

In the Name of Allah

# Horizons of Thought

A Semi- annual Journal on Islamic Thoughts and Teachings

Volume.2, No.2, Fall & Winter 2016-17

## Editorial Board:

**Dr. Muhammad Legenhausen**

Professor, IKI

**Dr. Abulfazl Sajedi**

Professor, IKI

**Dr. Muhammad Fana'i**

Professor, IKI

**Dr. Ali Mesbah**

Associate professor, IKI

**Dr. Sayed Ahmad Rahnamaei**

Associate Professor, IKI

IKI

Jomhuri Eslami Blvd.,  
Amin Blvd., Qom, Iran.

PO Box: 37185-186

Tel: +98 25-32113481

Fax: +98 25-32934483

[www.nashriyat.ir](http://www.nashriyat.ir)

[www.iki.ac.ir](http://www.iki.ac.ir)



**Imam Khomeini Educational and  
Research Institute**

**Director in Charge**

*IKI*

**Manager in Charge**

*Aboulhassan Haghani*

**Editor in Chief**

*Sayed Ahmad Rahnamaei*

**Coordinator**

*Mohammad Sadegh Sajedi*

**Page Setup**

*Amir Hosein Nikpour*

**Comptroller**

*Hamid Khani*

[Nashriyat.ir/SendArticle](http://Nashriyat.ir/SendArticle)

## *Horizons of Thought*

### **In Brief**

*Horizons of Thought* is a semi-annual academic journal of Islamic thoughts, Islamic teachings, and Islamic studies by a major emphasis on Islamic humanities. The issues and subjects dealt with in this journal are as follow:

- 1) Philosophy of religion from the view point of Islam.
- 2) Philosophy of science from the view point of Islam.
- 3) The history of Islamic thought from the doctrinal, social, legal, political, and economic aspects.
- 4) Critical analysis of western attitude towards Islam and Islamic studies
- 5) The foundations and principles of the humanities from the Islamic perspective, including: fundamental, theological, ontological, epistemological, anthropological, axiological, scientific, ecological, sociological, ethnological, psychological and educational foundations and principles.
- 6) Islamizing the humanities, including: psychology, education, economy, management, sociology, law, politics, culture and civilization.
- 7) Critical analysis of current prominent schools of thought in each areas of the humanities.
- 8) Conducting comparative researches on the above-mentioned areas from the aspects of the knowledge of subject, the knowledge of issue, teleology and methodology as well as precise scientific analysis of the results of studies and researches.

*Horizons of Thought* is pleased to welcome scientific research and achievements of researchers of the area of the Islamic humanities and appreciate any comments to further the journal's improvement. Please email all your academic manuscripts and comments to [www.Nashriyat.ir/SendArticle](http://www.Nashriyat.ir/SendArticle)

# Guides for Authors

## I. General Conditions for Manuscript Submission

1. The manuscripts should be research-based, analytical, logical, coherent, well-documented and well-reasoned and eloquently written in English language.
2. Authors are requested to type their manuscripts in *Word* software with the extension of Doc in *Times New Roman* typeface and send their manuscripts to this Website: <http://nashriyat.ir/SendArticle>.
3. The manuscripts should be written in at most 20 pages (250 words, per page). Sending incomplete articles must be seriously avoided.
4. The manuscript should include full name, educational level, full postal and email address, phone, fax number and affiliation of the author.
5. Submission of an article means that it has not been published inside or outside of the country and is not being considered for publication elsewhere.
6. Translated manuscripts should not be submitted. Critique of scientific articles and published books which contain noble topics or specific scientific points and are in line with demands of the academic society are publishable. Research papers will be given priority.

## II. Guidelines for Writing Manuscripts

1. The manuscripts should follow the system exemplified in the academic journals.
2. Each article must contain an abstract, key words, introduction, body, conclusion and references.
3. Abstract in a maximum of 150 words, should include title, research goal, method and research findings. Authors should refrain from including the table of contents, reviewing the content, giving evidence and making reference to any source.
4. Key words should include at most 7 items related to the content.
5. Introduction should include definition, literature review, significance of study, novelty of research, questions of primary and secondary importance, the outline of paper's general structure and paper's key concepts and terminology.

6. In organizing the body of the paper one of the conditions below should be met:

A new theory and a scientific finding should be offered;

New statement and explanation about a theory should be presented;

New reasoning about a theory should be suggested;

Thorough critique of a theory should be provided.

7. Conclusion should indicate descriptive findings about the research which should be presented in the form of brief statement. Avoid using subject matter, concluding, introductory issues, the structure of issue, reasoning, references, examples, and improper matters in the result section.

8. In bibliography all works (including Persian, Arabic, and Latin) referred to in the text must be listed in the reference list at the end of the manuscript in the following order:

- \* Books: Author's full name, (date of publication), book's name, (translation or research), time of publication, place of publication, publisher.
- \* Articles: Author's full name, (year, month or season of publication), title, name of journal, volume of journal, first and the last pages of manuscript.
- \* All references must be placed within the text as such: (author's name, the date of publication and page).

### **III. Notes**

1. The right of acceptance, rejection and revision of the manuscripts is reserved for the journal.
2. The author will be informed of submission, acceptance, and rejection at most after four month.
3. After acceptance of the manuscript, the right of publication is reserved and any transmission is permitted providing the journal's name is mentioned.
4. The author is subject to the content of the manuscripts which reflects the authors' thoughts.
5. The journal does not return the manuscripts and software after it has been reviewed.

# Table of Contents\_\_\_\_\_

**Foundations and Principles of Education in Islam / .....7**

*Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi*

**Opportunities and challenges for the transfer of . . . / ..... 23**

*Mohammad Hossein Mokhtari*

**Communicating with Young People in the West . . . / .....45**

*Hakimeh Biria*

**The Meaning and Nature of Religion / ..... 55**

*Ali Mesbah*

**Futuwwah in Islamic Culture and Mysticism / .....73**

*Mohammad Fanaei Eshkeviri*

**Encouragement of Youth to Religion in the Qur'an / .....87**

*Mohammad N. Saghaye Biria*



## Foundations and Principles of Education in Islam

**Late Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi**/ Professor and Ex-president of *IKI*

**Translated by Ali Mesbah**/ Associate Professor, *IKI*

**Received:** 2020/05/23

### Abstract

Visions and understandings about the nature and dimensions of human being, the objective(s) of education, and how human beings develop and advance toward the given objective(s) shape the foundations of education in every system of thought. Therefore, before elaborating on Islamic educational system, one has to determine its theoretical bedrocks and practical principles. The ultimate goal of Islamic education is to pave the way for maximal perfection of human beings, and its practical aims are understood in this direction. Deliberating upon the Islamic ideas about the true nature of human beings, their ontological dimensions, the goal of their creation, their ultimate perfection, and the way they have to move towards this end, the author has come up with twelve points as cornerstones of an Islamic education, as well as twelve practical principles.

**Keywords:** Islam, Education, Foundations, Principles, Human Nature, Creation, Perfection.

## Introduction

Each educational system is based on the idea and vision of its founders about a number of elements: the true nature and the ontological dimensions of human being, the objective(s) they consider for education, and their idea about how human beings develop and advance toward the given objective(s). In fact, these visions and understandings shape the foundations of education in every system of thought, even though they may not be consciously taken into consideration, or may not be explicitly mentioned.

Naturally, Islamic educational system is also based on a series of specific foundations, stemming from an Islamic vision about the aforementioned issues. Therefore, it is necessary for us to first and foremost pay attention to these theoretical bedrocks, and then explain educational practical principles on their basis before trying to elaborate on the Islamic educational system.

By deliberating upon the Islamic idea about the true nature of human beings, their ontological dimensions, the goal of their creation, their ultimate perfection, and the way they move towards this end, one is able to consider the following twelve points as cornerstones of an Islamic education. Of course, the ultimate goal of Islamic education is but preparing the ground for maximal perfection of human beings, and practical aims are understood in this direction.

## Theoretical Foundations of Education in Islam

1. **The True Nature of Human Being:** From an Islamic point of view, human being is not merely a corporeal organism, but rather possesses a celestial element that remains after the dispersion of body<sup>1</sup>, and lives forever, either with perpetual beatitude or eternal misery. In fact, human being is human because of one's soul, and body serves as a means of activity, or as a vehicle for action and motion; of course, the soundness and strength of an instrument is something that should be taken care of.

2. **The Position of Human Being in the World:** Human being, from amongst the creatures of this world, is blessed with certain bounties and capacities that differentiates it from others. Subtleties that exist in human



exterior and interior organs, especially in the brain and nervous system, and its unique psychological capabilities cannot be found in any other living organism. Due to these same characteristics, human being is able to manipulate natural events and to employ them in the service of its own progress and perfection. Bestowing such privileges upon human beings is a Divine veneration, as mentioned in the Qur'an.<sup>2</sup>

**3. Human being on a crossroad (between two infinities):** Powers and potentialities, which the Almighty Allah has bestowed upon humankind, are one's genetic and innate assets for moving forward towards the final goal. Nevertheless, putting these divine resources to work depends on one's own will, choice, decision, and selection. One can take advantage of these bounties to travel the path to the actual perfection and obtain eternal beatitude, as one can also abuse them and hence, journey toward slump and baseness so much so one becomes less worthy than animals<sup>3</sup>, and buys eternal misery for oneself. Therefore, the human route can be mapped between two infinities, one ascending to infinite perfection and beatitude, and the other crashing into infinite wretchedness and anguish.<sup>4</sup> So the ultimate human value and dignity is contingent upon choosing piety<sup>5</sup>, and hence, not all people would possess absolute and equal value, but rather believers and committed people who act properly, have positive value, and disbelievers who commit improper deeds gain negative value, each of whom have multilevel ranking.<sup>6</sup>

**4. The aim of the creation of humankind (Ultimate perfection):** Humankind is created with unique qualities in order to travel the path to perfection with free will and conscious choice<sup>7</sup>, to be worthy of receiving specific blessings bestowed upon one as a result of one's discretionary move, and to reach the position of proximity to God, accompanied by perpetual beatitude. And since such a journey must be done at one's discretion, there must be an opposite alternative path culminating in permanent misery and punishment.<sup>8</sup>

**5. Temporal world as a prelude to the hereafter:** Considering the aim of human creation, it becomes evident that one's life in this world is a limited and preparatory transience for self-realization, progress, and the objectification of

potentialities. The stable and eternal result of this life appears in the hereafter. If people choose, in this world, the direction of perfection, they will reside in the edifice of everlasting bounty and mercy, and if they choose the opposite, they will go to the place of interminable torment and decay. According to the Qur'an, this world is "the stage of trial"<sup>9</sup>, so that the righteous are differentiated from the transgressors, and in the hereafter, all will meet what they deserve.

**6. General means of movement:** Human ascent towards the summits of perfection and beatitude, or one's descent into the canyons of decay and destruction are the results of one's actions and behavior, whether internal (such as remembering God) or external. The most one acts freely and consciously, the most effective they will become upon one's destiny by accelerating the movement. Such behaviors notwithstanding, no ethical good or evil exists, and hence no reward or punishment is deserved.<sup>10</sup>

**7. Conditions for volitional movement:** Crystallizing one's ascending or descending movement, human volitional behaviors stem from one's instinctive and natural tendencies. Giving direction to such actions depends on knowing specific facts, believing in certain realities, and adopting special values.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, human external actions are contingent upon natural and social possibilities and the availability of outward conditions too.

**8. The bare minimum in effective choice:** Human primary behaviors (such as those in the age of infancy) stem from innate inclinations, information gathered through simple experiments, and the use of material conditions—which are provided without one's volition. This kind of behaviors—though not totally devoid of some sort of decision and choice—has no final effect on one's eternal beatitude or misery because they lack sufficient freedom and awareness. Gradually, behaviors become more complex, and fanning the flames of desires, acquiring knowledge and insights, and bringing about exterior means and conditions are more or less included in the domain of one's volition and choice. These conditions, therefore, pave the way for taking long and decisive steps, which comes about when a person achieves one's necessary cognitive development (the age of puberty

and duty). At this point, the minimum necessary condition for conscious choice—effectual in perpetual beatitude and misery—is attained, and an individual becomes subject to serious responsibilities.<sup>12</sup>

**9. The relation of individual differences with responsibilities:** Human individuals are not on a par regarding their God-given possessions (both physical abilities and psychological capabilities), as they vary in enjoying natural and social bounties as well as means for external activities. Such differences are the results of the cause-effect system that governs the world, and follows the wisely Divine plan.<sup>13</sup> The quantity and quality of responsibilities, and the vastness or narrowness of the scope for ascension or descension differs respectively. The general law is that everyone is responsible before God who has bestowed these bounties upon him/her<sup>14</sup> within the limits of one's capacity and capability<sup>15</sup>, and according to the scope of one's available choices and alternatives. Therefore, the extent of one's possible progress and perfection and the degree of one's potential relapse and regress would be symmetrical and proportionate.

**10. The effect of education (the role of teacher and educator):** Human beings have the opportunity to receive help from others in acquiring knowledge, learning values, and actualizing their potentialities in general, as well as correcting their mistakes and misdeeds. Thereof, the important role of teachers and educators become evident, because they are the ones who can broaden the range of one's knowledge and reasoning by teaching worthy knowledge and providing useful information<sup>16</sup>, and are able to assist their audience in choosing the right option, controlling their selfish desires, achieving moral virtues such as self-devotion and sacrifice, and in sum, to give them a hand to worship God. In this way, they grow to be precious means for applying the Divine goal in creating human beings, as well as taking long steps in the direction of their own perfection.<sup>17</sup>

**11. The inevitability of social life and its requisites:** People need to cooperate and coexist with their fellow human beings in order to be able to continue their living, meet their life needs, and fight various threats. Social life,

on its turn, rests on the division of labor, just distribution of benefits and products, laws and rulings, and an executing system for their implementation. Without such mechanisms, social life will be crippled by anarchy, and people are deprived of resources necessary for their journey toward perfection. On the other hand, the isolation of individuals makes their life miserable, or even impossible, as it leaves society without their cooperation, and both the consequences are against the expediency and rationale of the creation of humankind. Moreover, it is basically in the context of a social life that various efforts and conflicts become possible, and ordeals and decisions in different dimensions are given a chance.<sup>18</sup>

**12. Social responsibilities:** Since the path an individual travels during one's life is bilateral, and its direction depends upon the decision and choice made by the individual or community, there are always people who not only take steps against their own expediencies, toward misery and self-destruction, but also obstruct and hinder others from progress. They initiate various forms of injustices and aggressions, and if there is no effectual endeavor aiming at guiding the misled<sup>19</sup>, eliminating the mischief of aggressors, and standing up for the disadvantaged and victims, before long, aggression and misdeed will dominate the world, and there will remain no opportunity for philanthropists and those who are apt to advance towards perfection.<sup>20</sup> As a consequence, different sorts of social responsibilities are respectively determined for individuals, groups, and official departments of the government.

### **The Practical Principles of Education in Islam**

Based on the aforementioned foundations, one can conclude some general points for the quality of education, we call them here, “the practical principles of education” and they are as follow:

**1. An accurate appraisal of the material and spiritual needs:** The content of education should be arranged in a way that the instructed recognize the essentiality of the psychological and spiritual dimension of human being, and regards material necessities as means (and not ends).<sup>21</sup> At the same time, one has to avoid

extremism in ascetic advices which may terminate in bodily harms, or even sometimes psychological abnormalities; one should not forget observing sanity principles, physical education, and rationally calculated recreation.

2. **Provoking the sense of self-esteem and self-respect:** An educator should stimulate a sense of self-esteem and self-respect due to the unique position of human being amongst creatures, and exceptional bounties the Almighty God has bestowed upon humankind—whether physical and psychological, or external and social—as well as the dominance He has given to people over nature. A teacher, therefore, should make students cognizant of the fact that engaging in base actions is tantamount to soiling the jewel of humanity, and following selfish desires equals the enslavement and abatement of one's intellect and heavenly spirit.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, because bodily organs and psychic forces are trusts of God, the same as the external bounties; therefore, one's encounter with, and employment of, them has to be in accordance with the consent of their real owner, i.e. the Almighty God, so that His trust is not breached. A teacher and educator should also consider students as trusts of God, entrusted to him/her in order to be taught the best material by the best method and to be trained in the best manner.<sup>23</sup>

3. **Struggle against oblivion:** As humankind is constantly on a crossing, one leading to infinite advancement and the other to infinite relapse, the instructed should always be made attentive to the significance of his/her situation, so that one is not conceited by the prime blessings of God and the temporal bounties.<sup>24</sup> Such awareness prevents one both from being confused like some humanists who assume these privileges a reason for eternal pride, and from passing one's time and entire life with negligence and vanity.<sup>25</sup> Educators should also take advantage of the innate instincts of seeking self-interest and self-perfection, and avoiding harms in the process of speeding up one's move toward perfection, as it is apparent in the teachings of the Holy Qur'an<sup>26</sup> and the tradition of the infallibles (may God's peace be upon them).

4. **Vivifying God's remembrance:** Taking the goal of human creation, i.e. attaining God's proximity, into consideration, one has to vivify the remembrance

of God in the heart of the instructed, so that the student is provided with spiritual peace and serenity<sup>٧</sup>, as well as a direction-finder to determine and/or correct one's itinerary. This also can serve one to enhance one's actions by injecting into it a divine motivation.<sup>٧٨</sup>

**5. Exchange of finite with the infinite:** Considering the fact that the temporal life is a prelude to the hereafter, one should conclude two significant results: first, does not think of temporal pleasures and sufferings as cardinal; neither enamored with its joys, nor fear its pains.<sup>٧٩</sup> Secondly, one has to recognize the true value of every moment of one's life, because by spending them in doing what God desires, one can attain eternal beatitude, as exhausting them in ways antagonist to values will lead to eternal misery. Therefore, every moment of life is priceless, not comparable to the value of tons of gold and diamond.

**6. Fighting dependency:** Since one's perfection and eternal beatitude is solely determined by one's own willful activity<sup>٧٠</sup>, and even liability for intercession (Shafa'at) should also be acquired through proper deeds<sup>٧١</sup>, so the educator must revive the spirit of self-reliance and independence, reinforce a sense of responsibility and conscience, and struggle against encumberment, subjection, and subordination to others<sup>٧٢</sup>, and remind the instructed this point in all behaviors and encounters (i.e. in writing homework, etc.).

**7. Attentiveness toward freedom in action:** Considering the role of "free choice" in the human motion toward perfection, the instructed should be given the opportunity for freedom in action, instead of pushing him/her into passivity. An educator has to avoid making an imposition and infliction out of instructions and tutorials; instead, in cases that the expedience of the student necessitates an intervention by the educator, one has to be careful to do the job indirectly, so that the learner does not feel much pressure and limitation. For this reason, obligations should, as far as possible, accompany logical arguments and does not exceed the boundaries of guidance.

**8. Observing the principle of graduality:** Taking the graduality of human progress and perfection, whether natural or acquired, into account, a teacher and educator should always be mindful about what the students' age and

natural/social factors necessitate. Accordingly, one has to try to elevate the instructed gradually and step by step, without expecting swift and sudden jumps, as he/she must take intelligent measures to prevent them from excessive academic or self-control activities which might result in physical ailment or spiritual disorder.<sup>xx</sup>

**9. Flexibility and equilibrium:** Because of individual and group differences, necessary and rational flexibility should be observed in both programming curriculum and its enforcement. One has to also avoid insistence on rigid and monotonous schedules and those that does not make distinctions between different students, culminating in breaching their rights, and the frustration of most of them. Therefore, one has to take account of equilibrium as a principle.

**10. Giving priority to what is more important:** Educators/teachers play a significant role in growing young students and cultivating their potentialities. Bearing this in mind, they have to carefully take the expedience of each and every learner into account, as well as what is suitable for the whole of the Islamic society and the human society in general. Both curriculum planners and educators should steer clear of programs and courses that waste time and squander life, or record low compared to superior goals. They should pay more attention to issues more effective regarding human eternal wellbeing (e.g. Islamic beliefs and ethics), and teach them more suitably and more appealingly, and try to set themselves as good role models for the behavior of their students.

**11. Natural and social knowledge:** Social life is inevitable and has its requirements and obligations. On the other hand, material enjoyment is necessary for providing individual and social needs<sup>xxi</sup>, and for sustaining the dignity and honor of the Islamic society<sup>xxii</sup>. These facts reveal the necessity of introducing natural, mathematical, and social sciences to a curriculum, by delineating general and specialized syllabi, carefully taking into consideration students' age and mental requirements as well as society's needs and possibilities. It is worth mentioning that in all cases, the main goal, namely, proximity to the Almighty God has to be given special attention and vehemence. A pedagogue should never lose any opportunity for reviving divine motivations and transcendent values, and for

removing negligence and fighting egoism. In other words, all goals are to be dealt with as introductions to the ultimate end.

12. **Reinforcing a sense of responsibility toward social expediency:** The variety of social duties requires the educational system to be directed toward solidarity and altruism. Strengthening such virtues as cooperation, mutual aid, self-sacrifice, disinterestedness, benevolence, and seeking justice; and fighting vigorously such vices as selfishness, and indifference towards social expediencies should be high on the agenda of both those planning curricula and teachers/educators in treating students.<sup>73</sup> Special emphasis has to be put on cultivating in the instructed such morale as chivalry, combating injustice, struggling corruption, taking jihad against tyrants, and supporting the oppressed and the deprived. In this way, qualified and efficient people are trained for building an ideal society who can play their roles in actualizing the divine goals on earth.



