that each is the manifestation of a divine name, such as the Living (*Al-Hayy*), the Knowing (*Al-'Alim*), and the Capable (*Al-Qadir*). Therefore, one who believes in this doctrine considers the entire universe to be the manifestation and appearance of God and holds it in reverence; animate and inanimate entities do not differ for him inasmuch as all are appearances and manifestations of God. The corollary of respecting creatures is neither killing living beings beyond the measure permitted by God nor altering and destroying nature beyond permissible limits.

This doctrine of the mystics does not remain merely at the level of theory; rather, it is also evident in the accounts of the lives of mystics and Sufis that have reached us, some of which we alluded to earlier. Numerous accounts exist in various sources that narrate the harmlessness of mystics toward animals—ranging from the smallest harms to killing and consuming animals (to see a number of these accounts, see: Pourjavady, 2010, pp. 56–59). One of the famous anecdotes in this regard is the account recorded by 'Attar Nishapuri in *Tadhirat al-*

Awliya concerning Bayazid Bastami (died: 874 CE), who is said to have unknowingly brought two ants with him from Hamadan to Bastam. When he realized this, he returned to Hamadan and placed the ants right back where they had been.

Harmlessness toward animals can have two possible reasons. It is possible that the care for animals stems from the code of chivalry (*javanmardi*); and it may stem from the overflow of love for God onto His manifestations and appearances. In support of the second probability, one can cite an anecdote by Ahmad Ghazali in *Sawanih*: "Majnun had not eaten food for several days. A gazelle fell into his snare. He treated it honorably and set it free. When asked: 'Why did you do this?' he said: 'Something of Layla remains within it; cruelty is unbecoming'" (Ghazali, 1980, pp. 22–23). This anecdote points to a state of love wherein the lover sees something resembling the beloved in whatever he gazes upon. The mystic beholds the pervading of the divine name "Living" in animals, and just as Majnun, upon seeing the eyes of the gazelle, is reminded of Layla and sets it free, the mystic likewise, upon seeing animals, is reminded of the divine Beloved and neither harms nor kills them (cf. Pourjavady, 2010, p. 59).

Another aspect of refraining from destroying animals and plants can be gleaned from the anecdote previously narrated about Ibrahim ibn Shayban al-Kirmanshahi and his master, Abu Abdallah al-Maghribi. In this anecdote, Abu Abdallah al-Maghribi considers the pointless plucking of plants an error because, like humans and other animals, they glorify their Lord, and such glorification necessitates a degree of consciousness and awareness. The ruling that animals and plants glorify God based on the aforementioned noble verse—and therefore possess consciousness—is also observable in other mystical texts (including: Mustamli Bukhari, 1984, pp. 703–706) (cf. Pourjavady, 2008, pp. 7–8). However, this glorification is not exclusive to living beings; inanimate

objects (jamadat) also glorify God. Rumi (Masnavi-ye Ma'navi, Book 3, verses 1022–1024) has composed thus:

When you move toward the realm of the inanimate,
How can you become privy to the souls of inanimate things?
From the inanimate, you journey toward the world of spirits,
And hear the clamor of the universe's constituent parts.
Openly, the glorification of inanimate things will come to you,
And the whisperings of [false] allegorical interpretations will not
carry you away.

It is true that mystics primarily cite noble Quranic verses as the basis for their belief in the glorification by all creatures, but in elucidating this belief, they draw upon the doctrine of manifestation and appearance (tajalli). Regarding the glorification of creatures, Ibn 'Arabi states: "According to us, there is no silent existent in existence; rather, all of them praise God" (Ibn 'Arabi, 1994, vol. 12, p. 324).

1-3. The Doctrine of Divine Vicegerency (*Khilafah*)

The doctrine of divine vicegerency relates to the issue of environmental ethics in two respects. First, this Quranic doctrine might, according to certain interpretations, engender the notion that human beings, in the station of God's vicegerent, possess the right to any form of manipulation in the universe—an interpretation similar to that which in Christianity became the source of the claim that anthropocentrism and the assertion of human mastery over the universe caused reckless human intervention in nature and the destruction of the environment. However, based on mystical interpretation, such a notion is incorrect. On the other hand, the mystical doctrine of human divine vicegerency entails that the divine vicegerent must be the protector of the environment.

In itself and through its connection with the doctrine of the Perfect Human (*Insan al-Kamil*) and the divine trust, the doctrine of divine vicegerency possesses numerous details that addressing them lies beyond the scope of this article. Here, it suffices to examine it solely from the aspect relevant to environmental ethics. The first point regarding this doctrine is that, in mystical exegesis, the station of divine vicegerency is not a rank that God has bestowed upon all human beings; rather, it is exclusive to the Perfect Human. Ibn 'Arabi believes that only the Perfect Human is worthy of being God's vicegerent, and the only commonality between the imperfect human—who possesses animal attributes—and the Perfect Human is resemblance in physical form, not in the meaning of perfection (Ibn 'Arabi, 1990, vol. 1, p. 12). The characteristic of the Perfect Human, who is also expressed by titles such as the "Comprehensive Being" (*kawn-e jami'*) and the "Axis of the Universe" (*qutb-e 'alam*), is that he is the most perfect locus of manifestation for the Most Beautiful Divine Names (*al-asma al-husna*) and the complete mirror of God. The Perfect Human is the manifestation of the Greatest Name of God, while other creatures are the loci of manifestation for His other universal and particular names.

Among the characteristics of the divine vicegerent and the Perfect Human is that he is the intermediary between the Truth and creation, through whom the grace of existence reaches creatures from the Exalted Truth (Ibn 'Arabi, 1988, p. 35). Furthermore, the creatures of the universe are subjugated to him, and he has the capacity to manipulate and administer the universe (Ibn 'Arabi, 1987, p. 199). Yet his most crucial characteristic is that God preserves the world and its inhabitants through him. Ibn 'Arabi writes: "*The Perfect Human for the universe is like the bezel of a ring upon which an inscription is engraved, whereby the treasury of existence is preserved; therefore, he has been named the vicegerent*"

of the Truth, because the Creator of existence, under the shadow of his existence, preserves the universe and its inhabitants. Thus, the universe shall endure as long as the Perfect Human exists within it" (Ibn 'Arabi, 1987, pp. 48–50).

From these characteristics, it becomes abundantly clear that in the mystical depiction, although the divine vicegerent—who is termed the Perfect Human—possesses the power to manipulate and administer the universe and the universe is subjugated to him, he is nonetheless the protector of the universe, and God preserves the world through him. Therefore, even if this station is extended to other humans in proportion to the perfections they acquire—whereby they become the loci of manifestation for one or more of the names of the Divine Presence—their proper status, by virtue of succeeding the Exalted Truth and acquiring the Most Beautiful Names, is to safeguard and protect the world, not to destroy and corrupt it.

Conclusion

We demonstrated in this article that in order to resolve the environmental crisis, we must change the mindset and attitude that led to it. Islamic mysticism can, on the one hand, establish an appropriate moral status for the environment and, on the other hand, possesses an acceptability that can encourage human beings to follow this ethics; thus, by altering our mode of thinking and attitude toward the environment, it can help resolve the crisis. Among the doctrines of Islamic mysticism, the three doctrines of love, tajalli (manifestation), and divine vicegerency can provide an adequate moral foundation for the environment. Based on the doctrine of love, Islamic mysticism arouses love for all of God's creations within us, demanding that we human beings become friends and supporters of plants, animals, and objects, treating them with affection and avoiding causing them harm. Furthermore, based on the doctrine of tajalli, by introducing the

environment (inanimate nature, plants, and animals) as the manifestation of God, Islamic mysticism helps secure the moral status and dignity of the environment; and through the doctrine of divine vicegerency, by rejecting the anthropocentrism of creation, it interprets the station of human vicegerency not as ownership of the environment, but as its preservation, considering humans as guardians and responsible stewards of the universe. Promoting these doctrines of Islamic mysticism, which are also manifested in the lifestyle and practice of Muslim mystics, can bring about a change in perspective toward the environment and resolve the crisis.

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