## Endnotes

١. «وَوَفَّخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِي» (حجر: ٢٩ و ص: ٧٢); «ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ فَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِينَ» (مؤمنون: ١٤); «ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِهِ» (سجده: ٩); «فَلْيَتَوَقَّأَكُم مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ» (سجده: ١١).

*Sūrah H,ijr, Āyah 29 & Sūrah S,ād, Āyah 72*: “And I breathed into him of My spirit,” *Sūrah Mu'minum, Āyah 14*: “Then We produced him as [yet] another creature, so blessed is Allah, the best of creators,” *Sūrah Sajdah, Āyah 9*: “Then He proportioned him and breathed into him of His spirit,” and *Sūrah Sajdah, Āyah 11*: “Say, you will be taken away by the angel of death who has been charged with you, then you will be brought back to your Lord.”

٢. «وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا» (اسراء: ٧٠).

*Sūrah Isra', Āyah 70*: “Certainly We have honored the Children of Adam and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and given them an advantage over many of those We have created with a complete preference”.

٣. «وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ» (اعراف: ١٧٩); «إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ» (انفال: ٥٥).

*Sūrah A'rāf, Āyah 179*: “Certainly We have created for hell many of the jinn and humans: they have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; rather they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless.” *Sūrah Anfāl, Āyah 22 & 55*.

٤. «لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ» (تين: ٤-٦).

*Sūrah Tīn, Āyah 4-6*: “Certainly We created human in the best of forms; then We relegated him to the lowest of the low, except those who have faith and do righteous deeds. There will be an everlasting reward for them”.

٥. «إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اتَّقَاكُمْ» (حجرات: ٥٥).

*Sūrah H'ujurāt, Āyah 13*: “Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Godway among you”.

٦. «هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ» (آل عمران: ١٦٣); «وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَاتٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا» (انعام: ١٣٢، احقاف: ١٩); «فَمَنْهُمْ شَقِيٌّ وَسَعِيدٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ شَقُوا فَعَلِيَ النَّارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَشَهِيقٌ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَعَّالٌ لِمَا يُرِيدُ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ سَعِدُوا فَعَلِيَ الْجَنَّةِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ عَطَاءٌ غَيْرُ مَجْذُودٍ» (هود: ١٠٨-١٠٥).

*Sūrah Āl-'Imrān, Āyah 163*: “They have ranks with Allah,” *Sūrah An'am, Āyah 132 & Sūrah A'hqāf, Āyah 19*: “For everyone there are ranks in accordance with what they have done,” & *Sūrah Hūd, Āyah 105-108*: “...some of them will be wretched and [some] felicitous. As for the wretched, they shall be in the Fire: their lot therein will be groaning and wailing. They shall remain in it for as long as the heavens and the earth endure—except what your Lord may wish—indeed your Lord does whatever He desires. As for the felicitous, they will in paradise. They will remain in it for as long as the heavens and earth endure—except what your Lord may wish—an endless bounty”.

٧. «فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُكْفِرْ» (كهف: ٢٩); «لِيُهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَن بَيِّنَةٍ وَيَحْيِيَ مَنْ حَىٰ عَن بَيِّنَةٍ» (انفال: ٤٢); «إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا» (انسان / ٢).

*Sūrah Kahf, Āyah 29*: “...let anyone who wishes believe it, and let anyone who wishes disbelieve it,” and *Sūrah Anfāl, Āyah 42*: “...so that he who perishes might perish by a manifest

proof, and he who live may live on by a manifest proof,” & *Sūrah Insān, Āyah 2*: “Indeed We created man from the drop of a mixed fluid so that We may test him. So We made him endowed with hearing and sight”.

٨. «وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ» (بلد: ١٠) «أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ وَأَنْ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ». (يس: ٥٠-٦١)

*Sūrah Balad, Āyah 10*: “And [have We not] shown him the two paths [of good and evil]?” & *Sūrah Yāsīn, Āyah 60-61*: “Did I not exhort you, O children of Adam, saying, “Do not worship Satan. He is indeed your manifest enemy. Worship Me. That is a straight path”?

٩. «لَنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا» (هود: ٧؛ ملك: ٢)؛ «لَنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا» (كهف: ٧)؛ «وَلَنَبْلُوكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ» (الانبیاء: ٣٥).

*Sūrah Hūd, Āyah 7 & Sūrah Mulk, Āyah 2*: “...that He may test you [to see] which of you is best in conduct,” & *Sūrah Kahf, Āyah 7*: “...so that We may try them [to see] which of them is best in conduct,” & *Sūrah Anbiya’, Āyah 35*: “...and We will try you with ill and good by way of test, and to Us you will be brought back”.

١٠. «لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ» (بقره: ٢٨٦)؛ «وَقَبِطْ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُم لَا يَظْلُمُونَ» (آل عمران: ٢٥)؛ «يَجْزِي اللَّهُ كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ» (البراهيم: ٥) و ...

*Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 286*: “Whatever [good] it earns is to its benefit, and whatever [evil] it incurs is to its harm,” *Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān, Āyah 25*: “...and every soul shall be recompensed fully for what it has earned, and they will not be wronged,” & *Sūrah Ibrāhīm, Āyah 51*: “...so that Allah may reward every soul for what it has earned. & ”

١١. «إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا» (انسان: ٣)؛ «فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا» (الشمس: ٨).

*Sūrah Insān, Āyah 3*: “Indeed We have guided him to the way, be he grateful or ungrateful,” *Sūrah Shams, Āyah 8*: “And inspired it with [discernment between] its vices and virtues”.

١٢. «وَأَنْبَتُوا الْبَتَامَى حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النُّكَاحَ فَإِنْ اسْتَمْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ» (نساء: ٦).

*Sūrah Nisā’, Āyah 6*: “Test the orphans when they reach the age of marriage. Then if you discern in them maturity, deliver to them their property”.

١٣. «وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ» (الانعام: ١٦٥)؛ «وَاللَّهُ فَضَّلَ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي الرِّزْقِ» (نحل: ٧١)؛ «وَلَا تَتَمَوَّأُوا مَّا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ» (نساء: ٣٢) و ...

*Sūrah An‘ām, Āyah 165*: “...and raised some of you in rank above others so that He may test you in respect to what He has given you,” *Sūrah Nahl, Āyah 71*: “And Allah has granted some of you an advantage over others in [respect of] provision,” *Sūrah Nisā’, Āyah 32*: “Do not covet the advantage which Allah has given some of you over others;” etc.

١٤. «لَا تَكُلْفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا» (بقره: ٢٣٣)؛ «لَا يَكُلْفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا» (بقره: ٢٨٦)؛ «لَا يَكُلْفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا مَا آتَاهَا» (طلاق: ٧).

*Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 233*: “No one is to be tasked except according to its capacity;” *Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 286*: “Allah does not task anybody beyond its capacity,” *Sūrah T, alāq, Āyah 7*: “Allah does not task anybody except proportionate to what He has given them”.

١٥. «وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ عَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ» (نحل: ٩٣)؛ «ثُمَّ لَنَسْأَلَنَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ عَنِ النَّعِيمِ» (تكاثر: ٨)؛ «إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَالْبَصَرَ وَالْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا» (اسراء: ٣٦)؛ «وَقِفْوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ» (صافات: ٢٤).

Sūrah Nahl, Āyah 93: "...and you will surely be questioned concerning what you used to do," Sūrah Takāthur, Āyah 8: "Then, that day, you will surely be questioned concerning the blessing;" Sūrah Isrā', Āyah 36: "Indeed the hearing, the eyesight, and the heart—all of these are accountable;" Sūrah Saffāt, Āyah 24: "Stop them! For they must be questioned".

١٦. «هَلْ أَتَيْكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِي مِمَّا عَلَّمْتَ رُشْدًا» (كهف: ٦٤).

Sūrah Kahf, Āyah 66: "... May I follow you for the purpose that you teach me some of the probity you have been taught"?

١٧. قال رسول الله ﷺ لأمير المؤمنين: يا علي، لأن يهدي الله بك رجلاً خير لك مما طلعت عليه الشمس. وقال ﷺ: إن معلم الخير يستغفر له دواب الارض وحياتان البحر و كل ذى روح فى الهواء و جميع اهل السماء و الارض. و إن العالم و المتعلم فى الاجر سواء. و قال ﷺ: العالم و المتعلم شريكان فى الاجر: للعالم اجران، و للمتعلم اجر، و لا خير فى سوى ذلك. رك: بحار الانوار، عوالم، اصول كافي، بصائر الدرجات و ...

The Apostle of Allah told Amīr al-Mu'minīn, "O Ali! For sure, if Allah guided someone through you, it would be better for you than [the possession of] all that are under the sunshine." (Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 32, p.447, Ch. 12, No. 394 & Usūl al-Kāfi, vol. 5, p. 28); He also says, "The animals of earth, aquatic fishes, every living organism in the air, and all inhabitants of heavens and earth ask Allah forgiveness for a teacher who teaches goodness. And the scholar and the student are equal in their rewards." (Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 1, p.217, Ch. 6, No. 40 & Basā'ir al-Darājāt, p. 3); He also is narrated as saying, "The teacher and the student share the reward: there are two rewards for the teacher and one for the student, and there is no good in anything else." (Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 1, p.173, Ch. 1, No. 35), etc.

١٨. «وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ» (محمد: ٤)؛ «وَلِيَبْلُوَكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ» (محمد: ٣١)؛ «لِيَبْلُوَنَّ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ» (آل عمران: ١٨٦)؛ «وَلِيَبْلُوَكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَ بَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ» (بقره: ١٥٥)؛ «وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَ لِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ» و ... (آل عمران: ١٥٤)

Sūrah Muh,ammad, Āyah 4: "...but that He may test some of you by means of others;" Sūrah Muh,ammad, Āyah 31: "We will surely test you until We ascertain those of you who wage jihād and those who are patient;" Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān, Āyah 186: "You will surely be tested in your possessions and your lives;" Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 155: "We will surely test you with a measure of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits; and give good news to the patient;" Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān, Āyah 154: "...so that Allah may test what is in your breasts, and that He may purge what is in your hearts;" etc.

١٩. «وَلِتَكُنَ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ...» و ... (آل عمران: ١٠٤)

Sūrah Āl-i 'Imrān, Āyah 104: "There has to be a nation among you summoning to the good, bidding what is right, and forbidding what is wrong;" etc.

٢٠. «وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ» (بقره: ٢٥١) «وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهُدِمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَ بِيَعٌ وَ صَلَوَاتُ مَسَاجِدٍ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا». (حج: ٤٠)

Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 251: "Were it not for Allah's repelling the people by means of one another, the earth would surely have been corrupted;" Sūrah h,ajj, Āyah 40: "... Had not Allah repulsed the people from one another, ruin would have befallen the monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques in which Allah's Name is mentioned greatly".

٢١. «زَيْنَ النَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَ الْبَنِينَ وَ الثَّنَائِبِ الْمُنْتَهَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَ الْفِضَّةِ وَ الْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَ الْأَنْعَامِ وَ الْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حَسْبُ الْمَأْتَبِ» (آل عمران: ١٤)؛ «وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْعُرُورِ» (آل عمران: ١٨٥)؛ «وَمَا أَوْتِينَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ زِينَتُهَا وَ مَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَ أَبْقَى أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ». (قصص: ٤٠)

*Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān, Āyah 14*: “To mankind has been made to seem decorous the love of [worldly] desires, including women and children, accumulated piles of gold and silver, horses or mark, livestock, and farms. Those are the wares of the life of this world; but Allah—with Him is a good destination.” *Sūrah Āl-i ‘Imrān, Āyah 185*: “...The life of this world is nothing but the wares of delusion,” *Sūrah Qasas, Āyah 60*: “Whatever things you have been given are only the wares of the life of this world and its glitter, and what is with Allah is better and more lasting; will you not apply reason?”

٢٢. «قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكَّاهَا وَ قَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسَّاهَا»، «مَنْ كَرُمَتْ عَلَيْهِ نَفْسُهُ هَانَتْ عَلَيْهِ شَهَوَاتُهُ» (الشمس: ١٠٦-٩).

*Sūrah Shams: Āyah 9-10*: “One who purifies it [one’s soul] is certainly felicitous, and one who betrays it certainly fails.” Amīr al-mu’minīn says: “Whoever honors oneself, disregarding one’s desires becomes easy for him/her” (Ibn Abi-al-Hadīd’s exegesis on Nahj al-Balāghah, vol. 20, p. 99).

٢٣. «كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَ كُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ»، وَفِي رَسُولَةِ الْحَقُوقِ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ: «وَ أَمَّا حَقٌّ رَعِيَّتِكَ بِالْعِلْمِ فَإِنَّ تَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ إِنَّمَا جَعَلَ قِيَمًا لَهُمْ فِيمَا أَنْتَاكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَ فَتَحَ لَكَ مِنْ خَزَائِنِهِ، فَإِنَّ أَحْسَنْتَ فِي تَعْلِيمِ النَّاسِ وَ لَمْ تَخْرُقْ بِهِمْ وَ لَمْ تَضْجُرْ عَلَيْهِمْ زَادَكَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَ إِنْ أَنْتَ مَنَعْتَ النَّاسَ عِلْمَكَ أَوْ خَرَفْتَ بِهِمْ عِنْدَ طَلْبِهِمُ الْعِلْمَ مِنْكَ كَانَ حَقًّا عَلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ أَنْ يَسْلِبَكَ الْعِلْمَ وَ يَهَاءَهُ وَ يُسْقِطَ مِنَ الْقُلُوبِ مَحَلَّكَ».

The Apostel of Allah says: “All of you are shepherds, and each and every one of you is responsible for your sheep” (Bihār al-Anwār, vol. 72, p. 38). Imām Zayn al-‘ābidīn writes in his Risālat al-Huqūq, “The right of those whom you teach is that you should realize that the Almighty Allah has given you authority over them regarding the knowledge He has bestowed upon you and its treasures He has opened for you. Therefore, if you do your best in teaching people, not treating them roughly or annoying them, Allah will give you more of His blessing, but if you withhold your knowledge from people, and treat them roughly when asked for it, it is the right of God to remove your knowledge and its associated honor, and displace your esteem from the hearts of the people.” (Man lā Yahzuduh al-Faqīh, vol. 2, p. 621)

٢٤. «فَلَا تَتُرَتِّمَنَّكَ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَ لَا يَغُرَّتْكَمُ بِاللَّهِ الْغُرُورُ» (لقمان: ٣٣، فاطر: ٥)

*Sūrah Luqmān, Āyah 33 & Sūrah Fātir, Āyah 5*: “...So do not let the life of the world deceive you, nor let the Deceiver deceive you concerning Allah”.

٢٥. «يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَ هُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَافِلُونَ» (روم: ٧)؛ «وَ لَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ» (اعراف: ٢٠٥)؛ «أَقْتَرَبَ النَّاسُ جِسْمًا بِهِمْ وَ هُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مَعْرِضُونَ» (انبیاء: ١)؛ «يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَ لَا أَوْلَادِكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَ مَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ» (منافقون: ٩)، «ذُرِّهِمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَ يَتَمَتَّعُوا وَ يَلْهَبُهُمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ» (حجر: ٣)

*Sūrah Rūm, Āyah 7*: “They know just an outward aspect of the life of the world, but they are oblivious of the Hereafter,” *Sūrah A’rāf, Āyah 205*: “...and do not be among the heedless;” *Sūrah Anbiyā’, Āyah 1*: “Mankind’s reckoning has drawn near to them, yet they are disregarding in [their] obliviousness.” *Sūrah Munāfiqūn, Āyah 9*: “O you who have faith! Do not let your possessions and children distract you from the remembrance of Allah, and whoever does that—it is they who are the losers;” *Sūrah Hijr, Āyah 3*: “Leave them to eat and enjoy and to be diverted by longings. Soon they will know”.

٢٦. «فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنذِرِينَ» (بقره: ٢١٣)؛ «رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنذِرِينَ» ... (نساء: ١٦٥)

*Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 213*: “...then Allah sent the prophets as bearers of good news and as warners;” *Sūrah Nisā’, Āyah 165*: “Apostles, as bearers of good news and warners;” etc.

٢٧. «الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ تَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ» (رعد: ٢٨).

*Sūrah Ra'd, Āyah 28*: “Those who have faith, and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah. Look! The hearts find rest in Allah’s remembrance”!

٢٨. «يَتَوَنَّنُ فُضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَضُونَا» (مائده: ٢، فتح: ٢٩، حشر: ٨): «رِجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِمُهُمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَ لَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ» (نور: ٣٧) «وَمِنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ» (بقره: ٢٠٧): «وَالَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِمْ» (رعد: ٢٢) «ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ» (روم: ٣٨) «إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ رَبِّهِ الْأَعْلَى» (الليل: ٢٠).

*Sūrah Mā'idah, Āyah 2, Sūrah Fath,, Āyah 29, & Sūrah H,ashr, Āyah 8*: “They seek Allah’s grace and [His] pleasure;” *Sūrah Nūr, Āyah 37*: “By men whom neither trading nor bargaining distracts from the remembrance of Allah;” *Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 207*: “And among the people is he who sells his soul seeking the pleasure of Allah;” *Sūrah Ra'd, Āyah 22*: “Those who are patient for the sake of their Lord’s pleasure;” *Sūrah Rūm, Āyah 38*: “That is better for those who seek Allah’s pleasure;” *Sūrah Layl, Āyah 20*: “...but seeks only the pleasure of his Lord, the Most Exalted”.

٢٩. «إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ» (توبه: ١١١): «لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَ لَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَ اللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ» (حديده: ٢٣)

*Sūrah Tawbah, Āyah 111*: “Indeed Allah has bought from the faithful their souls and their possessions for paradise to be theirs;” *Sūrah H,adīd, Āyah 23*: “So that you may not grieve for what escapes you, not exult for what Allah gives you, and Allah does not like any swaggering braggart”.

٣٠. «وَ أَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَى» (نجم: ٣٩)

*Sūrah Najm, Āyah 39*: “And that nothing benefits man except what he strives for”.

٣١. «وَ لَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنْ ارْتَضَى» (انبیاء: ٢٨)

*Sūrah Anbīyā', Āyah 28*: “And they do not intercede except for someone He approves of”.

٣٢. ر.ك: اصول كافي، ج ٢، ص ١٤٨—١٤٩: «طَلَبَ الْحَوَائِجِ إِلَى النَّاسِ اسْتِئْثَابَ الْبُغْزِ وَ مَهْذَبَةَ الْحَيَاءِ وَ الْإِبَاسِ مِمَّا فِي أَيْدِي النَّاسِ عِزُّ الْمُؤْمِنِ فِي دِينِهِ وَ الطَّمَعُ هُوَ الْفَقْرُ الْحَاضِرُ». وَ كَانَ اميرالمؤمنين عليه السلام يقول: «لِيَجْتَمِعَ فِي قَلْبِكَ الْاِفتِقَارُ إِلَى النَّاسِ وَ الْاِسْتِغْنَاءُ عَنْهُمْ فَيَكُونُ اِفتِقَارُكَ اِلَيْهِمْ فِي لَبِنِ كَلَامِكَ وَ حَسَنِ بَشْرِكَ وَ يَكُونُ اسْتِغْنَاؤُكَ عَنْهُمْ فِي نِزَاهَةِ عَرْضِكَ وَ بَقَاءِ عَرْكَ».

*Imām S,ādīq says*, “Asking people for one’s needs is tantamount to begging for the removal of ones respect, as it destroys modesty. Disregarding what others have is equivalent to the awe for the faithful due to one’s religiosity, and coveting is a present poverty.” Imām ‘Ali used to say, “You should combine in your heart both a need for people and a self-sufficiency: your need for them is [crystallized] in your lenient talk with them and your affability, and your self-sufficiency is [revealed through] your unstained honor and continuous veneration.” (Us,ul al-Kāfi, vol. 2, pp. 148-49)

٣٣. «قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إِنَّ هَذَا الدِّينَ مَتِينٌ فَأَوْعِلُوا فِيهِ بِرَفْقٍ وَ لَا تَكْرَهُوا عِبَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ فَتَكُونُوا كَالرَّأكِبِ الْمُتَنَبِّتِ الَّذِي لَا سَفْرًا قَطَعَ وَ لَا ظَهْرًا أَبْقَى» (ر.ك: اصول كافي، ج ٢، ص ٨٦-٨٧).

The Apostle of Allah says, “This religion [of Islam] is exalted, so enter it with lenity, and do not impose the worshiping of Allah on His servants so that you are like the horse rider who falls short of destination, exhausted without completing his journey.” (Us,ul al-Kāfi, vol. 2, pp. 86-87)

٣٤. «هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا» (بقره/ ٢٩): «لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَ الْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ وَ أَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَ مَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَبْصُرُهُ وَ رُسُلَهُ بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ» (حديده: ٢٥)

*Sūrah Baqarah, Āyah 29*: “It is He who created for you all that is in the earth;” *Sūrah H,adīd, Āyah 25*: “Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice; and We sent down iron, in which

there is great might and uses for mankind, and so that Allah may know those who help Him and His apostles in [their] absence. Indeed Allah is all-strong, all-mighty”.

٣٥. «وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ» (منافقون: ٨)؛ «وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا» (نساء: ١٣١)؛ «وَأَعِدُوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ بِهِ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ». (انفال: ٦٠)

*Sūrah Munāfiqūn*, Āyah 8: “Yet all might belong to Allah and His Apostle, and the faithful;”  
*Sūrah Nisā*, Āyah 141: “...And Allah will never provide the faithless any way [to prevail] over the faithful;”  
*Sūrah Anfāl*, Āyah 60: “And prepare against them whatever you can of [military] power and war-horses, awing thereby the enemy of Allah, and your enemy”.

٣٦. «مَنْ أَصْبَحَ لَا يَهْتَمُّ بِأُمُورِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فَلَيْسَ بِمُسْلِمٍ»

The Apostle of Allah says: “Whoever begins one’s day without being concerned for the affairs of Muslims, he is not a Muslim.” (*Usūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 163).

## **Opportunities and challenges for the transfer of dialogue achievements among religions to the society**

**Dr. Mohammad Hossein Mokhtari/** Associate professor, *IKI*

**Received:** 2020/06/16 - **Accepted:** 2020/09/19

### **Abstract**

One of the most important topics in the contemporary world is the necessity of interaction and dialogue among religions, which promotes human aims in this world. According to the Holy Quran, this is only possible in the light of logical, intellectual and theoretical understanding. To transfer achievements of such dialogue is of supreme importance. The use of reasoning and its communication is emphasized by God and issued as a command to the Prophet of Islam. According to the importance of the topic, this research aims to study the Opportunities and challenges for the transfer of dialogue achievements among religions to the society. There are some points to consider in communicating such achievements to the society: Religions differ in the sense that some religions due to the circumstances become concerned with persons and individuals rather than pay attention to the social demands. Globalization as a key matter can play a role in the communication of inter-religious achievements since religious values are rooted in human and natural values. Such values function and spread better in a global world. More evident and common topics shared by all religions include human honor, kindness, forgiveness and friendship, peace and benevolence, guidance and so on that might be employed for communicating the achievements of dialogue among religions to the society. Of course, the variety and extent of the number of religions no doubt becomes an opportunity for the human community when the dialogue among religions and the communication and transfer of its achievements might deepen the understanding and insight in the society.

**Keywords:** religions, society, Opportunities and challenges, dialogue achievements.

## **Introduction**

There are also some challenges for the transfer of dialogue achievements among religions to the society. One is globalization in the common sense that is the dominance of Western culture and the disappearance of other cultures. This would prevent the spread of human and natural values to human society. Another challenge is the encounter between religions and science and its aggrandizement which sometimes lead to the rejection of metaphysics. This contradiction also might be resolved. Another basic challenge is the differences in content and principles in different religions. Muslim and Christian scholars in particular have the responsibility to put an end to such differences. The challenge of providing a definition for life is also in view. There is a sharp contrast between the arid definitions provided by the schools of materialism and the ones which are expected by religious scholars.

Additionally, there are the challenging problems like the efforts made by supporters of evil to weaken the light of faith in religions, the extremism exercised in the name of religion as well as the catastrophic conflicts between followers of different religions and the exploitation of religion for political, material and other ends. The above mentioned issues give us the chance to examine the privileges and challenges closely and precisely in order to pave the way for a better channel to transfer the achievements of dialogue among religions to the people in the society. This would guarantee a correct and most wanted understanding and insight for individuals of the society.

## **Literature Review**

### **Emphasis of the Holy Quran and other religious texts on the necessity and perseverance in dialogue among religions**

One of the most significant issues in the contemporary world is the necessity of interaction and dialogue among religions. We live in a space where interaction between human beings is essential for a peaceful co-existence which leads to the progress of human goals in the world we live in. According



to the Holy Quran, dialogue among religions is possible only in the context of logical, rational and theoretical knowledge. This point is an explicit reference to the following Quranic verse:

There is no compulsion in religion. Righteousness is now distinct from error (Al Baqara, verse 256).

«لا اكراه فى الدين قد تبين الرشد من الغي»

Thus from a Quranic perspective knowledge and appropriate understanding are introduced as essential for a constructive interaction among religions. Muslim scholars have interpreted this verse and believe that the Almighty God has created human being in the system of creation as free but in the system of legislation the acceptance of religion has been made obligatory (Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, Course on Interpretation of Quran, Surah Muhammad.) Needless to say, this verse is a symbol for freedom that is crystallized in the form of the divine revelation: There is no compulsion in religion (لا اكراه فى الدين). That is to say human beings have been created free which is the very ideal for human perfection. Obedience implies freedom. We may talk about the state of human perfection only when he chooses one of the two paths willingly and with interest (Ibid).

The key point, according to Muslim scholars, is that religion did not spread by sword but it was developed by reasoning and thus was a source of guidance in the society. We read in the Holy Quran:

Say: “people of the book, let us come to a common word between us and you that we will worship none except Allah, that we will associate none with him, and that none of us take others for lords besides Allah. ‘If they turn away, say: 'bear witness that we are Muslims.’” (Surah Aal-e-Imran: verse 64)

«قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ»

In his Tafsir Al-Mizan, Allameh Tabatabai gives this comment: Let us make the word monotheism the pivot of our cooperation and friendship and work hard to spread the monotheistic thought and take measures to implement it.

## **Existence of religions as a valuable opportunity**

Basically, the variety of religions is one of the important opportunities that different religious scholars may use to benefit the society at large. Plurality and variety of religions is an undeniable fact, but the important issue is how to deal with this fact. People need to get prepared to enter the social arena for a comprehensive plan in the society. It is no more possible to remain restricted in one's island of culture and tradition, and it is also inevitable to submit to the significance and liveliness of other cultures (Richard Glin, 2000, p.1-9.)

Followers of religious plurality confirm that all major religions introduce a way to salvation and all include the religious truth, while the difference between them is rather relative (Legenhausen, 1999, p.11.) Additionally, the source and developments of each religion are connected to sources and developments of other religions (Michael Peterson, et al, 1996, p.399).

Adherents of each religion have typically an exclusive perspective of their own religions and believe that all the truth is exclusively contained in their religion, while other religions fall outside the circle of truth and have been sentenced to invalidity and gone astray. Such an attitude towards others paves the way for confrontation among human communities. However, earlier communities were not closely connected to each other thus preventing wide confrontations (Qadrnan Qaramaleki, 1998, p 13).

When we cast a brief look at the divine religions and the plurality and variety among them, we realize that all these religions exist on the same path and propagate nothing other than the oneness of God. The reason is that the essence of religions is divine and oneness of God is their basis. Thus the variety of religions with appropriate and logical interpretation would not be any danger for human society. On the contrary, great scholars of religions can think of solutions for the cultural, moral and spiritual problems of the nations through highlighting commonality among religions.

One may conclude from the statement of Allameh Tabatabai that through the presentation of a comprehensive attitude, he believes that all religions

have somehow benefitted from the truth. Adherents of other religions too may be agents of salvation, but Islam as the last of religions is regarded as the most complete religion. However, his most important reason for its comprehensiveness is that the divine guidance makes it essential that all human beings reach a happiness they deserve. Doubtless, the condition to regard the divine kindness as vast is that we should recognize the majority of people as those of salvation. However, Alvin Plantinga, contrary to Allameh Tabatabai's opinion, introduces an exclusive attitude towards religious variety. He believes that the teachings of only one religion are true, only one religion can be the true religion and other religions would be invalid. He finds truthfulness and salvation exclusively in Christianity and its teachings (Plantinga, 2000, p 13).

Allameh Tabatabai and other Muslim scholars believe that followers of religions should appreciate the truth behind all religions that is submission to the elevated God. They should follow this truth and make it the law of their deeds. As a result, every step in this path which is taken in the light of submission and obedience towards the divine commands would lead to salvation.

Plantinga assumes that ideas or some ideas of a particular religion (for instance Christianity) are actually true. He surely adds that all issues, including other religious ideas that do not match other ideas are untrue (Plantinga, 1993, p.238). Unlike Tabatabai whose opinion that the truth of all opinion is one, Plantinga believes that all religions have outspoken differences that distinguish them from each other. He thinks that different religions are not completely similar so that one may take them as one single and exclusive truth.

Thus Muslim thinkers especially Allameh Tabatabai believe in the essential unity of all religions and somehow consider all religions as truthful to a certain extent and take the differences among them not as essential. On the issue of salvation, Tabatabai also believes that adherents of all religions may reach the state of salvation, although he believes that Islam is the most complete religion and is more truthful.

He postulates that since God has implanted the inclination towards salvation and happiness the realization has also been provided by God in different religions. The most important ground for salvation in every religion is guidance which, according to Allameh Tabatabai, does not belong to a particular religion. He uses the Quranic verses to conclude that the Holy Quran attempts to establish unity among religions. He considers faith in God, the Judgment Day as well as good deeds as the criteria for salvation. However, Alvin Plantinga does not believe in the unity of religions. He takes religions as different with contradictory claims and beliefs. He also believes that salvation and truthfulness belong merely to Christianity. He asserts that it would be contradictory to believe in similarities between religions. He rejects such similarities and points to the guarantee in the Christian beliefs and teachings.

It seems that Tabatabai's idea is more solid than that of Plantinga, since the point of view of exclusivity does not sound logical. As God has great kindness and intends to guide and bring salvation to all mankind and as He sent his prophets among all races, we may conclude that the idea of inclusivity is more reasonable and more logical than the idea of exclusivity.

It should be emphasized that the spirit of religions is in contradiction with exclusivity. Thus all religions should look for common ideas to make religions the path for salvation. exclusivity might be harmful for understanding and agreement among religions in the society. So ideas like that of Plantinga cannot be comprehensive enough to lead the society to salvation. The spirit of all religions calls for oneness of God; with this mind, plurality of religions might be used as an important tool to communicate the important achievements common among religions to the people in the society.

It is through the unity among religions that all mankind can tread the path of peace and love and give up stubbornness and separation. We need to recognize God as one and the prophets as from the same light. Consequently, religions should be recognized as one with the same concerns. Therefore, plurality of religions shows different faces of the same truth that throughout the ages appear one after the other according to human understanding and perception of the same original pillar (Javadi Amoli, 1998, p.119).

## Globalization and the Issue of Dialogue among Religions and Preservation of its Achievement

One of the important debates of the last decade of the twentieth century was the phenomenon of globalization. The first step for globalization is the search for its understanding and meaning. It seems that there is no much agreement among scholars concerning its definition. In short, here we do not review the various definitions introduced by different experts in this field. Still with little thinking one may perceive the fact that such definition, though not a comprehensive definition for globalization, regulating these definitions may make us conscious of the opportunities and challenges of globalization ahead of us. Needless to say, globalization is not an exclusive issue in a certain context of processes, but it includes all cultural, economic, military, political, sports, and other aspects.

One thinks that religions might play important roles in many important problems of the contemporary world such as world peace, development, environment, peaceful coexistence among religions and cultures and so on.

The Holy Quran invites us to think about religion which has been a new approach in religious studies since the eighteenth century and particularly the present century. The important thing is to try to match conditions of the social life of the present time with religion which should be made compatible with the society of today. Islam has such a capability of leniency and compatibility.

### **Globalization and the convergence of religions**

One of the positive corollaries of globalization in the field of religion is the preparation of the way for convergence among religions and the formation of discourses like global theology and dialogue among religions.

Thinking about religions tells us that each of them has been inclusive; that is each has its particular theologian teachings and recommended particular customs and rituals to their followers. Nevertheless, it seems that the common point of all religions is the emphasis on spirituality and the support of moral teachings (Malekian, 1999, 1(2), p6-17).

Globalization, in the context of religion, despite the fact that each individual religion is inclusive, has paved the way for unity among all religions through the introduction of common ethical teachings such as peace, justice and love. This has been a prelude to the introduction of the discourse of global theology or global ethics.

A discourse that, like the discourse of dialogue among civilizations emphasizes interaction, negotiation and cooperation among adherents of religions, has caused three changes in the context of global religion:

Leaders and adherents of each religion have been persuaded to overlook differences and insist on common ethical teachings. The clear example of such an important issue is the publication of the Islamic Declaration of Human Rights of the 1981.

The introduction of the subject of world theology has suggested the necessity to form religious nongovernmental foundations at a global level for the realization of such an important issue. The first step in this regard was the establishment of the Parliament of the World's Religions early in the 1990s.

The introduction of the discourse of dialogue among religions and the emphasis on the participation and role of the religious elite and scholars in this regard have undermined the monopoly and domination of traditional leaders and caused the appearance of a new group of experts in religious affairs at a global level.

### **Globalization as an Opportunity for Pure Natures**

By nature Human beings are global since none of the racial, linguistic and geographical limitations and boundaries could have a special impact on the developing thought and nature. Thus the Holy Quran tells us:

People, we have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you might know one another. The noblest of you before Allah is the most righteous of you. Allah is the knower, the aware (Al-Hujuraat, verse 13).

«يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ»

When we think about this Quranic verse, we realize that the propagation of the positive and elevated human thoughts is the common concern of all human beings, because the prophets and their religions actually have no plurality, great numbers or multiplicity. God is one. God's religion is also one. All prophets have been sent by the one God; one who says otherwise would not be in the same path of the prophets. Such a divergent way would be that of Satan.

Globalization is an effective step taken towards communicating the valuable achievements of the dialogue among religions, since the heavenly religions think globally. This characteristic draws a distinction between such religions and other religions that are regional and temporary.

According to their nature which refers to the human global status, human beings attempt to communicate and develop their thoughts in the world. This human characteristic should be recognized as an effect of globalization. At the same time, the inclusivity of religions should also be taken into consideration because peace, justice, struggle against discrimination, opposition to cruelty and so on are topics followed by heavenly religions. Moreover, all human beings are after such attributes by nature and common sense.

Globalization has always existed as the aim of the divine prophets. Judaism, Christianity and Islam have always attempted to form the global rule and the one nation (Al-Hujoraat: verse 13). The formation of one nation has been emphasized in the following verse:

But we wanted to be gracious to those abased in the land, and to make them leaders and inheritors, and to establish them in the land; and to show Pharaoh and Haman, and their armies, the very thing they dreaded (Al Qasass: Verses 5 & 6).

«نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ وَنُكَفِّرَنَّ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ»

The totality of verses shows that globalization and globalism have been originally among the aims of the prophets. Thus globalization might be exploited

as an important opportunity for communicating the achievements of the dialogues among religions. At the same time, the society intended by religions is a religious society governed by the divine values, spirituality, religious rules and justice. It seems that one has to distinguish between different layers of globalization or globalism in the context of intersection between religions and globalization at the present time. In explaining the principles of globalization if we reach the same principles of modernism, humanism, individuality and rationalism, liberalism and democracy then the debate over tradition and modernity will appear. Then there will no way to talk about it in general; the subject then should be subdivided into minor topics for discussion.

### **Assiduous attention of Religious Scholars to Strengthen Moral and Spiritual Basis of Human Communities**

Religion and ethics have always been regarded as the two sources of guidance, virtue and happiness in the human community. For the same reason, the two subjects have been the constant topics for scholars as well as intellectual and philosophical schools since the genesis of such schools of thought. Religious ethics have made up a large proportion of teachings and commands of all religions throughout history. As for the rationality, mutual relations and the effect of religion on the formation of perfect ethics for the human society, and the capability of the principles of religious ethics in solving related problems, have usually been the sources of thoughts of the scholars and the initiating factors for various works of research and works.

In fact, it is the common ethical teachings that are able to influence all individuals in the society and eliminate the ground for all historical and social tensions. These teachings also communicate a message to the world that spirituality and ethics have been institutionalized in religions and therefore the way towards human salvation is to look for their goodness and salvation in religions. In general, they should take religion as the connecting bridge and the connection between the present human world and that of the above.



There are many common grounds among heavenly religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam. One instance is the belief that this world is not the only world. This matter has taken religions to the stage that there is a life after this life, and that in general this world builds our next world. Therefore, the world expects an ethical system. In the same direction, most religions have been closely related to modesty, truthfulness, kindness, reason, help, sacrifice, and so on. This way they have granted their followers certain teachings. Truthfulness to mankind or friendship with human beings suggests a love to mankind which is present in all religions as a general spirit.

When we cast a look at history we notice that the prophets have an undeniable role in the formation of unity and in responding to human demands in the society. With the aid of these teachings and many similar ones the prophets have brought unity in different proportions of the human society. One of the prophets was Moses who saved the Iberians from Egypt and took them to the Land of Kanaan or the Promised Land after his appearance. He united the Iberian tribes and brought development to them so that the kingdom of David and afterwards the kingdom of Solomon son of David were established (Henry lucas, 2005, Vol. 1, p.106).

With the advent of Jesus Christ, the disjoined Iberians once more were united. The Greeks, Romans, Chaldeans and Assyrians were united through the religiosity of Jesus Christ and formed a great civilization. According to historians, there are few subjects in the history of Western civilization so interesting and attractive as the history of Judaism and the emergence of Christianity. In Judaism we witness the religious rootedness in the life of a nation. One thing which has still kept the Jews united is religion (Ibid, p 306).

The other prophet was Muhammad. Prior to the appearance of this prophet, Arabia was the living place for tribes who wondered continuously to find suitable resorts for living. Each tribe had its own rules and traditions with no attention to other tribes. The tribes of this area used to have major conflicts with each other. The Arabs who were divided into small tribes in Arabia and the north along the

Red Sea did not enjoy an orderly and peaceful community. Lack of unity was one feature of the Arabs in the past. As a matter of fact Arabia was a geographical term. There was an Arab race but no Arab nation before Islam. With the appearance of the prophet Muhammad and the spread of his teachings the various beliefs that divided the Arabs into conflicting tribes and communities were cast away and replaced by unity. Through the deep religious feeling that was awakened by the prophet united the disjointed tribes. A kind of religious community was formed then and consequently a kind of government. Very soon many groups welcomed Islam, mixed with the Arabs and a new nation came into being. The Muslim world then was a mixture of different nations with the Holy Quran and the Arabic language as their uniting factor (Ibid, p 352).

Therefore, the greatest achievement of the appearance of each prophet was the unity among groups and nations. From a different perspective, a community is like the human body. When an element is lacking in the body a defect will appear. Lack of sugar might lead to weakness or convulsion. Likewise, when the community lacks something a vital agent becomes weak and different worries and tensions will appear. The society then will deteriorate. Today we witness many economic and political tensions and problems the cause of which might be sought for in the lack of a vital and necessary element. Religions call this element the spiritual feelings (Bakhtavar, 1970, p.91).

If we look at the community we see the rational and spiritual poverty. Though material poverty is a defect, the spiritual poverty is much more important for the problem of human backwardness which keeps man from reaching a status of elevation. Thus the need for spiritual feelings is more gangrenous than the material and rational needs. The reason is that when there is a spiritual need in a community people will mostly notice their own interests and get inclined to the principle of selfishness. In such a context crime, violence and divorce will increase. Man is the captive of nature and the material world and very attentive to pleasure and prefers his own interests to those of others (Bakhtavar, 1352, p.84).

Thus the important element that more than any other element is capable of developing the society emotionally and morally is religion. It can shoulder the heavy responsibility of educating spiritual and moral human beings. Religions also have shown that they have been very successful in finding solutions to human problems.

### **Religions' guidance, a fuel for growth in human society**

During human lifelong, God has always guided human being toward salvation. This mercy has been so huge and widespread that he has sent more than 124000 messengers to convey instructions. Although this instruction has been oral, it has been also rendered as texts, known as religious holy scriptures.

Should we define the communication of religions as the process of interaction between religious experts and believers, we can observe interactions and bilateral attitudes of religions towards each other. The general rule and principle of popular religions, namely Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, as well as that of popular religions of the Far East and India, is the value of affection, mercy and friendship along with the importance of peace, goodwill and guidance for all people. These propositions are truly the content of human creature by which people find themselves appealed to the beauty of religions and feel innately connected to them.

This might be a critical opportunity for the representatives of all religions to play their role perfectly in order to go along the way of guidance with a proper amount of contemplation.

For the great interpreter of Quran, Allameh Tabatabai, true salvation realizes when is it rendered by God the Exhaled, and it comes from God only when it guides human being to be in the straight path (Sirat al-Mustaghim) and makes him aligned with prophets. The sign of this alignment is the return of its orders to monotheism, responding to God's call, bondage and God-fearing.

Therefore, any call and so called guidance differentiating between prophets or discriminate between God's orders may not lead people to salvation. Such

direction is deviated from the path of human nature (al-fitrah), and it is not accepted by God. As in the Holy Quran:

«ان الذين يكفرون بالله ورسله ويريدون ان يفرقوا بين الله ورسله ويقولون نؤمن ببعض ونكفر ببعض ويريدون ان يتخذوا بين ذلك سبيلا اولئك هم الكافرون حقا» (نساء: ٥١).

“Those who disbelieve in Allah and his messengers, and desire to divide between Allah and his messengers (by believing in him without them), and say, 'we believe in some (prophets Moses and Jesus), and disbelieve in some of them (such as prophet Muhammad),' desiring to take between this (and that) a way (between belief and disbelief), those in truth are the unbelievers.

### **Peace and the role of religions in the promotion of mercy and calmness in human societies**

All religions have specific teachings about spreading peace so that some related researchers have stated that paying attention to peace is a necessary feature of any religion, because the single mission of all religions is to lead human being to perfection, among the most important features of which is living in peace and calmness based on justice. The importance of this feature is so great that many fake religions have paid attention to it in order to appeal followers. Finding out how each religion deals with the concept of peace and recognizes the role that every religion plays in promoting this mercy can be achieved through many ways, one of which is to be gathered for meetings like this.

A true believer for any monotheist religion should behave in a peaceful manner based on affection and loving his fellowmen outstandingly.

In Islam, the concept of peace has a foundational wide stance. The word “Islam”, according to philologists, is derived from the Arabic root “silim”, which literally means peace. Thus, the religion is called “the religion of peace” in many contexts. Also, “Salam” is a rather popular word derived from the same root by which most people start their greetings in Islam. As suggested by the literal meaning, the word calls for peace and friendship. It is also a name of God:

«هو الله الذی لا اله هو الملك القدوس السلام» (الحشر: ٢٣).

“He is Allah, there is no god except he. He is the king, the pure, the peace”

Quran has enunciated world peace to human being: “Believers, all of you, enter the peace and do not follow in Satan's footsteps; he is a clear enemy to you (Surah Al-Baqara: Verse 208). Also, about ancient Arab (al-jaheliah), who had accustomed with violation and bloodshed, Quran says: “If they incline to peace, incline to it also (Surah Al-Anfal verse 61).

Furthermore, one could find various instances in the prophet of Islam’s practical manner in which he attempted to spread peace by making numerous peace treaties from which the contemporary world can learn. Mentioning one instance may suffice here when Mecca was concurred, the prophet of Islam said “today is the day of mercy and forgiveness” (Sharh Nahjul Balaghah. Ibn Abil-hadid, vol. 10, p. 202) , while he could easily punish the enemies.

Therefore, the pure Islam vigorously opposes violation, threatening and terrorist activities. Those who commit these crimes in the name of Islam are clearly violating Islamic laws. Those who perform suicide terrorist operations can never be true believers of Muhammad, the prophet of peace.

### **Challenges:**

In the following paragraphs, we deal with some problems in our way to convey religions’ achievements to the context of societies:

### **Non-divine lifestyle**

One of the challenges with whom religions are faced is the influence of religions on societies’ lifestyle. Life illustration is an important principle for religions.

Divine religions are derived from the same source and all of them strive to guide people toward salvation and anagogy. The principal mission of divine prophets is to free human being from this lower stage of life and take him to the clean, lasting life, which Quran calls sheer life (hayat al-tayibah).

In the holy Quran, some verses deal with the role of religions in human direction, such as the followings:

«إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ» (مائده: ١٤).

“... We have sent down the torah in which there is guidance and light ...”

«وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ» (مائده: ٤٦).

“and gave him the gospel, in which there is guidance and light...”

«تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ» (لقمان: ٣).

“Those are the verses of the wise book, a guidance and a mercy to those who do good.

In view of the mentioned verses, we can find out what significant role can divine religions play in human salvation, i.e., they can provide a framework for the desired life based on prophets’ teachings.

In the contemporary world, some pervert beliefs are shaping peoples’ lives. Therefore, religion experts should attempt to remove this chaos from their societies by complying with a proper manner based on divine religions. The role of religions may be so important in this regard.

An example of the mentions perversion is the domination of the Hollywood over the culture of Christian people in America, who had forgotten their religious lifestyle by the entrance of such movies propagating some fake values. Here Christianity proved to be a victim of cultural invasions.

The holy Quran have provided criteria for the desired life in many instances, of which we point to one here:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ» (انفال: ٢٤).

“Believers, respond to Allah and the messenger when he calls you to that which revives you.

The intended life in this verse is one originated from the principle of faith to God, since “believers” are the audiences of the verse. Therefore, the verse might intend a life that believers achieve in the high-level stages of their faith. All religions, particularly Islam, provide programs for human life.

The properties of undesired lifestyle could be enumerated as follows:

A life based on fad and lust, consumerism, aimless amusements, sex and sensuality, opportunism, negligence about the fundamental questions of creation and afterlife, domination over the nature, racism, and monetarism.

Enumerating the undesired implications of these factors on human life, one can believe more than ever in the significant effects of religions' ethical and social teachings on human life. Although one could not expect the same position by various religious leaders around the world, there are some barriers that make it difficult to overcome the present crisis between the followers of different religions. Those barriers should be removed in a hope of achieving a common standing. Three major issues have been dealt with so far in order to achieve common positions in interreligious dialogues, namely peace and peaceful coexistence, youth religious education, and developing a common charter for religious life. These three inclusive issues provide a wide ground for interreligious common positions.

Religious life is an internal commitment along with an external call for a life inspired by the sacred source of religions. The current material human has violated this commitment in many cases allocating all his capacities for a material world life and hence finding himself faced with the "meaning of life" crisis. Interreligious dialogue can be an effective short path to develop a universal religious charter in order to cure the current materialism sickness.

### **Aggressive followers, a big challenge for religions**

Firstly, we should be aware that in Quranic culture the God's religion have been always a single one, and all prophets have called for the same school (Surah Aal-e-Imran: Verses 6 & 19).

Secondly, all prophets have had a set of common principles and proved traditions all the same. Principles such as calling for piety, rejecting personalism, calling for unity, annunciation and alarum, rejecting ignorance, calling for anagogy and so on.

Despite the equity of religions, which can be seen in holy texts, some ignorant followers and some hostiles magnify certain texts in order to achieve their material interests.

Certainly, emphasizing on the common true inspirational teachings of religions can remove a big part of aggressions among them. Calling all divine religions for unification, Quran says:

«قل يا أهل الكتاب تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم ألا نعبد إلا الله...» (عمران: ٦٤).

“Say: 'people of the book, let us come to a common word between us and you that we will worship none except Allah ... (Aal-e-Imran, 64)”

Collaboration and interaction between believers of various divine religions could reduce their conflicts and certainly will not let them be increased.

The problem of conflict between religions started when the true followers of prophets became isolated by some egocentric, dogmatic people or prophets' enemies, entering fake considerations into religions. They distorted some of the holy texts, ascribed their own conceptions to God and hence diverted religion from its authentic path. They picked up new names as substantive religions.

### **Fake religions, trying to distort the course of divine religions**

Imported pietisms, distortive pietisms and secular pietisms are different concepts, each has its own meaning. Each of the mentioned categories could point to some aspects of the new wave that has begun to exist since nearly four decades ago in the West, spreading across the world.

The story begun after the isolation of religious beliefs in the West, the result of which was the lapse of spirituality. With the Western lifestyle becoming more and more unbearable, student movements spread out all over Europe and America in 1960-70s. The whole situation made the Western civilization alter itself, that is, after years of putting religion aside and attempting to omit spirituality and denying the supernatural world, numerous psychical and social crises occurred to the west resulted from the lack of responsiveness in the so called modern way of life to the requirements of human nature.

Today, such new spiritualist movements are known as “modern age religions”.



Endeavouring to distort and destruct divine religions, especially via proliferating the thought of religious liberty in the world along with making hostilities and bloodshed among the followers of divine religions and different sects of each religion in order to divide monotheist people are cultural policies for Zionism to dominate over religions and transform them. The leaders of international Zionism are currently countering the impacts of divine religions by dissecting people in Islam and Christianity.

### **Naturalism, a challenge for religions**

Scientism is a philosophical perspective that considers natural sciences as superior to all human questing methods. For naturalism, only empirical and deductive methods are valid for the illustration of all physical, social, cultural and psychical aspects. This perspective is influenced by empiricism, which was dominated during Enlightenment era. It is also interdependent with Positivism proposed by August Kont (1798-1857). Friedrich von Hayek considered Kont's perspective as extremist. He believed that this kind of perspective converts the natural philosophy of science to an illogical belief, and ideology. Nowadays, the term naturalism is used as a humiliating one. (Encyclopedia of Science, Technology, and Ethics, Scientism, 2001-2006)

Alvin Plantinga says: naturalism for me is a thought based on which there is neither a God, nor something like God (Ibid).

For Plantinga, the naturalist approach is more powerful than atheism, because it covers a wider area. That is, one can not be a naturalist without being an atheist (Ibid).

In the new era, the perspective is dominated over all kinds of sciences. Unlike natural sciences, which are dominated by a single school, various world-views are ruling other branches of science. Worldviews in every case highly influence the selection of theories. Different religions, based on their precise recognition of religion and preserving religious teachings, can accept and develop any scientific insight that is accordant with them. However, it is very difficult to accept naturalism in an absolute way.

It appears that the finding of science never conflict with any religions (especially Abrahamic religions). The conflict which sometimes is seen between these two areas lies in either the application of antireligious metaphysics applied by some scientists in their scientific activities or aberrant interferences that some experts in these two areas make in each others' activities.

If scientific theories challenge divine religions, it is because some scientists, in order to generalize empirical findings to general laws, resorted to metaphysics that counter that dominating divine religions. For example, Darwin's theory of evolution provided some big challenges for divine religions. It questioned the Demonstration of Order proof, denied the privilege of human being over other creatures, considered ethics as originated in natural selection, and stated that nature is aimless. This theory played the most powerful role in attenuating Abrahamic religions.

It appears that scientism should be dealt with in detail, because it is to be considered neither a threat nor an absolute opportunity. It is only through intense and close scrutiny and caution that one could make use of scientism as an opportunity.

## **Discussion**

Spirituality is the single essence of all divine religions. Certainly, legislation in these religions can lead to the satisfaction of humans' a needs and give sense to all aspects of people's individual and social life. Therefore, it is worth planning for making the most of religions to contribute fully in the future of the world.

We should seek sense-making from religions for societies. Religions' common features in terms of literature, art, philosophy and culture could be an important source to such end.

Religions should be aware that every kind of barrier can threaten the possible achievements of sense-giving resulted from interactions between religious leaders. Thus, comprehensive, non-ethnic pathology can provide unity in action and facilitates transferring its achievements. For instance, the deviation in some religions in which some undesired attributes are ascribed to some prophets, and, of course, quoting such assertions, is a barrier to this end, over which we can overcome by numerous discussions among religious authorities.

It seems that holding numerous meetings in which Muslim and Christian experts gather and try to agree upon solutions for placing monotheism and pure divine values at their right positions in societies is a proper idea, for due to their being in formalist modes, some religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism are not capable of giving sense to a society.

Similarly, some religions are not capable of collaborating with others in this process because of their historicism, ethnicism, instinctivism, and sensism.

After dealing with the mentioned issues and enumeration of some challenged and opportunities, the environment would be more transparent for their close discussion. It is necessary that the figures of Islam and Christianity strive for solving the problems currently challenging human societies as far as they are concerned. Hopefully, such meetings can be frequently held in order to bear satisfactory consequences and lead us to the desired situation.

## References

The Holy Quran

Javadi Amoli, Abdollah, 1998, *Shariat dar Ayeneye Marefat (Religion in the light of Knowledge)*, 2nd edition, Asra Publications.

Javadi Amoli, Abdollah, *Course on Interpretation of Quran*, Asra Publications, Surah Muhammad.

*Encyclopedia of Science, Technology, and Ethics, Scientism*, 2001-2006 by Macmillan Reference USA

Lucas, Henry, 2005, *A Short History of Civilization*, Vol. 1, Abdolhossein Azarang (trans.), p.106.

Bakhtavar, Kamalodin, 1970, *Naqshe Adyan dar Takamole Ensan (The Role of Religions in the Development of Human Being)*, National Library of Iran.

Bakhtavar, Kamalodin, 1352, *Navamis-e Andisheh (Principles of Thought)*, Tehran, ت.ب.ج. p.84.

Malekian, 1999, "Religion and Religiosity in the Contemporary World In conversation with Professor Mostafa Malekian", *Journal of Seven Heavens*, 1(2), p 6-17 .

Michael Peterson, et al., 1996, *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Ahmad Naraq and Ebrahim Soltani (trans.), Tarh-e No Publication.

Qadrnan Qaramaleki, Muhammad Hassan, 1998, *Kandkavi dar Souyehaye Pluralism (Scrutiny in Aspects of Pluralism)*, Kanoun-e Andishe-ye Javan, p.13.

Legenhausen, Muhammad, 1999, *Islam and Religious Pluralism*, Narges Javandel (trans.), Technical Institute of Taha.

Plantinga, 2000, *A. Warranted Christian Belief*, New York, Oxford University Press.

Plantinga, 1993, *A. Warrant and Proper Function*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Glin, Richard, 2000, *Towards Theology of all Religions*, Reza Gandomi Nasrabadi(trans.), Meftah-e Qom, Center of Studies and Research on Religions and Sects.

Sharh Nahjul Balaghah. Ibn Abil-hadid, vol. 10, p. 202

## **Communicating with Young People in the West: Awakening the World Public Conscience**

**Hakimeh Biria** / Ph.D. in American Studies, University of Tehran

**Received:** 2020/01/14 - **Accepted:** 2020/05/01

### **Abstract**

The present article is an attempt to analyze the significance and implications of the two letters of Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei in correspondence with the young people in Western countries in light of his theory of the confrontation between the forces of jahiliyyah and the forces of prophetic guidance and his theory of power, both of which have Qur'anic roots. The leader's call on Western youth to base their understanding of Islam on the Qur'an and the personality of the Prophet of Islam directly addresses the Western powers' tactics for manipulating both non-Muslim's and Muslim's interpretation of Islam, namely instigating wide scale Islamophobia and promoting secular/liberal Islam. Given Western activists' outcry against the perils of such an approach to Islam, the wisdom of the leader's appeal to the young people in the west becomes more evident. These letters mark the beginning of an awakening jihad in which Muslim thinkers and activists need to play a central role.

**Keywords:** Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei, letter, Western youth, Islam, Islamophobia.

On January 21, 2015, Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Khamenei wrote a letter to all the youth in Europe and North America, marking the first such communication between a senior Islamic thinker and religious authority and young people in the west. The first letter encapsulated two main requests both of which highlight the significance of understanding Islam and pertaining issues:

**My first request is: study and research the incentives behind this widespread tarnishing of the image of Islam. My second request is that in reaction to the flood of prejudgments and disinformation campaigns, try to gain a direct and firsthand knowledge of this religion. The right logic requires that you understand the nature and essence of what they are frightening you about and want you to keep away from.**

A look at the current interaction between the west and Islam shows that there are two main obstacles in front of such an approach to understanding Islam. Today, hegemonic powers have come to believe that the only way to slow and eventually halt the appeal of Islam is to manage the interpretation of the faith. Islamophobia and the promotion of Eurocentric, secular versions of Islam often dubbed “moderate” Islam are two tactics that are used for managing the understanding of the faith.

Influential individuals in the American foreign policy establishment advise the United States government to play an active, central role in what they call a “war of ideas within Islam,” to use the words of Angel Rabassa, former senior analyst at the U.S. Departments of State and Defense and current senior political analyst at the RAND Corporation. The ultimate goal is to defeat “Islamism” and to promote so-called “moderate Islam” (Rabasa et al, 2007).

Robert Satloff, president of the influential Zionist American think tank the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, defines an Islamist “as a Muslim who seeks – either through peaceful or violent means – the imposition of Qur’anic law (Shari’a) and a Qur’anic-based state, rejecting the legitimacy of the existing political structure in his/her country or region” (Satloff, 2004, p 69).

The only defining characteristic of Islamism is thus the belief in the idea that governance belongs to God and legislation needs to be in accordance with divine

law. All other differentiating factors, including resort to terrorism or acceptance of the democratic process, are found irrelevant. Thus, by definition all Islamist causes are found to be illegitimate. Both Shi'a and Sunni variants of Islamism are likewise rejected. However different, the Islamic Republic of Iran is as much the enemy as the Islamic State (ISIS), Hizbollah is as much the enemy as Hamas, and al-Qaeda is as much the enemy as the Muslim Brotherhood. Such a conceptualization echoes the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's words at UN General Assembly in 2014: "ISIS and Hamas are branches of the same poisonous tree," he argued. "Hamas is ISIS and ISIS is Hamas" (Timm, 2014).

It seems best to label this approach to Muslim politics as "reverse excommunication" (reverse takfirism) in which case, similar to the approach of the takfiri elements in Muslim countries such as Wahhabism, it characterizes everyone as non-Muslim except those who accept a limited version of Islam that is amenable to Western interests. In this context, any Muslim or Islamic movement that seeks to in any way implement Islam in the public and political affairs of Muslims is charged with apostasy. The legitimacy of such individuals and entities' interpretation of Islam is undermined and their extermination made imperative. All elements who are in this way excommunicated are labeled as Islamist.

To defeat all variants of Islamism, Dennis Ross and Robert Satloff advise the U.S. government to fight the cause on multiple levels: "with arms, with intelligence, with diplomacy, with trade, with ideas, with policy, with culture, and with political will, all at the same time" (Ross and Satloff, 2004, 2004, p 2). Currently a senior fellow at the Washington Institute, Ross has held high level diplomatic posts in the administrations of George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama. Most recently he served two years as special assistant to President Obama and National Security Council senior director for the Central Region, and a year as special advisor to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Of course, this line of thinking has its critics. For example, the Center for American Progress, a progressive American think tank, has published several reports criticizing the ill effects of the rise of Islamophobia in the United States and its prevalence in American politics (Wajahat, 2011; Ken, 2015). It is argued in these reports that Islamophobia has been institutionalized in the United States and is posing a threat to American national security. In his 2012 book *Crusade 2.0: The West's Resurgent War on Islam*, John Feffer of the Institute for Policy Studies well articulates that “much of the sentiment directed specifically at ‘Islamism’ is ultimately meant for Islam as a whole” (Feffer, 2012, p 20) and that “the United States has gone to war in defense of a different professed faith, not Christianity but rather liberal democracy” (Ibid, p 16-17).

This hard confrontation with Islam works in tandem with a soft confrontation that aims to change the essence of Islam and affect Muslims’ faith in the efficacy of Islam as the best source of reforming the current unjust world order. In the years after 9/11, Western countries have increasingly tied Islam to their national security and started comprehensive programs for promoting the creation of Eurocentric versions of Islam dubbed Euro-Islam, German Islam, American Islam, etc. These efforts are euphemistically named the promotion of “moderate Islam.” In this view, Islam, as a religion, is seen as a national security problem, and the solution is seen in “religion building.” Of course, the difficulty of instigating the reformation of Islam is acknowledged: “It is no easy matter to transform a major world religion. If “nation-building” is a daunting task, “religion-building” is immeasurably more perilous and complex” (Benard, 2003, p 3).

The main ingredient in this religion-building project is undermining the legitimacy and authenticity of original sources of Islam and their value for serving as the foundation for transforming the socio-political structure of the Muslim world. Cheryl Benard of the RAND Corporation encapsulates this vision as follows:

The modernist vision (of Islam) matches our own. Of all the groups, this one is most congenial to the values and the spirit of modern democratic society. Modernism, not traditionalism, is what worked for the West. This included the



necessity to depart from, modify, and selectively ignore elements of the original religious doctrine. The Old Testament is not different from the Quran in endorsing conduct and containing a number of rules and values that are literally unthinkable, not to mention illegal, in today's society. This does not pose a problem because few people would today insist that we should all be living in the exact literal manner of the Biblical patriarchs. Instead, we allow our vision of Judaism's or Christianity's true message to dominate over the literal text, which we regard as history and legend. That is exactly the approach that Islamic modernists also propose (Ibid, p 37).

Reformation of Islam is seen through the lens of modernization, which is often equated with westernization. Sayyid's definition of Eurocentrism is useful here. Eurocentrism is defined as "a multidimensional attempt to restore Western cultural practices as universal" (Sayyid, 2003, p 285). An Ummah-centered Islamism can act as a real challenge to Eurocentrism and Orientalism disrupting the uneven power relations that have been built upon the two foundations.

Promotion of moderate Islam, with its attendant requirements of divorcing Islam from Shari'ah could well be analyzed as the new façade of "militant secular fundamentalism" (Esposito, 2000, p 9) to use John Esposito's terminology for describing the sort of secularism and anti-religion stance of countries such as France. Militant secular fundamentalism hides beneath a veneer of Islamic terminology that has been emptied from any meaning and devoid of any power in public life.

According to Sayyid, "it is only with [Imam] Khomeini that the role of Western discourse as universal interlocutor appears to be shaken (Sayyid, 2003, p 113-14). Promotion of moderate Islam is an attempt at blocking the idea that the only path to progress passes through the west. Again Sayyid's words are very relevant here: "The possibility of Islamic political thinking can only be undertaken by disengagement with the problems and perspectives of Western political thought. As long as Islamic political thinkers are locked in a (one-sided) conversation with Western political thought, they remain locked in a logic in which there is no space for anything other than the west"

(Ibid., p 114). So-called moderate Islam is in actuality the locking of Islamic thinkers in such a one-sided conversation with Western political thought. As such, Islam loses all potential for building a civilization independent of the west.

The paternalistic style of religion-building is in essence a repackaged version of modernization theory that finds it the white man's burden to catalyze change in the essence of how Muslims interpret their religion. What is significant is the change in what modernization signifies. While before, as in the case of Ataturk and Reza Shah's policies, modernization was made synonymous with militant secularization and de-Islamization of society, Western pundits and politicians now call for the modernization of Islam itself, which is indicative of the growing significance of Islam in the developments of the Muslim world.

The main aim of Islamophobia and promotion of secular/liberal Islam is to take the initiative from the community of believers. Through Islamophobia, an irrational, general fear of Islam is created. This has two effects. On the one hand, it creates a climate of hate and fear among non-Muslims which acts as a rift between them and the Muslim world. On the other hand, through the tactic of reverse excommunication (reverse takfir), all interpretations of Islam except for the secular/liberal understanding are slandered as false religions. Secular Islam, which advocates an instrumental approach to Qur'an making it subordinate to so-called liberal values and to secularism, diminishes the most important source of power among believers of Islam: that of faith in Allah's words as the ultimate source of guidance, steadfastness and resilience in upholding that faith in action. With regard to this understanding of power, Imam Khamenei says:

**We should not be weak. We should be strong. Strength does not only lie in weapons and money. The main basis for strength is faith in God and steadfastness. Allah the Exalted says, "Whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks" [The Holy Quran, 2: 256]. If we have faith in God and reject evil, this is grasping "the most trustworthy hand-hold". This is a source of power and**

**strength. We should promote and want this in the world of Islam (Ayatollah Khamenei, 2016).**

Through Islamophobia and the promotion of so-called “moderate Islam,” the taghuti powers mute the voice of the majority of Muslims around the world who reject both the Islam of Daesh and calls for instigating a reformation in Islam.

The leader addressed Western youth with a subsequent letter on November 29, 2015, shedding light on the hypocritical behavior of “certain Western powers” regarding terrorism, which he finds symptomatic of a mentality marked by deep-rooted “aggression” and “moral promiscuity.” He asked young people in the west to take the initiative to reform this “violent-breeding mentality,” a mentality that operates in hard and soft modes, taking away innocent lives, destroying the property and infrastructure of many countries, but also aggressively imposing its culture on others while trivializing other cultures. The soft and subtle violence of cultural imperialism is as important as the hard violence of Western power’s sponsorship of war and terrorism around the world as part of the second letter indicates:

**I consider the imposition of Western culture upon other peoples and the trivialization of independent cultures as a form of silent violence and extreme harmfulness. For example, the two elements of “aggression” and “moral promiscuity” which unfortunately have become the main elements of Western culture, have even degraded the position and acceptability of its source region.**

The two letters together put forth a specific theory that Ayatollah Khamenei has elsewhere explained in more depth: that the world is witnessing a confrontation between the forces of be’that (prophetic and Godly resurrection) and jahiliyya (willful ignorance and rebellion against God’s guidance). Understanding the true message of Islam when coupled with an understanding of the true face of the leaders of jahiliyya would open the path for building a new relationship between the Muslims and the Western worlds, a constructive relationship that paves the way for creating a better future.

## Conclusion

The letters of Ayatollah Khamenei to young people in the West signify the fact that the whole of humanity should undergo an awakening with regard to the true message of Islam and the real characteristics of jahiliyya. Bringing about a Western awakening is of strategic importance. History of the different movements in the west including the anti-slavery and anti-war movements shows that many concerned individuals in the west are aware of the malaise that the forces of jahiliyya have inflicted on humanity, in general, and Western societies, in particular. Today, some Western activists are also concerned about the cultural crises that is ruining the lives of everyone around the world including the sexualization of society and the greed and consumerism that is depriving us all of our humanity. The power of such activism would grow exponentially if it were coupled with the power of understanding the truth about Islam's message, and it is the role of ulama and the enlightened thinkers of the Muslim world to bring about that connection.

The leader's communication with Western youth stems from his belief that one of the main jihads of the day is activism to explain and enlighten. His letters to Western youth is an indication to Muslim thinkers and activists that it is only through such enlightenment and engagement with the people of the world that the public conscience will awaken. A timely awakening of the public conscience could act as a catalyst for activism, resistance, and change.

## Bibliography

- Ayatollah Khamenei, Speech delivered on May 18, 2016, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, in a meeting with participants of the 33rd International Quran Competitions: <http://english.khamenei.ir/news/3818/Cooperating-with-U-S-is-a-great-sin-Ayatollah-Khamenei>
- Benard, Cheryl, 2003, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Dennis Ross, the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/experts/view/ross-dennis>
- Esposito, John L, 2000, "Introduction: Islam and Secularism in the Twenty-First Century." *In Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, edited by John L. Esposito and Azzam Tamimi, 1-12, New York, New York University Press.
- Feffer, John, 2012, *Crusade 2.0: The West's Resurgent War on Islam*, New York, City Lights Books.
- Gude, Ken, 2015, *Anti-Muslim Sentiment Is a Serious Threat to American Security*, Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.
- Rabasa, Angel, Cheryl Benard, Lowell Schwartz, and Peter Sickle, 2007, "Building Moderate Muslim Networks", *Santa Monica*, CA: RAND Corporation.
- Ross, Dennis, and Robert Satloff, 2004, *Report of the Presidential Study Group: Security, Reform, and Peace, the Three Pillars of U.S. Strategy in the Middle East*, Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Studies.
- Satloff, Robert, 2004, *The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror: Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East*, Washington, DC, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
- Sayyid, Bobby S, 2003, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism*, New York: Zed Books.
- Timm, Jane C. 2014, *Netanyahu Likens Iran and Hamas to Isis, Nazis in Un Speech*, MSNBC, <http://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/netanyahu-likens-iran-and-hamas-isis-nazis>.
- Wajahat, Ali, 2011, *Fear, Inc: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America*, Center for American Progress.



## The Meaning and Nature of Religion

Ali Mesbah / Associate Professor, *IKI*

Received: 2020/11/18 - Accepted: 2021/03/23

### Abstract

One approach to religion is distinguished by its emphasis on, and giving priority to, the behavioral aspects, especially religious rites and social ceremonies, despite its acknowledgement that religion consists of several elements, including beliefs. On the other hand, others regard ritual practices as the results of the unique view of each religion toward the source of the universe and the human being, giving priority to the belief system of religion. Still a third group refuses to take any of these features as essential to religion, and considers religious experience as its essence, sidelining both religious practice and belief systems, whose alteration or omission won't harm the essence of religion. A fourth approach; however, looks at religion as a tool in the service of some individual or social ends. Consequently, the nature, scope, and objectives of religion, and its relation to human life change according to each and every of the above-mentioned approaches. This article makes a critical analysis of some of the most popular of these approaches, while trying to argue for its own view of the subject.

**Keywords:** Religion, Essence, Meaning, Nature, Experience, Practice, Belief System.

## 1. Religion as Belief and Rites

One approach to religion defines religion as a certain belief or a set of beliefs. Such a belief, which is generally speaking, a belief in supernatural and sacred entities, includes a vast spectrum of contradictory incidents. They range from Animism, to belief in superstitions and myths, to belief in any sacred entity, to belief in a supernatural being, to belief in the Almighty, Omniscient, and Omnipotent Creator of the world. What is shared by this immense variety of definitions for religion, is constraining the fundamental element of religion in a personal belief and commitment. Of course, such a belief effects human behavior and other areas of one's life, but according to them, the essence of religion is nothing but a belief, and other elements are regarded as its effects and upshots. Others, still, consider attitudes, rites, and traditions directly emanating from such beliefs to be part of the determining factors of religion. None of these ideas deems the truth and correspondence of religious beliefs to reality as necessary, and all contradictory and opposing beliefs are judged equal, and a sort of relativism and pluralism can be seen in all of them.

For instance, such scholars as James George Frazer (1854-1941), Rudolf Otto (Cf. Rudolf Otto, 1952), Peter L. Berger (Berger, 1967, p.177), and Mircea Eliade (Eliade, 1957, p. 8-113.), each one has stressed, in one way or another, the pivotal place of belief in the "Sacred" in the definition of religion. Some others have emphasized on the "almighty" instead of "sacred", and introduced religion as a belief in supernatural beings, communicating with them, and asking them for help through prayers and rituals (Cf. Deepak Mehta, 1991, p 345).

In my view, the pivotal role of belief and commitment is undeniable in religion. Sublimity and sanctity of the being that is the center of religious recognition, values, passions, and rituals is also an important component of religion that these theories have mentioned. But reducing religion to a belief, and reducing beliefs to a belief in a sacred being, presents at least a defective picture of religion. Some of these theories also pointed to the fact that religious commitment leads to certain actions such as sacrifice, prayers, and calling for



help in resolving life problems. However, paying attention to this issue is also only one part of the territory of religion. If the relation of this factor is not established with other aspects of individual and social life, one cannot expect religion to influence other areas of human life.

Such a perception of religion is the result of a secular ideology (or paradigm), which dominates academic thought today. Secularism is based on some ontological and epistemological presuppositions. Ontologically, it adheres to naturalism and presumes that all entities are material, and no immaterial being exists. It leads to the epistemological positivist presupposition that to understand anything requires direct observation. Therefore, some concluded that God and religion (as His message) cannot be established as facts, and religion is tagged as superstitious, irrational, and even void of meaning. According to such presuppositions, not only a researcher is not allowed to introduce religious ideas to one's investigations, but also religion is considered as barrier to science, meddling with correct grasp of reality, and has to be barred from such interference. They coined the term "scientific empathy" and "objectivity" to refer to the idea that one must prevent religious (as well as any other non-experimental) beliefs and values from influencing one's understanding of the world and one's choice of lifestyle.

According to them, of course, one can study religion as a subject matter, as Durkheim, Max Weber, or Peter Berger studied religion as a social phenomenon, and theorized about it, based on their hypotheses, methods, and theories. Or some psychologists as Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung considered religion as a psychological phenomenon, and searched for its roots, expressions, and psychological consequences.

Ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions of positivism are discussed and scrutinized in details in philosophy and the theory of knowledge. One of the main problems with positivism is that its basic claims such as "all beings are material and observable" or "the only reliable method of understanding is direct sense perception" or "non-experimental ideas prevent us from correct knowledge" are all non-experimental claims. Such claims,

according to positivistic foundations, are meaningless, or at least cannot be proved, and have no epistemological value. The first two propositions represent the basic ideas of positivism, and by their negation, the whole philosophical and epistemic system of positivism collapses, and there remains nothing but a bunch of ashes scattered all around by seasonal winds.

## 2. Religion as Means

A second approach to religion belongs to sociologists who give priority and principality to society over individual, and consider religion a tool in the service of society. In this approach, the pivot of the definition and essence of religion lies in its social function, and other elements such as dogmas, ethical values, and rituals are deemed mere preparatory means for attaining social objectives. According to this approach, the goal and function of religion is often understood as establishing and maintaining the coherence, unity, or the status quo in society.

For instance, Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), the famous French sociologist, though considering religion as a set of beliefs and actions that revolve around the sacred, he studies religion as a social phenomenon, not as an intrinsic and individual matter. He writes:

But from our point of view,... [r]eligion ceases to be an inexplicable hallucination and takes a foothold in reality. In fact, we can say that the believer is not deceived when he believes in the existence of a moral power upon which he depends and from which he receives all that is best in himself: this power exists, it is society. ...Thus religion acquires a meaning and a reasonableness that the most intransigent rationalist cannot misunderstand. Its primary object is not to give men a representation of the physical world... . Before all, it is a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members, and the obscure but intimate relations which they have with it. This is its primary function (Durkheim, 1915, p. 261-62).

Durkheim conceives society “a specific reality” (Ibid, p. 21) and the “unique source of all that is sacred.” (Ibid, p. 305) After he analyzes some incidents of, indigenous religions of primitive societies, He concludes that the sacred and god are nothing but expressions of society proper, when he says:

We now see the real reason why the gods cannot do without their worshippers any more than these can do without their gods; it is because society, of which the gods are only a symbolic expression, cannot do without individuals any more than these can do without society. ... [W]e must show that the effect of the cult really is to recreate periodically a moral being upon which we depend as it depends upon us. Now this being does exist: it is society (Ibid, p. 403-404).

For Durkheim, society is in need of sustaining its unity and coherence, and to do so, it sacralizes what is related to the whole of society, and on the contrary, desacralizes (and makes unimportant) what is related to the individual. Society establishes rites and traditions to revive the sacred, and calls them religion. Therefore, he assumes rituals to make the bedrock and foundation of religion, and maintaining solidarity among members of society as the sole function of religion. As for religious beliefs and values, he considers them as peripheral, secondary, and a byproduct of religious rites. For the same reason, it makes no difference for him what is worshiped in these rituals, what values are adhered to, or which of the opposing interpretations of the world (including of God, human being, mundane world, and the hereafter) one accepts (Cf. É. Durkheim, 1899, p 11, qtd. in Jesús Romero Moñivas, 2007). Moreover, Durkheim calls the epistemic aspect of religion as absurd, invalid, and “science before science”. He believes that this aspect of religion is doomed to withdraw in the face of modern science, and it has to content itself with its ethical and social function (Durkheim, 1909, p 57).

Such instrumental approach to religion is repeated, though in different forms, in other sociological studies, one of which can be seen in the Marxist approach. Karl Marx ascribes a negative function to religion. According to him, “[m]an makes religion, religion does not make man. ... Man is the world of man, the

state, society. This state, this society, produce religion.” (C.f. Karl Marx, 1964, p 38) It is fabricated in order to justify the unjust deeds of the rulers and help them maintain the status quo. This is why Marx calls religion “the opium” and “the illusory happiness of the people” (Ibid, p. 39).

With an analytical methodology, one can conclude that from the sociologists’ point of view, the realm of religion is restricted to the sphere of social action; not any social action, but only that part of social action which is directed to keeping social solidarity and the benefits of the statesmen. This amounts to the idea that religion not only is engaged in the study and understanding of any part of social phenomena, but the study of social phenomena is itself the study of religion. On the other hand, they do not ascribe to religion any role in introducing the origin of the world, the essence and the beginning and the end of the human being, and in explaining the relation between them. Neither religion has anything to do with the description, interpretation, and explanation of other actions and reaction, whether individual or social, voluntary or involuntary. In other words, religion and social sciences only meet on one point, and that is the study of religion itself.

A lot can be said about this reductionist view of religion. The limited samples of study, the flawed documents and data employed, inappropriate generalizations, problems with functionalism as a method for studying religion, subjective presuppositions despite of pompous claims to scientific impartiality, negligence regarding the truth claims of religions, reliance on fanatic presumptions about the essence of religion and its social task, contradictions and lack of logical consistency, and disregarding the Divine origin of the heavenly religions are among apparent flaws of this approach.

### **3. Religion as Phenomenon**

Phenomenological approach to religion is an influential approach. Philosophical phenomenology<sup>1</sup> aims at finding out the essence of phenomena and the hidden meaning in their depth. Phenomenologists believe they can attain an immediate understanding of the essence of phenomena (as they

appear to us) by disregarding the notions and information we already have of them in our mind.

Phenomenologists introduce religion by such notions as the experience of the unusual, the limitless, or totally other. For this reason, they assume religion to be a personal feeling directed at theology. Focusing on their own and others' religious experiences and behaviors, they try to analyze and compare them in order to come up with a universal structure, an essential meaning, and a comprehensive definition of religion (Herbert Spiegelberg, 1960, p 11). By essential meaning they mean a deep meaning hidden behind the appearance of normal ceremonies and experiences, waiting to be discovered and interpreted. Such structure and meaning are characteristic of religion in a general sense, and differentiate various religious phenomena. For phenomenologists, structures found in this way, although they are obtained through the analysis of certain limited religious phenomena, enjoy such merits as universality, permanence, and absoluteness (i.e. independent of time, place, and culture), and can be generalized to include all religions (C.f. Douglas Allen, 1987 & 2005).

For example, Max Scheler (1874–1928) studies such acts as “centering down (Versenkung), repentance,... entreaty, thanksgiving, praise, veneration, obedience, and the like,” as religious acts and finds out that they “are characterized by the fact that by their very essence they cannot be satisfied or “fulfilled” by any finite object of experience. At the same time they are deeply rooted in the very nature of man” (Herbert Spiegelberg, 1960, p 264). These acts are perceived to be manifestations of the Divine, characterized by “superiority to all other beings, universal efficacy, and holiness, the attribute which describes divine perfection in terms of its values. From these fundamental attributes, Scheler derives such additional aspects as spirituality (Geistigkeit) and personality” (Herbert Spiegelberg, 1960, p 263). Any human being is able to immediately perceive the Divine, and experience individual nullity (Nichtigkeit), being His creature and effect, relative and totally dependent on Him. Later,

however, he “interpreted God as a being who is only in the process of becoming real and whose only place of realization or ‘deification’ is man” (Spiegelberg, 1960, p 265). The essence and the quality of the subject of religious acts notwithstanding, two characteristics are identified in this definition of religious acts: 1) being the result of a need or feeling deeply rooted in human being, and 2) its subject should be infinite.

On the other hand, in James Cox’s definition of the phenomenology of religion, religion is assumed as a social construct instead of an individual experience or act. For him,

The phenomenology of religion is a method ... [for] the study of identifiable communities which base their acts of believing and resulting communal experience of postulated non-falsifiable alternate realities on a tradition that they legitimate by appealing to its authoritative transmission from generation to generation (C.f. James Cox, 2010, p. 48; qtd. In Jonathan D. F. Tuckett, 2014, p 32).

Some points about phenomenology deserve clarification:

Phenomenologists claim that they systematically inquire about what immediately appears to human being, by “immediate experience” they mean sense experience. According to the epistemological arguments, immediate knowledge is restricted to “knowledge by presence”, while sense perception is only obtained through sense organs and the neural system. Even conceptualization, interpretation, analysis, and concluding from what is known through knowledge by presence is done in the realm of knowledge by representation, and is liable to the rules of logic and epistemology.

Phenomenologists do not offer any definitive method for discovering universal structures and essential meanings of phenomena (including religious phenomena), and it seems that it is done, to the most extent, arbitrarily. Therefore, claims in this regard depend on individual circumstances, and cannot be academically established, nor refuted.

There is no criterion for the justification and establishing the truth of results in phenomenology. In the absence of logical measures and methodologies, it has no other choice except and give in to epistemological relativism; an idea that destroys the foundation of any school of thought.

Phenomenology's claim to simply describing phenomena without any judgment about them is illogical, because discovering universal structures and essential meanings is impossible without comparison, analysis, criticism, and rational argument.

Phenomenologists have to explain: what is the basis for choosing some behaviors, ceremonies, and experiences as "religious phenomena" in the first place. It is obvious that they have presupposed, perhaps unconsciously, some criteria for the religiosity of a phenomenon. And this is enough to put their claim to epoché (disregarding all that they already know) into question. Furthermore, this makes a vicious circle in this theory, because they are to discover the essence of religion by analyzing the same phenomena.

Phenomenology of religion exceeds the description and analysis of personal phenomena, and by appealing to other people's religious assertions, tries to find some commonalities between them. This is while others' claims are not subject to the researcher's immediate experience, and it means a methodological inconsistency in its establishing its basic ideas.

Phenomenologists of religion try to come up with general structures and essential meanings for religion by studying some limited instances of what they call religious acts and experiences. This is not logically productive, since general results do not logically follow particular premises, especially in such notions as religion that is not a notion of quiddity (For more criticisms of phenomenology, see: Neisser, 1959, p 198-212; Allen, 1987 & 2005).

#### **4. Religion as Feeling**

Friedrich Schleiermacher reduces religion to a mere feeling, while taking its whole theoretical and practical content as peripheral. For him, "[r]eligion's

essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling” (Friedrich Schleiermacher, 1988 , p.102, 136). It is a feeling of dependence and lack of autonomy (Schleiermacher, 1985). “Religion is the sensibility and taste for the infinite.” (Ibid, p 103) In other words, religion is a feeling of dependence on a superior and infinite being, and “[t]hus to accept everything individual as a part of the whole and everything limited as a representation of the infinite is religion” (Ibid, p 105). For Schleiermacher, it is not important what the subject of this feeling and the instance of the infinite is. It can be God, idol, humanity, universe, or anything to which one’s imagination may lead (Ibid, p 138).

But such definition for religion neither is inclusive to encompass all that is called by the name religion, because many Eastern religions do not verify such feeling. It is neither exclusive to exclude all that is not religion, because even those people who blatantly are irreligious or anti-religion also may have feelings of dependence, but they consider the subject of their feeling a materialistic or illusory entity. Moreover, there would be no feeling of dependence without any kind of knowledge and belief about an entity, albeit ambiguous. Therefore, downplaying, or even denying, the belief part of religion is not acceptable.

And the last point in this regard is that such an ambiguous feeling cannot have any role, whether positive or negative, in the human sciences; that is, in our knowledge of the human essence, or in our description, explanation, or steering human actions, reactions, or any social phenomena. This is obvious from Schleiermacher’s emphasis that religion neither is metaphysics, so that it can provide a view on the world and the human being, nor is it ethics so that it gives direction to individual or social actions. The only function, however weak, that is imaginable for religion by this definition is its role in the interpretation of religious rituals, performed by adherents of various religions because of their feeling of dependence on an infinite and primordial God.



## 5. Religion as Culture

Another approach to religion is a multifaceted approach that tries not to reduce religion to one of its functions, but considers religion as culture. It pays attention to the feelings and affections resulting from beliefs about the world and human being as well as observing religious rites by the adherents of a given religion. Amongst Western theoreticians, those belonging to Interpretivism or Hermeneutics, some cultural anthropologists, and psychologists of knowledge adhere to this perspective on religion.

### 5.1. Interpretivism: Religion as Part of Tradition

Wilhelm Dilthey, as one of the founders of interpretivism in German philosophy and the human sciences, thinks of the internal meaning of human affairs and actions as a result of the “cultural system” governing one’s mind, called “tradition”. He considers tradition and cultural system to include the economic life, law, ethics, religion, language, arts, and sciences (Dilthey, 1989, p 447-451). He seeks the roots of values and aesthetics in ethical and religious systems (Ibid, p 99). Once Peter Winch, following Wittgenstein, supposed religion and science as two forms of life and two separate categories with two independent logic. However, in his introduction to the second print of his book, he considers them not only as overlapping (Ibid, p xv), but as having internal connection, in a way that none of them can be understood without the other (Winch, 1990, p 100).

It is noteworthy that the role this theory accepts for religion is restricted to the status of description and interpretation of others’ behaviors. It does not admit for it any role in the analysis, explanation, and prescription of actions. This is true so far as one wants to understand the meaning of the actions performed by the adherents of another religion from their own points of views But it denies the possibility of discovering the cause of such behaviors, their evaluation, coming up with solutions for social problems, or improving individual behaviors towards human perfection on the basis of true religious foundations.

## 5.2. Anthropology: Religion as a Cultural System

Some anthropologists deem religion as a cultural system. For instance, Evans-Pritchard<sup>v</sup>, an English anthropologist, and Clifford Geertz, an American cultural anthropologist, have tried such a comprehensive approach, though none of them paid attention to all dimensions of religion. Evans-Pritchard believes: “there is no doubt that religion has something to do with both reason and affections, and it has close relations to social organization, but it cannot be explained merely by one of them. Religion should be comprehensively explained by its relation to all other factors and affairs in society.”

Geertz speaks of religion as a cultural system, composed of ideas and beliefs about the world, and a tendency towards feelings and behaviors according to those beliefs. Emphasizing religion’s symbolic dimension, with an eye on different aspects and features of religion, he defines religion in this way:

A system of symbols whose function is (2) to create strong, universal, and longstanding emotions and motivations in human beings by (3) formulating certain understandings of a universal order of the world, and (4) actualizing such understandings, so that (5) those emotions and motivations seem uniquely real (Geertz, 1993, p. 90 [pp. 87-125]).

As one can see, these two definitions take emotional as well as theoretical aspects of religion seriously, and Geertz pays more attention to the symbolic dimension of religion. But none of these theories look at religion as a program for life, disregarding its individual guidelines and social action-guides. This is against the obvious reality of most religions, especially Divine religions, and more specifically, Islam. Another problem with these theories, which is a methodological flaw, is that they are content with their partial studies of religious phenomena in a limited number of societies, and have generalized their findings, without any methodological justification, to all religions, and even to the nature of religion as such. Another problem with Geertz’ theory that has raised a lot of criticisms is his overlooking of the theoretical aspect of religion and the worldview it provides for its adherents.

## Psychology of Knowledge: Religion as a Source for Non-scientific Conjectures

Before explaining this viewpoint, it is necessary to briefly introduce two technical terms, developed by the logical empiricist philosopher, Hans Reichenbach (1891-1953). In order to discriminate between an epistemological and a psychological approach to knowledge, he coined the terms “context of discovery” and “context of justification”. He thinks that the difference between the two contexts can be shown by reflecting on the difference between the way a researcher comes to a theory, and the way he (or she) presents it to others. According to him, the process of coming to a theory does not necessarily follow logical and epistemological rules. Therefore, Reichenbach puts the burden of such a study on psychology. On the other hand, epistemology aims at discovering logical and epistemological rules for correct thinking. In other words, epistemology is concerned with how one should think, and not how one actually thinks. He explains that “I suggest two terms of the context of discovery and context of justification to establish this difference” (Reichenbach, 1938, p. 4-7).

Karl Popper, the English philosopher of science and theoretician of falsificationism, has accepted Reichenbach’s discrimination, and has based his theory on “the logic of scientific discovery” on these foundations. He says: “any discovery includes “a non-rational element”, or “a creative intuition” (Karl Popper, 2002, p. 7-8). Some writers have concluded that the context of discovery is free from methodological rules, and it is permissible, or even sometimes indispensable, to use one’s pre-understandings, social values, personal interests, and irrelevant sources such as dreams and superstitions. For this reason, they conclude that using religious teachings is acceptable in the context of discovery. However, an assumption resulting from such a process has no scientific validity unless it survives experimental tests. Therefore, religious statements per se lack any epistemological validity. On the contrary, the epistemological value of any statement depends on strictly observing experimental methods, because they suppose that the only valid method is empirical methodology (Harding, 2003, p.

295). As a result, to justify and judge about assumptions and conjectures produced in the first step, one should not rely on religious teachings because according to Reichenbach, a statement is useful only if it can be experimentally tested (Reichenbach, 1938, p. 69).

Obviously, this theory, though antagonistic to positivism in some aspects, follows the same empirical principles, and is exposed to the same flaws and criticisms. For example, its basic principle of denying “any way to understand reality except experiment” is neither justifiable, nor refutable through experiment. Putting religion and superstitions on the same footing is another version of the positivist stance on religion. It not only disregards religion in serious matters of knowledge and life, but also disrespects religion by assuming it as an obstacle to a realistic knowledge.

## **6. Religion as an Agenda for Eternal Beatitude**

Another approach to religion relies on the rationale that established the need for religion in the first place. In other words, it says: we establish the basic need for religion on the basis of rational arguments, so we have to find out what features reason deems necessary for such a thing called religion. The answer, in sum, is that: 1) the world and the human being is created by a Wise Creator for a certain cause; 2) This material world is too limited to allow human beings to attain the final goal of creation and eternal beatitude, so there should be another world; 3) Eternal beatitude is attainable through intentional and voluntary actions in this world; 4) Human beings need a detailed knowledge about what one’s eternal beatitude is, and what is the relation of each and every voluntary action with the eternal beatitude; 5) Therefore, the Wise Creator must give human beings the detailed information about the eternal beatitude and the way to attain it, whether through general means of knowledge such as intellect, intuition, or sense perception, or through Divine prophets and their successors.” The sum of such teachings and information is called “religion”. So religion can be introduced as “the sum of certain beliefs, values, and practical decrees that

show the eternal beatitude and the way to attain it". These three pillars of religion are not separate from, and independent of, each other, but rather interconnected in a coherent and organic hierarchical system. It means that practical rules are products of certain moral values, which in their own turn stem from certain beliefs about the world and the essence of the human being and his destiny.

There are many religions, or systems of "belief-value-action" in the world. The more they correspond to the reality of the world and that of human being, the more positive role they play in steering humanity towards perfection and real beatitude. On the contrary, so far as a religion diverges from reality, it misguides people. Appreciating the truth of a religion follows logical, epistemological, and ontological standards that should be strictly observed in any of the components of a religion.

According to this approach, the scope of religion includes all beliefs, practical values, and human actions, bringing in individual and social, material and spiritual affairs, whether they belong in the first place to this world or to the hereafter. The only condition for all such matters is that their relation to human eternal beatitude should be taken into consideration. Therefore, human need for religion is not restricted to individual and ritual affairs. For the same reason, Divine guidance involves answering all human wants regarding his beatitude. It is established in its proper place that human eternal beatitude (or misery for that matter) depends on voluntary actions in this world. So, actions that are subject to religious judgment are limited to voluntary actions.

## References

- Rudolf Otto, 1952, *The Idea of the Holy*, Translated by John W. Harvey, London and New York, Oxford University Press.
- Peter L. Berger, 1967, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York and London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland: Doubleday.
- Mircea Eliade, 1957, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*, tr. Willard R. Trask, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World.
- Deepak Mehta, 1991, "Review of Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion and the Scope of Rationality* [The Lweis Henry Morgan Lectures, 1984]", *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, New Series 25/2, p 345.
- É. Durkheim, 1915, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, tr. Joseph Ward Swain, London, George Allen & Unwin.
- É. Durkheim, *Année Sociologique*, II (1899), p. 11, qtd. in Jesús Romero Moñivas, "Science and Religion in the Sociology of Émile Durkheim", *European Journal of Science and Theology*, March 2007, Vol.3, No.1, p. 26.
- É. Durkheim, 1929, "Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie", *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, T. 36, No. 1, p 57.
- Karl Marx, 1964, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction," in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels on Religion*, introduced by Reinhold Neibuhr, New York, Schocken Books.
- Herbert Spiegelberg, 1960, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*, Netherlands, Springer.
- Douglas Allen, 1987 & 2005, *Phenomenology of Religion*, [http://www.interculturel.org/documente/phenomenology\\_of\\_religion.pdf](http://www.interculturel.org/documente/phenomenology_of_religion.pdf).
- James Cox, 2010, *An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion*, London, Continuum
- Jonathan D. F. Tuckett, 2014, *Phenomenological Critique of the Idea of Social Science*, Ph.D. Thesis, School of Literature and Languages, University of Stirling.
- Hans P. Neisser, 1959, "The Phenomenological Approach in Social Science", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 20, No. 2, p 198-212.
- Friedrich Schleiermacher, 1988, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- F. Schleiermacher, 1985, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart ,NY, Harper-Torchbooks.
- Wilhelm Dilthey, 1989, *Introduction to the Human Sciences* [Selected Works, Vol. I], Edited, with an Introduction by Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, New Jersey, Princeton, Princeton University Press.

- Peter Winch, 1990, *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, London, Routledge.
- Clifford Geertz, 1993, "Religion as a cultural system", in Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*, Fontana Press, p. 90.
- Hans Reichenbach, 1938, *Experience and Prediction*, Illinois, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.
- Karl Popper, 2002, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Sandra Harding, 2003, "How Standpoint Methodology Informs Philosophy of Social Science", *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, ed. by Stephen P. Turner and Paul A. Roth, Blackwell.

## Endnotes

---

1. The term Phenomenology has different, and sometimes opposing, uses.
2. Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973)
3. It refers to a transmitted saying by Imam Musa Kazim (peace be upon him) that says:
 

«إِنَّ لِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حُجَّتَيْنِ، حُجَّةٌ ظَاهِرَةٌ وَحُجَّةٌ بَاطِنَةٌ؛ فَأَمَّا الظَّاهِرَةُ فَالرُّسُلُ وَالْأَنْبِيَاءُ وَالْأَئِمَّةُ وَأَمَّا الْبَاطِنَةُ فَالْعُقُولُ» (اصول کافی، ج ۱، ص ۱۶).





## Futuwwah in Islamic Culture and Mysticism

Mohammad Fanaei Eshkevari/ Professor of comparative philosophy, *IKI*

Received: 2020/09/25 - Accepted: 2021/01/01

### Abstract

Youth is the period of capabilities, physical and spiritual vitalities and the peak of human activities. Youths are full of potentiality, motivation and are ready for struggling with tough challenges and innovating great changes within themselves and in the outside world. In line with this fact, in Islamic teachings the perspective of youth is much positive and optimistic. Accordingly, in Islamic culture the concept of Futuwwah (youthful manhood and chivalry) is introduced, promoted and expanded and became a source of formation of movements which were highly influential and effective throughout centuries. People of Futuwwah are recognized with noble qualities and honors, on top of which are qualities such as courage, honesty, hospitality and generosity. Before Islam there were some sorts of Futuwwah among Persians, Arabs and probably other nations, but in the Islamic era the concept of Futuwwah with the inspiration from the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet and his household ingrained with Islamic teachings and received an Islamic color and flavor. The concept of Futuwwah has been mentioned in the Quran in different forms and individuals such as the prophet Abraham, Joseph and the Companions of the Cave (*aṣḥāb al kahf*) are described as youth. The best example of fata (the youth) in Islam is Prophet Mohammad, who is known as the master of youths. Next to the Prophet, Ali bin Abi Talib is known as the model index of Futuwwah. In this paper, I will touch in brief the Futuwwah movement, its essence and its relation to Sufism and some other social movements, as well as its relevance to the contemporary life.

**Key Words:** Futuwwah, chivalry, youth, Sufism, noble qualities, brotherhood.

## Introduction

Youth is the period of talent and potentiality in all aspects of human personality: physical, mental, moral and spiritual. The youths seek truth, ideals and perfection. Due to the capabilities, passion and hilarity of youths, they are more prepared for changes than other age groups and the obstacles of progress and change in them are less than those of elders. Youths have less attachment to this-worldly and materialistic attractions; therefor they are more prepared for creating positive changes within themselves. Because of this, human personality in different aspects is mainly determined in this period of life. These features have caused youthful manhood to have a positive concept in all cultures, so that even those who are not young in terms of age and appearance, but have valuable moral and spiritual characteristics are called young and chivalrous and besides the youth of the body, the youth of heart is proposed, which would not get old by ageing and exhaustion of body.

In Islamic culture the concept of *Futuwwah/javanmardi* (youthful manhood and chivalry) is introduced, promoted and expanded and became a source of formation of movements which were highly influential and effective throughout centuries. Of course "Futuwwah" in this context refers to a kind of personality and character rather than an age group. People of Futuwwah are recognized with noble qualities and honors, on top of which are qualities such as courage, honesty, hospitality and forgiveness. They used to support oppressed people and struggle for establishing justice, security and peace, especially in the absence of powerful legitimate rulers.

The word "fata" means young man and refers to a kind of righteous young manliness. In the Quran Abraham, Joseph and Joshua and the Companions of the Cave (aşhāb al kahf) are described as youth.

Sometimes other terms are used in this sense. For example, the Quran talks about manhood. "*Within it (the mosque) is men who love to purify themselves; and Allah loves those who purify themselves.*" (Quran, Al-Tawbah: 108) Another verse says: "*Among the believers are men who have been true to their covenant*

with Allah: of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait: but they have never changed (their determination) in the least" (Quran, Al-Ahzab: 23).

Another term in this regard is the term *ukhuwwa* (brotherhood). The Quran says: "*the believers are brothers*". Later in Islamic history the term *akhy* (my brother) is used in a sense close to *fata*.

Another related word is *muruwwa* which means compassion, clemency, and humanity. Muruwwa sometime is used as equivalent to Futuwwah and sometime muruwwah is seen as one of the qualities of Futuwwah.

## Background

Before Islam there were some sorts of Futuwwah among Persians, Arabs and probably other nations, but in the Islamic era the concept of Futuwwah with the inspiration from the Quran and the tradition of the Prophet and his household ingrained with Islamic teachings and received an Islamic content and flavor. As I mentioned, the concept of Futuwwah has been mentioned in the Quran in different forms and different individuals are described as youths and authors of Futuwwah consider prophets such as Adam, Noah and Abraham as forefathers and pioneers of Futuwwah.

Abraham is the father of *fityan* (youths) because of different reasons, such as his sincerity in *tawhid* (unification of God) and his love of God, his struggle against polytheism, his generosity, and his attempt in sacrificing his son for the sake of God. Quran describes Abraham as *fata* (young) when talks about his struggle against idol worshipping: "*So he made them [idols] into fragments, except a large one among them that they might return to it [and question]. They said, "Who has done this to our gods? Indeed, he is of the wrongdoers." They said, "We heard a young man mention them who is called Abraham"* (Quran, Al-Anbiya: 58-60). Abubakr Zarkub (d.712 AH) writes:

**When pagans through Abraham by mangonel into the fire because of His monotheism, angel Gabriel came to him in the air and said to Abraham: "Do**

you have any request?" "As to you, no; God's knowledge of my status is enough for me", Abraham replied. Afterward the fire became rose garden for him and he remained secure, for God said to the fire: "*O fire, be coolness and safety upon Abraham*" (Quran, Al-Anbiya: 69) (Zarkub, 1370, p 173).

Ishmael is another example of fata (youth), because he submitted to the will of God and became ready to be sacrificed by his father and encouraged his father in doing his mission. "*Then, when (the son) reached (the age of) (serious) work with him, he said: O my son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: Now see what is thy view!*" (The son) said: "*O my father! Do as thou art commanded: thou will find me, if Allah so wills one practicing Patience and Constancy!*" (Quran, As Saffat: 102).

Joseph is another example of fata. It was he who escaped from committing the sin and preferred to be imprisoned rather than committing the sin. He is a fata because of his forgiving his brothers who deed injustice to him. He said, "*No blame will there be upon you today. Allah will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful*" (Quran, Yusuf: 91-92).

A small group of the believers that the Quran calls them the Companions of the Cave (aşhāb al kahf), are described as youths (fityah). Since they lived in a time when they were persecuted for their beliefs, they left the city (Ephesus) and took refuge in a cave where they fell asleep. When they woke up, they realized that they have slept more than 300 years and the people of their city had become believers. Quran praises these youths for their devotion to Allah: "*It is We who relate to you, [O Muhammad], their story in truth. Indeed, they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance*" (Quran, Al-Kahf: 18).

The best example of fata (the youth) in Islam is Prophet Mohammad, who is known as the master of youths (Sayyid al-fityan). People of Futuwwah consider Prophet Muhammad as the heir of prophets' Futuwwah. Abu Hafis Suhravardi, a Sufi master, says:

"Futuwwah from Adam transmitted to Shīth [Seth], from Shīth to Abraham, from Abraham to Ishmael (peace be upon them), and similarly generation after generation till upon the prophethood of our master Muhammad (peace be upon him)" (Suhravardi, 1370, p.112).

He was the master of youths, for in moral virtues he reached to a point that Allah said: "*And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character*" (Quran, Al-Qalam: 4). He was the best example for virtues of Futuwwah such as courage, generosity, forgiveness, and compassion. When he concord Mecca, he forgave all his enemies, whom have treated him the worst way they could. He declared: I say to you what my brother Joseph said to his brothers: "No blame will there be upon you today."

Next to the Prophet, Ali bin Abi Talib is known as the model index of Futuwwah and the king of men (shahi mardan); because he was both young in term of age in the time of the Prophet and due to his adherence to the Prophet, he was on the peak of manliness traits, such as bravery, generosity, piety and justice. Other Imams who are descendants of prophet and Ali are also considered as perfect examples of Futuwwah. According to Shi'a, the inheritor of the Futuwwah of all prophets and saints and the seal of the youths is Imam Mahdi the awaited Imam of Shi'a.

*Fityan/javanmardan* (people of Futuwwah) refer to different events in the life of Imam Ali as manifestations of his Futuwwah. For example, after a long day of fasting when he wanted to break his fast, a poor man knocked he door and asked him for food and along with his wife Fatima and sons he gave all that they had to the needy and broke their fast only with water. This story was repeated three successive days about which the following verse of the Quran was revealed: "*And they feed, for the love of God, the indigent, the orphan, and the captive*" (Al-Nisa: 8).

An example of his sacrificial act is what happened in the Laylatul Mabeet (the night of sleeping in the Prophet's bed). When the pagans decided to assassinate the Prophet in his bed, prophet migrated to Medina and Ali slept in the Prophet's bed and saved his life. His bravery is admitted by all. He never turned his back to enemy in the battlefield. It is famous that in the battel of Ohud while he was fighting the prophet shouted: "*lā fata 'illā 'Alī; lā sayf 'illā Dū l-Fiqār.*" "There is

no hero (young man) like Ali; There is no sword like Dū l-Fiqār," the latter being the name of his sword. It is also narrated that Jibraeil (Gabrial "Lord of Angels") said this.



Abu Hafis Suhrawardi says: "Futuwwah transmitted from the master of people Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to the Commander of Faithfulls [Ali] (may God be pleased with him) who was from the family of the Master and was his cosine. And the Master said about Ali: "O Ali: You are to me like Aaron to Moses." (Suhrawardi, p. 101) Because of this, all fityan, like Sufis, try to connect the chain of their authority to Ali. "Thus all fityan follow Ali and whatever they find is because of this following. Then Futuwah transmitted from Ali to his descendants and Salman and Safwan" (Amuli, 1370, p. 64).

## Historical Development

In the second century of Islamic era Futuwah and Sufism linked together which led to the emergence of different youths' movements. Consequently, some works which are known as "Futuwwat nam-e" (letter of youthful) were compiled in this field. Some Sufis such as Abulqasim Qushayri, Faridduddin Attar, and Abdullah Ansari, Ibn Arabi in their works discussed Futuwah and the characters of a fata; and some other Sufis compiled independent treatises on Futuwah, like Abu Abdurrahman Sulami, Abu Hafis Suhrawardi, Sayyid Ali Hamadani, Abdurrazzaq Kashani, and Mulla Husain Kashifi. They insist that a real Sufi is a fata as a real fata is a Sufi. Muhammad Amuly points out that Futuwah is a precondition for being a Sufi (tasawwuf) and without it Sufism is not complete. (Quoted by Riyaz, 1382, p. 50) In fact, if we look at the history of Futuwah movement, we see that Sufism with its restrict discipline is the spirituality of elites and Futuwah is more popular and constitute the spirituality of a larger number of people. In other words, one cannot expect all people to become Sufi,

however it is reasonable to invite all to Futuwwah. Sayyid Ali Hamadani says in this regard that spiritually people are in three hierarchical categories: ordinary people that constitutes majority, people of Futuwwah, and Sufis. Then he advises the reader that if you are not ready to be a Sufi try to be a fata (Hamadani, 1382, p. 181).

A Sufi movement which is intermingled with Futuwwah is Malamatiyyah which is founded by Abu Hafs Hadad Nishaburi (d. between 264-270 H). One of the most famous works in this regard is 'Abdurahman Sulami's treaties on Malamatiyyah. Some believe that Malamatiyyah is highly influenced by Futuwwah and most of Malamatiyyah teachings are taken from Futuwwah (Afifi, 1376, p. 49) For example, qualities that Sulami mentions for Malamatiyyah (in his Kitab al-Futuwwah) are the same qualities of Futuwwah. Malamatiyyah used to see the pride (kibr) and hypocrisy (riya) as the worst calamities of the soul and thus exaggerate on opposing the desires of the soul and enduring humility and blames of people. (See Qushayri, 1391, p. 61) Other groups such as 'Ayyaran and Qalandariyyah are also affected by Futuwwah.

The focus of Sufism, like that of other mystical traditions, is on individual spiritual perfection through purification of heart and contemplative life. This lifestyle sometime leads to negligence of the social aspects of life so that mysticism in general is accused of being indifferent with regard to humanity, while Islam as a religion has a strong social dimension. We can say that Futuwwah movement in Islamic culture represents in fact the social aspect of Islamic spirituality and constitutes the social dimension of Sufism.

In addition, by emphasizing on values such as love, care, humbleness, serving, benevolence, hospitality, courage, sincerity, etc., it confronts some abnormalities and deviations that may occur on isolated mystical and ascetic life. In other words, Futuwwah represents the humanitarian dimension of Islam and Islamic spirituality. The ideal man of Islam is neither an isolated worshiper, nor a battlefield warrior and nor a social activist alone; rather the perfect man is the one who has cultivated all these elements in a balanced way in his personality. This is what Islamic examples such as the Prophet and Imam Ali represent in their personalities.

In some areas in Islamic world, such as Anatolia, groups of Futuwwah were shaped that were called *ikhwa* meaning brothers. *Fata* is called *akhy*, literally means my brother. This concept also has its root in the Quran where it says "*Indeed believers are brothers.*" (Quran, Al-Hujurat: 10). They were insisted on helping travelers and strangers (Riyaz, 1382, p. 93).

One important quality in Futuwwah is bravery. In order to help oppressed and resist against oppressors, *fityan* must be brave and strong. Therefore, they were interested in sports such as wrestling, horse riding, fencing, and shooting. *Zurkhaneh*, the traditional sport club, has been a spiritual place for the traditional sport. Some of *fityan* were champions of *zurkhaneh* that were known as *pahlavan*. A popular *pahlavan* must combine between physical strength and moral and spiritual virtues. One of the traditional legendary heroes of this type is *Puriya-ye Vali* who lived in the first part of eight century AH.

Another development in Futuwwah was the emergence of Futuwwah among different social groups and craftsmen such as barbers, chintz makers, bakers, butchers, etc. Usually each of these groupes had its own Futuwwaht name (book of Futuuwwa) in which its rules and regulations and its moral and spiritual code of conduct were written.

It is interesting that each group relates its crafts to one of the prophets and takes preferably Adam as the founder of that craft. They believe that the principles and instruments of these crafts also came down from heaven. For example, in a treatise on butchery the author says that angle Gabriel brought to Adam the principles of butchery and from Adam it transformed to the prophet Shith, and from Shith to Noah, and from Noah to Moses, and from Moses to Abraham (Resale Qassaban, in Afshari, 1381, p. 194).

It should be noticed that question about historical validity of these kinds of claims is irrelevant. The point is that they used to try in this way to give spiritual meaning and flavor to their crafts, as they tried to connect each part of their crafts to a verse of Quran.

When Futuwwah shaped as a social movement with its own organizations and regulations, gradually some rituals have been shaped among them. It developed its hierarchical system and a very detailed rules and formalities. For example, one



most wear a special close which includes trousers, belt and sash and most drink a concoction containing salt and water called shurb al murada'ah by the hand of the master. A fata must follow a master and serve him.

## The Nature of Futuwwah

Kashifi (840-910 AH) talks about Futuwwah as a branch of Sufism. He says:

**The subject matter of the science of Futuwwah is human being in so far as being the willful agent of beatific acts and praised qualities and avoiding the ugly acts and moral vices... Futuwwah has three stages: first, generosity that whatever one possesses does not abstain from others. Second, sincerity, so that one cleans his heart from pride and animosity. And the last is loyalty to both people and God... The science of Futuwwah is a noble science and is a branch of science of Sufism and unification of God (Quoted by Riyaz, 1382, p. 16).**

Here I talk about Futuwwah not as a science but as a bunch of characters and a social movement. Futuwwah is a specific type of personality consists of some moral, spiritual and even physical qualities. Abdurrahman Sulami (d. 412 AH), one of the earliest authors on Futuwwah, devoted a howl book on listing the qualities required in Futuwwah. (Abdurrahman Sulami, *Kitaul Futuwwah*) According to some, the three attributes of generosity, sincerity and loyalty (sakha, safa, wafa) constitute the essence of Futuwwah. Kashifi considers generosity and courage as the top qualities of a fata. Generosity leads to doing good to friends and courage leads to repelling the harm of enemies from them (Ibid).

Sayyid Ali Hamadani (714-786 AH), a Shi'a Sufi master, mentions obedience, serving, compassion, and doing duties of brotherhood as main qualities of a fata. (Hamadani, in Riyaz, 1382, p. 187) In his view, the root of all virtues and all positive and perfect qualities depend on Futuwwah (Ibid, p.155). He quotes Imam Ali saying: "Futuwwah has four pillars: forgiveness while in power, forbearance in the time of anger, benevolence in animosity, generosity while oneself is in need (Ibid, p.165).

Najmuddin Zarkub emphasizes on the mystical aspect of Futuwwah and states that Futuwwah is a synonym of wilayah (sanctity/ friendship with God). Thus Futuwwah is to be straight and in the straight path in all dimensions: in word, in action and in inner states, thus encompassing shari'a (religious law), tariqa (mystical path) and haqiqa (truth). (Zarkub, 1372, p. 169) Elsewhere he mentions that Futuwwah is a part of prophethood (nubuwwah) in the sense that one of the qualities of a prophet is Futuwwah. He quotes Shaikh Marandi who says that Futuwwah is a branch of prophethood (Suhravardi, p. 98).

Suhravardi mentions that Futuwwah has twelve pillars: six apparent and six hidden. The six apparent pillars of Futuwwah are band of pants (chastity), band of stomach (eating lawfully), band of tongue, band of ear and eye, band of hand and foot, and band of greed and longitude. The six hidden and inner pillars of Futuwwah are: generosity, benevolence, humbleness, forgiveness, self-annihilation and awareness (Suhravardi, 1370, p. 94).

According to Abdurrazzaq Kashani (d. 730-735 AH) Futuwwah is between muruwwah and wilayah. Muruwwah is commitment to moral virtues and liberation from moral vices. Futuwwah is the perfection of morality and its firmness in the soul. And wilayah is the state of annihilation in unity. "Thus muruwwah is the straightness and purity of one's essence and Futuwwah is its lightness and brightness. As muruwwah is the foundation of Futuwwah, the latter is the foundation of wilayah. One who has no muruwwah has no Futuwwah and he who has no Futuwwah can never achieve wilayah." Thus Futuwwah is an essential element in mystical perfection. (Kashani, 1369, p. 224) He elaborates that wilayah is Sufism and Futuwwah is part and parcel of Sufism, as wilayah is part of prophethood. Thus, one may be a fata but not yet a Sufi (Ibid, p. 233).

All virtues are important for a fata; however, in Futuwwah the emphasis is on some specific virtues. As narrated from Imam Ali, the principles of Futuwwah are eight virtues: loyalty, truthfulness, tranquility, generosity, humbleness, benevolence, guidedness and repentance. Without these qualities one cannot be a fata (Ibid, p. 234).

As we see, in Futuwwah the emphasis is on altruism, love of others, taking care of others and respecting others' rights. Hamadani writes: "From what we have said it became clear that all levels and qualities of Futuwwah are related to the rights of people." (Hamadani, 1382, p. 165) The first step in this way is to avoid harming others. The second step is compassion and benevolence to others and serving them and repelling the evil from them.

On the basis of this principle, fityan were serious in helping needy and helpless, and defending the rights of oppressed people. In some areas they used to build houses called Futuwwaht khane, zaviya, kharabat etc. in which they used to take care of travelers by providing them with accommodation and giving them food and drink and facilities for their comfort. They also had attention to the spiritual and intellectual needs of guests. Suhrawardi describes these centers: "All who come in these places will benefit and take their share from food, drink, clothes, shoes, expenditure, knowledge, wisdom, gnosis and courtesy" (Suhrawardi, 1370, p. 126).

It is well known that on the front of the khaniqah of the great Sufi Master Shaykh Abul Hasan Kharraqani (352-425 H) was written: "Whoever comes to this house, feed him and do not question him about his faith. For whoever is given life by Allah, deserves to eat from the table of Abul Hasan."

Suhrawardi says: the path of Futuwwah includes five ways: religious law (shari'a), mystical path (tariqa), truth (haqiqa), gnosis (ma'rifa), and unification of God (tawhid) (Ibid, p.160).

He further points out that Futuwwah goes beyond shari'a. "There are many things that in sharia are allowed, but in Futuwwah are not allowed. This does not mean that Futuwwah is against sharia; rather it means that for example if someone does something wrong against a fata the fata instead will do good to him, while according to shari'a one can retaliate by doing a similar act" (Ibid, p. 105).

Of course forgiveness is also part of shari'a. Shari'a says that the victim has right to retaliate, even though it is better for him to forgive, as the Quran explicitly mentions (Quran, Al-Maeida: 45).

An unknown Sufi author writes: "Futuwwah is like a tree that its origin is religious law, its root is mystical path, its branch is truth, its fruit is knowledge, its water is compassion, and its leave is honesty." (Afshari, 1371, p. 267)

From what we have said, we can know qualities that are incoherent with Futuwwah. Some of these qualities are: egoism, hedonism, opportunism, miserliness, stinginess, revenge, injustice, jealousy, suspicion, slandering, backbiting, disloyalty, apostasy, unchastity, dastardliness, pride, laziness, cowardice, usury. . . .

Committing acts that are incoherent with Futuwwah and adhering the qualities opposite to the qualities of Futuwwah, will destroy Futuwwah and cancel the membership of one in Futuwwah organization. Those who want to enter Futuwwah should leave aside their vices and qualify with moral virtues. Zarkub mentions forty qualities that one should put aside before entering Futuwwah. (Zarkub, p. 184) Those who cannot enter paradise cannot enter Futuwwah. The Prophet said: There are three groups that never enter paradise: murderers, alcohol addicts, and slanders (Majlisi, 1403, vol. 72, p. 264).

## **Decline of Futuwwah**

Although Futuwwah in description is a highly moral and spiritual movement and its founders and examples and many of its members have in fact been so; however, like any other social movements, some individuals and groups who called themselves *fata* went into astray and even some rebellions and criminal gangs and robbers called themselves *fata* and similar honorable titles.

Following this events, some reform movements in Futuwwah took place. A turning point in this development is the join of the Abbasid Khalif al-Nasir lidinillah (575-622 AH) to the Futuwwah movement and his attempts in fighting with rebellions and bringing Futuwwah groups under his own control.

Futuwwah movement with its ups and down has been present in Iran with different names until the period of Qajar dynasty. However due to the appearance of corruptions in groups called themselves people of Futuwwah, it declined and disappeared as a social movement. Although the *fityan* groups do not exist as social organizations these days, but the valuable essence of Futuwwah and its moral and spiritual heritages are still alive and fresh.

## **Need for Revival of Futuwwah**

The essence of Futuwwah is not its organization with its hierarchy, or its rituals. The essence of Futuwwah is its moral and humanitarian ideals. Fortunately, in our time we have seen some promising signs of its revival and presence in Iran and in some other areas like Iraq and Lebanon. After the victory of Islamic revolution in Iran we see the emergence of voluntary groups who follow the same ideals that true fityan were seeking. Popular movement of basij in defending the country against the aggression of Saddam Husain, who was supported by the United State of America and its allies, in which tens of thousands of these voluntary forces sacrificed their lives is a great example of Futuwwah.

Along with this development the emergence of voluntary individuals and groups who founded a movement known as Jihad Sazandegi (struggle for construction) is another good example of contemporary youth chivalrous. They help people especially in rural areas in cultivating their agricultural products, building houses, schools, medical clinics, providing them with healthy water and electricity and other basic needs. Those who are wealthy contribute in these activities with their financial aids, and others contribute by their knowledge, craft and laboring.

Nowadays which youths are involved in ethical and spiritual crises, the revival of Futuwwah and promoting its message can both meet the youths' sensation and ideals and lead them towards morality and spirituality. Revival of youth chivalrous movement in contemporary world can play a very constructive role in human situation and fill a great gap in contemporary world. It can do this by forbidding the evil and promoting the good, i.e., by removing the obstacles and creating the causes of human wellbeing.

## Bibliography

- Afifi, Abul 'Ala, Malamatiyyah, 1376 SH, *Sufiyyah wa Futuwwaht*, translated by Nusratullah Furuhar, Tehran, Ilham.
- Afshari, Mehran & Mehdi Madaeini (ed.), 1371 SH (=Solar Hijri Calender), *Chahardah Risaleh dar babe Futuwwat va Asnaf*, Tehran, Nashre Cheshme.
- Afshari, Mehran (ed.), "Resale Qassaban", in Afshari, Mehran & Mehdi Madaeini (ed.), 1371 SH, *Chahardah Risaleh dar babe Futuwwat va Asnaf*, Tehran: Nashre Cheshme.
- Afshari, Mehran (ed.), 1382 SH, *Futuwwat Name ha va Rasaeil-e Khaksariyyah*, Tehran: Pazhuhishgahe Ulume Insani.
- Kashani, Abdurrazzaq, 1369 SH, *Tuhfatul Eikhwan*, Tehran, Intisharate Eilmi va Farhngi.
- Kashifi Sabzevari, 1350 SH, *Mulla Husayn, Futuwwaht Name-e Sultani*, ed. Muhammad Jafar Mahjub, Tehran: Bunyad-e Farhang-e Iran.
- Majlisy, Muhammad Baqir, 1403 AH, *Bihar al-Anwar*, (vol. 72), Bierut: Dar, Ihya atturath al-Arabi.
- Qyshayri, Abdulkarim, 1391 SH, *Risaleh Qushayriyyah*, trans. By Abu Ali 'Uthmani, Tehran, Intisharate Elmi va Farhangi.
- Riyaz, Muhammad, 1382 SH, *Futuwwat Nameh*, Tehran: Asatir.
- Sulami, Abdurrahman, 1977, *Kitab al-Futuwwah*, ed. Suleyma Aates, Ankara, An Ankara University.
- Suhravardi, Abu Hafs, "Futuwwat Nameh", in Murtaza Sarraf (ed), 1370 SH, *Rasaeile Javanmardan*, Tehran: Muein
- Zarkub, Najmuddin, "Futuwwaht Name", in Murtaza Sarraf (ed.), 1370 SH, *Rasaeile Javanmardan*, Tehran: Muein.
- Amuly, Mhahamad, "Risale-ye Futuwwatiyyah", in Murtaza Sarraf (ed), 1370 SH, *Rasaeil-e Javanmardan*, Tehran: Intisharat-e Muein.
- Hamadani, Sayyed Ali, "Risale-ye Futuwwatiyyah", in Muhammad Riyaz, *Futuwwat Nameh*, Tehran: Asatir, 1382 SH.
- Riyaz, Muhammad, *Futuwwat Nameh*, Tehran: Asatir, 1382 SH.

## Encouragement of Youth to Religion in the Qur'an

Mohammad N. Saghaye Biria / Assistant Professor, *IKI*

Received: 2020/02/02 - Accepted: 2020/06/22

### Abstract:

The problem of heedlessness of youth to religion has spread throughout the world due to secular ideologies. The believers in God and the chain of great prophets are concerned about the welfare of their youth in this world and in the hereafter. What are the ways to encourage youth to accepting religion and practicing it? What is the viewpoint of the Quran? This article refers to the Quran using content analysis as its research method.

Studying facts and examples in the Quran suggests the following resolutions toward encouragement of youth to religion: 1. To build the future of youth with a divine and monotheistic pure intention and bear all difficulties of educating them (Investment of time effort, and capital). 2. To be attentive to youth education; but consider their power of choice. Our part is to elevate their understanding about religion and provide the background for their right decisions. 3. To try to keep and strengthen the family culture based on religious teachings. 4. To benefit from the opportunity of youth more readiness for acceptance and practice of religion compared to adults and seriously take action in their education. 5. To inform youth about the dangers of following temptations and obedience of Satan. 6. Not to hesitate introducing God to youth, and inviting them to become intimate with God. 7. To build a large religious community that supports religious culture and provides a religious umbrella including a strong set of religious conventional laws. This will be the most effective way to encourage youth to religion.

**Key Words:** youth, family, religious education, the Qur'an, spirituality.

## Introduction

Religion and religiosity has a background as long as man's life on the planet earth. We can say religion and the human being came to being together. Definition of religion is important because it determines the limits of the object of education in this research. Allameh Tabatabaei (1997, vol. 2, p. 130) defines religion as:

**“... a kind of conduction in this life which causes prosperity in this world in a way harmonious with the hereafter perfection and the eternal actual life before God, the Pure; therefore, there should be canons which refer to the states of life as needed.”**

Religious education is making gradual changes in individuals to move from being to becoming or change from potential state to real state based on religious goals and values in bodily, cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions (Sajedi, 2005, p. 95). Also it is teaching valid statements of a religion to other individuals in a way for them to become theoretically and practically loyal to its teachings (Ibid, p. 40). Therefore religious education is not limited to the mosque, church or seminary.

Religion has been always present and played an essential role in the intellectual and spiritual life of societies. Cavalli-Sforza et al. (1982) found a strong correlation of 0.92 for religious behavior of Catholic students and their parents. Conservative Protestants are similar to Roman Catholics in their ability to transmit their beliefs to their children (Beit and Argyle, 1997, p. 111). However, along with social changes and emergence of some obstacles, the ratio of religiosity faced a decline (Mahdizadeh, 2001).

The factors of desertion of religion vary in nature: some is rooted in a broad approach to religion that sometimes is referred to as secularization of religion or modern theology. Despite its attracting title, as Kord Firoozjaee (2005, p. 23) stated, in the process of secularization of religion, Christianity faced a fundamental change; it descended to the level of ordinary and secular world and no holiness remained in it. The modern theology totally belongs to the modern



realm and therefore it does not heed firmness and certainty; therefore, it does not believe in any religious fact that is stable; rather, it is ready to abandon any belief per demand of modern requirements. According to the Qur'an, it is not acceptable to change the religious facts for the sake of folks' worldly demands (Aali 'Imraan: 177 & At-Tawbah:9).

Youth religious education is a core concern of families in our time. Everywhere in the world, numerous traps and possible hazards such as erroneous beliefs, moral corruption, sexual deviation, drug abuse, gang activities and as such threaten the welfare of the youth. Practicing religion may be a remedy to all these problems and guarantee the welfare of the youth in both worlds. Hosein Zadeh & Mosharafi (2010, p. 41) in a case study through factor analysis reported six religious education pathological factors in students of Azad University in Ahar, Iran. Sorted according to their importance, these factors include: 1) religious problems, 2) lack of understanding youth's needs and difficulties, 3) incompetence of the religious centers, 4) shortcoming and heedlessness of parents, 5) cyberspace and 6) showing off.

The most important hazardous factors among the above six factors are religious problems. There are numerous factors which block religion in youth minds including: many religious teachings are just narrated without firm logical reasons; lack of patience and ability to listen to different questions of students in educators; just showering religious data by educators; lack of receiving related answers to their logical questions; and religious propagators' abusing their status for position or gaining secular goals (Ibid, p 50). As Faramarz Rafipoor (1999, p. 315) mentioned, the most important issue in religion is cognizance of and attesting God and secondly the method of attachment and relation to God.

A bad introduction to religion, weakness of religious logic in propagation, incorrect and shortsighted understandings that are done in the name of religion are the main reasons for ridiculing religion and a main factor of blasphemy. Imposing personal tastes regarding the meaning of life, clothes and haircut mode

and prevention from happiness and sexual relations in university campus are considered the most effective reasons for students to distance from religion (Motahhari, 1995, p. 182).

The problem of youth heedlessness to religion has spread worldwide because of certain reasons including secular ideologies that serve giant companies and industries. A large portion of these companies services are in conflict with religious values. Even in certain cases they are against human and family values of many cultures around the globe. Pornography industries, huge alcoholic beverage companies, legal medical firms for abortion are just few examples of such productions and services that are against religious values in general.

These firms mostly serve savage worldly desires of individuals which brings billions of dollars to the pocket of the owners of these firms. The media companies which are mostly owned and controlled by the same giant firms pave the ground for justification and secular philosophy and naturally convincing the community for such products and activities. This is done through scientific methods of communication and persuasion. Then, people are persuaded that such activities are but normative acts and never think of a world free of porno products, or other activities that are clearly against divine religious values. They also justify these activities under pretext of freedom and democracy.

The strong power of media and, swift development of internet and social networks worldwide are also at the service of these secular values. The complex technology of networking today allows the directors to analyze the global detailed data of users to guarantee the interest of these companies.

The believers in religion who share belief in God, in the chain of great prophets, belief in the hereafter and eternal abode, are concerned about the welfare of their youth in this world and in the hereafter.

Despite all these obstacles, a body of studies shows religion coming back to life. In 1980, Time magazine wrote that interest to research about religion is vitalized and God is coming back to the arena of human life (Azarbayjani, 2007).

Among psychologists, Galton has emphasized the positive effect of supplication; Jung believes religion is a remedy to pains and psychological disorders; William James (1902) has discussed the positive effects of religion (Shrifi Nia, 2010). Janbozorgi and Rezaee, (2017) showed the effectiveness of religious training in those seized in prison.

This article tries to answer the following questions:

What are the ways to encourage our youth to accepting religion and practicing it?

What is the viewpoint of the Quran and its teachings in this regard?

What resolutions may be inferred and introduced to this phenomenon?

This article refers to the most authentic Islamic sources, the Quran using content analysis as the research method.

At the outset, we refer to necessity of establishing a divine model family as a basic background for youth education; then, youth readiness for guidance will be examined; next, contesting negative factors will be discussed; attentiveness of the prophets to religious education of their offspring will come next; family educational factors will be discussed afterward, and necessity of establishing a righteous community concludes the article.

## **1. A Divine Model family a Basic Background for Youth Religious Education**

With building a divine family we mean a family in which God's religion is practiced. With model family we mean a family whose members are role models for each other as well as other people. In fact the members are role models for each other and the family is a role model for other families. The Qur'an teaches to supplicate for such a family:

«وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا»

And those who pray, "Our Lord! Grant unto us wives and offspring who will be the comfort of our eyes, and give us (the grace) to lead the righteous." (The Qur'an, 25: 74).

This means we are encouraged to develop a model family for the pious. Certainly, all members of a model family including its youth are pious and practice religion. We have to provide the background for the future of our youth through establishing a divine model family with a pure intention just for God and bear all difficulties on its way. In the history of prophets of God we read that Abraham (as) settled some of his offspring and his wife in a dry hot place near the Ka'ba for the same cause. The Qur'an quotes Abraham as supplicating:

«رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بُوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ»

"O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular Prayer: so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks" (The Qur'an, 14: 37).

A noteworthy point is that Abraham supplicates in plural form and two times addresses God as "our Lord," which may show that it was not just a decision made by him, it has been a collective decision. It means that I took this difficult decision with the consent of my wife. We take this lesson that consensus of parents in children is needed in educational planning.

Another point is that all these difficulties are tolerated because of the sacred place that was secluded on that time, the first house of worship, Ka'ba. This shows the importance and effectiveness of sacred places in long term youth educational plans. Abraham and his beloved wife and son should be put in these difficulties in order to establish prayer.

From the view of the Qur'an, parents as a basic educational goal should ask God for an upright generation. The Qur'an quoting Zachariah says:

«هُنَالِكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ»

"There did Zachariah pray to his Lord, saying: "O my Lord! Grant unto me from Thee a progeny that is pure: for Thou art He that heareth prayer!" (The Qur'an, 3: 38).

According to this verse, not only Zachariah wanted a child but also prayed for its purity. When we refer to ourselves, we want a vigorous and pure generation in physique and soul. Supplication for such a generation is the foothold for its future education. Although God would answer our supplication, similar to all other blessings, we need to plan for their protection through our educational hard work. Therefore, we need to supplicate to God for a healthy pure generation and after birth, we need to be concerned about their religious education and take proper actions to achieve this end. In this regard we mention two verses of the Qur'an:

«أَيُّودٌ أَحَدَكُمُ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضِعْفَاءُ فَاَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ»

“Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date-palms and vines and streams flowing underneath, and all kinds of fruit, while he is stricken with old age, and his children are not strong (enough to look after themselves)- that it should be caught in a whirlwind, with fire therein, and be burnt up? Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His) Signs; that ye may consider” (The Qur'an, 2: 266).

Because the answer to the question is clear, it is not worded in the verse; however, its answer is that you do not like such a thing happen to you. In other words it shows innate concern of parents for their children who are not strong enough to cope with world difficulties. When you are concerned about future of your generation in this world, how come you are heedless of their eternal life in the hereafter, which virtually depends on their purity and practice of piety?

The other verse, that is similar to the first one reads:

«وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَةً ضِعَافًا خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا» (النساء: 9).

Let those (disposing of an estate) have the same fear in their minds as they would have for their own if they had left a helpless family behind: Let them fear Allah, and speak words of appropriate (comfort) (Nisaa: 9).

According to general content of both verses, it is good to be concerned and take suitable action about the future of the youth.

After birth, even when one reaches the outmost strength point, meaning 40 years of age, one should not be heedless of his children. The Quran talks about man when he reaches 40 years of age, the outmost bodily and soul strength, in a time naturally has also children:

«وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ \* أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ فِي أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعَدَّ الصَّدُوقِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ» (الأحقاف: ١٦-١٥).

We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says, "O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou has bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as Thou mayest approve; and bring uprightness in my offspring for me. Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow (to Thee) in Islam" (al-Ahqaaf: 15).

Another noteworthy point is that parents should look at their children as a divine bliss not a materialistic resort. The Quran in this regard says:

«وَلَا تَكْرَهُوا فِتْيَاتِكُمْ عَلَىٰ الْبَغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ يُكْرِهِنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ» (النور: ٣٣).

...But force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that ye may make a gain in the goods of this life. But if anyone compels them, yet, after such compulsion, is Allah, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (to them) (al-Noor: 33).

If the meaning of “maid” is includes young daughters, then it is possible to say one example or at least one situation that is similar to forcing youth is to put them in a situation that committing sin is certain. This verse then may imply that we should provide a healthy situation for our youth in a way that they may freely practice religion.

Despite attentiveness of educators and positive conditions for religious education, there are some obstacles on the way. Therefore, it is not enough to plan only for constructive positive acts, but also we need negation of negative forces. The Quran quotes from Satan, after being rejected from the presence of God, swearing to work against Adam's offspring to deviate them from the right path:

«قَالَ أَرَأَيْتَكَ هَذَا الَّذِي كَرَّمْتَ عَلَيَّ لَئِنِ أَخَّرْتَنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَأُحْتَكِنَ ذُرِّيَّتَهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا» (الإسراء: ٦٢).

He said: "Seest Thou? this is the one whom Thou hast honoured above me! If Thou wilt but respite me to the Day of Judgment, I will surely bring his descendants under my sway - all but a few!" (al-Israa: 62).

The Quran warns us of Following Satan's path reminding us of a covenant not to follow Satan as a clear enemy:

«أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ \* وَأَنْ اعْبُدُونِي هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ \* وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنْكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ \* هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ \* أَصَلُّوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ» (يس: ٦٠-٦٤).

"Did I not enjoin on you, O ye Children of Adam, that ye should not worship Satan; for that he was to you an enemy avowed? \* "And that ye should worship Me, (for that) this was the Straight Way? \* "But he did lead astray a great multitude of you. Did ye not, then, understand? \* "This is the Hell of which ye were (repeatedly) warned! \* "Embrace ye the (fire) this Day, for that ye (persistently) rejected (Truth)" (Yaaseen: 60-64).

Therefore, parents should commend their children to protection of God, the same way that mother of Maryam did:

«فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَئِيسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ» (آل عمران: ٣٦).

When she was delivered, she said: "O my Lord! Behold! I am delivered of a female child!"- and Allah knew best what she brought forth- "And no wise is the male Like the female. I have named her Mary, and I commend her and her offspring to Thy protection from the Evil One, the Rejected" (Aali 'Imraan:37).

Elsewhere, God orders the believers to protect themselves and their family from hellfire:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَّا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ» (التحریم: ٦).

O ye who believe! save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who flinch not (from executing) the Commands they receive from Allah, but do (precisely) what they are commanded (al-Tahreem: 6).

The verse clearly indicates that protection depends on our actions and the education we provide for our offspring.

In another verse, the Quran introduces the Gahanna as the final abode of the Satan and its followers. When Satan sworn to mislead all human beings from the right path God addressed Satan and said:

«قَالَ اخْرُجْ مِنْهَا مَذْءُومًا مَّدْحُورًا لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ» (الأعراف: ١٨).

(Allah) said: "Get out from this, disgraced and expelled. If any of them follow thee,- Hell will I fill with you all (al-A'raaf: 18).

Therefore, the danger of Satan and its complicated plots for misleading our children and youth is real and the only way of redemption is fighting with Satan and tempting desires and practicing religion; this depends on our effort.

## 2. Attentiveness of the Prophets to Youth Education

The Quran narrates how prophets were active in advising their children teaching them the book and training them for piety; that is the reason we find chosen prophets of Allah among the offspring of them. The Quran in numerous verses has talked about the blessing of God to the prophets and their upright offspring.

The Quran praising Ibrahim says:

«وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ أَجْرَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ» (العنكبوت: ٢٧).

And We gave (Abraham) Isaac and Jacob, and ordained among his progeny Prophethood and Revelation, and We granted him his reward in this life; and he was in the Hereafter (of the company) of the Righteous (al-Ankaboot: 27).

Elsewhere, the Quran referring to Noah and Ibrahim says:



«وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ»  
(الحديد: ٢٦).

And We sent Noah and Abraham, and established in their line Prophethood and Revelation: and some of them were on right guidance. But many of them became rebellious transgressors (al-Hadeed: 26).

There is a certain point here that there is no guaranty for being upright even regarding prophets' offspring and that honesty and corruption depends on individuals will.

In another verse, about Ibrahim, the Quran says:

«وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ» (الانعام: ٨٤).

We gave him Isaac and Jacob: all (three) guided: and before him, We guided Noah, and among his progeny, David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron: thus do We reward those who do good (al-An'aam: 84).

It is notable that in all these verses, although God's blessing is effective in education and guidance of the Prophets' offspring, but this is also done through ordinary actions such as efforts of teachers and educators and more important than all the power of free choice in individuals.

From the Quran we understand that the prophets were serious in their people's and their offspring education. As an example we review the words regarding holy Maryam's development through Zechariah:

«فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَا مَرْيَمُ أَنَّى لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ» (آل عمران: ٣٧).

Right graciously did her Lord accept her: He made her grow in purity and beauty: To the care of Zachariah was she assigned. Every time that he entered (Her) chamber to see her, He found her supplied with sustenance. He said: "O Mary! Whence (comes) this to you?" She said: "From Allah. for Allah Provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure" (Aali 'Imraan: 37).

This verse proves that a great attentive educator such as Zachariah was the means for divine education of holy Maryam.

The real blessing is the one God granted the prophets, their offspring and the ones who were guided by them. The Quran referring to this fact says:

«أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَائِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا» (مريم: ٥٨).

Those were some of the prophets on whom Allah did bestow His Grace,- of the posterity of Adam, and of those who We carried (in the Ark) with Noah, and of the posterity of Abraham and Israel of those whom We guided and chose. Whenever the Signs of ((Allah)) Most Gracious were rehearsed to them, they would fall down in prostrate adoration and in tears (Maryam: 58).

However, these blessings were not distributed equally among prophets' offspring, some were upright and some clearly were oppressive of themselves; the Quran in this regard says:

«وَبَارَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ إِسْحَاقَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ مُبِينٌ» (الصفات: ١١٣).

We blessed him and Isaac: but of their progeny are (some) that do right, and (some) that obviously do wrong, to their own souls (al-Saaffaat: 113).

Elsewhere, it says:

«وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ» (البقرة: ١٢٤).

And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands, which he fulfilled: He said: "I will make thee an Imam to the Nations." He pleaded: "And also (Imams) from my offspring!" He answered: "But My Promise is not within the reach of evil-doers" (al-Baqara: 124).

Some points are noteworthy in this verse, one is that to gain the position of Imam (divine leadership) requires passing difficult exams and those who are oppressive never reach that position. From among Ibrahim's offspring only those who do not have any kind of oppression whatsoever, will be able to become Imam.

In another verse, the Quran mentions selection of Adam, Noah and the family of Ibrahim and 'Imraan, meaning their offspring:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ؛ ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ» (آل عمران: ٣٤-٣٣).

Allah did choose Adam and Noah, the family of Abraham, and the family of Imran above all people, \* Offspring, one of the other: And Allah heareth and knoweth all things (Aali 'Imraan: 33-34).

Then, it becomes clear that if we want our offspring similar to that of the prophets receive blessing and guidance of God, we have to try hard in their religious education and have our youth benefit from this real bounty of God.

### 3. The Youth Family Educational Background

One of the effective factors in religious education is the family religious culture. The family in which the father provide service to his parents and thoroughly honor them, the family in which attention to the blessings of God and thankfulness to Him is practiced, the family in which parents try to educate and correct their children, provide a suitable family culture and a rich environment for children to get familiar with religion, its philosophy and meaning of life and eventually development of uprightness in them. The Quran says:

«وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْهًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْهًا وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصَالُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ» (الأحقاف: ١٥).

We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months. At length, when he reaches the age of full strength and attains forty years, he says, "O my Lord! Grant me that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou has bestowed upon me, and upon both my parents, and that I may work righteousness such as Thou mayest approve; and bring uprightness in my offspring for me. Truly have I turned to Thee and truly do I bow (to Thee) in Islam" (al-Ahqaaf: 15).

Although in the verse, it is not openly mentioned that what may be the ground and suitable environment for offspring education, but counting numerous issues specially benevolence to grandparents, being a good doer and being thankful for all blessing before mentioning children uprightness may somehow imply their effect and role in this regard. Regardless of the verse talking about this fact or

not, our logic and intellect indicates that these issues are quite effective through learning from role models. Psychologists such as Bandura have introduced the effectiveness of observational learning.

#### 4. Youth preparedness for Guidance

Fortunately, according to the Quran, the seed of knowledge of God is planted in all human beings including youth. Based on the verses of the Quran, in a realm that all human beings' offspring were present, they witnessed that God is their Lord. This realm sometimes is referred to as the realm of "alast," or "qaaloo balaa;" the first means "Am I not" because the question that was addressed to all was "Am I not your Lord?" and the latter means "They said: yea," because all answered, "Yea! We do testify." The Quran says:

«وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ» (الأعراف: ١٧٢)

When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam - from their loins - their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?" - They said: "Yea! We do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "Of this we were never mindful" (al-A'raaf: 172).

According to this belief, the ground proof for divine education is set, just we need to go forward and take action.

The issue of the realm of "alast" is one of the complicated issues in the Quran; in short, according to the verse mentioned above, God –Exalted- in a realm other than this world, had a conversation with human beings and took their confess regarding His lordship and all have contested to the fact that He is their Lord. The benefit of this confess, as mentioned in the continuation, is that nobody would have a proof for denial of God and on the day of judgment, the wrongdoers and disbelievers cannot say: "O Lord! We did not know you." This knowledge is an unconscious one that of course in some situations may enter the consciousness (Mesbah, 2014).

Another Quranic proof for youth being more ready for accepting the divine call compared with adults is the verse that says only a group of youth believed in Moses:

«فَمَا آمَنَ لِمُوسَىٰ إِلَّا ذُرِّيَّةٌ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ عَلَىٰ خَوْفٍ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ لَعَالٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّه لَمِنَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ» (يونس: ٨٣).

But none believed in Moses except some children of his people, because of the fear of Pharaoh and his chiefs, lest they should persecute them; and certainly Pharaoh was mighty on the earth and one who transgressed all bounds (Yoonus: 83).

Hence, the opposite of what is thought about youth is the case; the youth even are more vigilant to accept religion and support it. If we communicate the truth with them and honestly explain the facts regarding the world, meaning of life, belief in God and other religious facts, they will certainly answer even better than adults.

## 5. Paradise Awaiting for Righteous Families

According to the Quran, when talking about people who enter paradise, either the followers of righteous divine leaders, or a chain of family members including believers, their parents and their offspring who followed them in religion and belief are mentioned. Regarding the second group, the Quran quotes angels' supplication for believers as follows:

«رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ» (غافر: ٨)

"And grant, our Lord! that they enter the Gardens of Eternity, which Thou hast promised to them, and to the righteous among their fathers, their wives, and their posterity! For Thou art (He), the Exalted in Might, Full of Wisdom (Ghafer: 8).

In another place, the Quran, as a fact, indicates:

«وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا أَلَتْنَاهُمْ مِنْ عَمَلِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ» (الطور: ٢١).

And those who believe and whose families follow them in Faith,- to them shall We join their families: Nor shall We deprive them (of the fruit) of aught of their works: (Yet) is each individual in pledge for his deeds. (al-Toor: 21)

The emphasis of the verse is “and their offspring who followed them in faith” and at the end mentions that “Each individual is in pledge of his deeds.” Again the match does not happen other than through education that leads to following in faith.

«جَنَّاتٌ عَدْنٌ يَدْخُلُونَهَا وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ بَابٍ» (الرعد: ٢٣).

In a third verse, the Quran talks about the same fact in a different wording:

Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring: and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation) (al-Ra‘d: 23).

In this verse also those family members who are “righteous” shall enter paradise. Again, the process of making family members “righteous” through education and out of their power of will is mentioned.

## 6. Building a Righteous Community

A higher goal after building a righteous family is a righteous community. The Quran quotes from Ibrahim as supplicating:

«رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ» (البقرة: ١٢٨).

"Our Lord! make of us Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will), and of our progeny a people Muslim, bowing to Thy (will); and show us our place for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in Mercy); for Thou art the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful. (al-Baqara: 128)

There are few points that need some elaboration. The word “muslimayn” which means two muslims refer to Ibrahim and Ismael as this verse is the continuation of the previous verse that narrates the supplication of Ibrahim

and Ismael when they were building the Ka'ba. Lexical meaning of muslim is one who bows to God's will. Ibrahim (as) used the word muslim with the same meaning for the community to come from among his offspring, which became the proper name for the believers in Islam. For the same reason the Quran says Islam is the tradition of your father Ibrahim; he is the one who named you Muslims beforehand:

«وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مَلَّةً أَيْبِكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ» (الحج: ٧٨).

And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the cult of your father Abraham. It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and ye be witnesses for mankind! So establish regular Prayer, give regular Charity, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector - the Best to protect and the Best to help! (al-Hajj: 78).

## 7. Conclusion

As it is mentioned in the Quran, making a role model family who considers piety to God is one of the main goals of religion. Such goal is pursued by prophets such as Zachariah and Abraham through certain efforts. Their model in building the future of youth with divine and monotheistic pure intention is a resolution for encouragement of youth to religion. Another point is the prophets' curiosity and caring for their offspring education. However, due to human beings' free will, some of their offspring followed the right path and some of them were oppressive of themselves. One may compare Abraham's sons Isaac and Jacob with Came and son of Noah. Therefore, we may not expect 100% result from even the best solutions. Nevertheless, we need to consider their power of choice and try to provide the background for their right decisions regarding religion.

Another point is the effect of keeping and strengthening the family religious culture such as kindness to parents, gratefulness to God for His favors, practicing righteousness and religious duties which provide a strong ground for youth religiosity. This will result in successfulness and welfare of all family members in this world and the hereafter.

Verses of the Quran regarding Moses and his followers indicate that the most of them were new generation and youth; this shows youth more readiness to accept and become more active in religious activities. We should take this opportunity to encourage youth to religion.

Warning youth about ill results of following one's temptations and paths of Satan is a complementary resolution to encourage youth to religion.

According to the Quran, the seed of knowing God and tendency to God is planted in the heart of every human being. It means attraction to religion exists in youth and we may take advantage of such innate tendency to invite youth to religion which match their nature.

The last point is to build a large religious community that supports religious culture and provides a religious umbrella including a strong set of religious conventional laws. This will be the most effective way to encourage youth to religion. Table. 1 shows the facts regarding youth religiosity, some examples and proofs from the Quran and the suggested resolutions.



**Table. 1: Youth religiosity in the Quran**

No.	Facts	Examples	Suggested resolutions
1	Making a role model family who considers piety to God is one of the main goals of religion (al-Furqaan: 74).	- Zachariah praying for a pure generation ( Aali 'Imraan: 38) - Ibrahim (as) makes some of his offspring dwell in a dry valley, by the Ka'ba; in order that they may establish Prayer ( Ibrahim: 37)	To build the future of youth with a divine and monotheistic pure intention and bear all difficulties of educating them (Investment of time effort, and capital).
2	The prophets were curious and caring about their offspring education.	- Some of the prophets' offspring were on right guidance, but many of them became oppressive of themselves (al-Hadeed: 26) - Ibrahim's sons Isaac and Jacob compared with that of Cane and son of Noah	To be attentive to youth education; but consider their power of choice. Our part is to elevate their understanding about religion and provide the background for their right decisions.
3	Kindness to parents, gratefulness to God for His favors, practicing righteousness and religious duties provide a strong ground for youth (al-Ahqaaf: 15).	Gardens of perpetual bliss: they shall enter there, as well as the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their offspring; and angels shall enter unto them from every gate (with the salutation) (Ra'd: 23).	To try to keep and strengthen the family culture based on religious teachings.
4	Youth are more ready for acceptance and practice of religion compared to adults.	But none believed in Moses except some children of his people (Yoonus: 83)	To benefit from the opportunity of youth more readiness for acceptance and practice of religion compared to adults and seriously take action in their education.
5	Satan has sworn: I will surely bring his descendants under my sway - all but a few!" (Israa': 62).	If youth follow Satan they will end to fire of hell along with Satan (al-A'raaf: 18).	To inform youth about the dangers of following temptations and obedience of Satan.
6	God has put the seed of knowing Him inside every man including youth (al-A'raaf: 152).	The ground is ready, therefore we have to take action; the proof is complete.	Not to hesitate introducing God to youth, and to inviting them to become intimate with God.
7	Social conventions in a religious society are very effective because beyond family culture, it provides an overwhelming umbrella to invite and encourage members of the society to religion.	The verses of the Quran show Abraham's attempts and supplication for a future community (ummah) which is obedient to God. (al-Baqara, 128).	Although it take a lot of effort, but building a religious community is a stronger solution for youth religiosity.

## Bibliography

The Qur'an.

The Nahj al-Balagha.

Azarbayjani, Masood; Mousavi Asl, Seyed Mahdi, 2007, "The effects of religiosity from the viewpoint of William James", *Motaleat Islam wa Ravanshenasi Din*, vol. 1.

Banari, Ali Hemmat, 2000, "Study of priorities in moral education from the viewpoint of Imam Ali (as) in Nahj al-Balagha" *Masaal Carbordi Ta'leem wa Tarbiyat Islami*, Vol. 4, Winter, p 539-568.

Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin and Argyle, Michael, 1997, *The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief and Experience*, p. 111.

Hoseinzadeh, Omidali; Mosharrafi, Hashim, "Factor analysis of hazardous factors of religious education of students of Azad University, Ahar Unit, a case study" *Zan wa Mutali'at Khanevadeh*, Vol. 7, p 41-60.

Janbozorgi, Masood; Rezaee, 2006, "Construction and validation of religiosity test based on the Qur'an and Nahj al-Balagha statements", *Motaleat Islam wa Ravanshenasi*, vol. 5, p 79-107.

Kord Firoozjaee, Yarali, 2005, "Secularization of religion" *Ravaq-i Andisheh*, vol. 42, p 40-64.

Mahdizadeh, Hossain, 2001, "Pathology of religiosity of youth with regard to words and practices of Imam Ali (as)", *Masaal kaarbordi ta'leem wa tarbiyat islaamee*, vol. 6.

Mashayekhi Rad, Shahab ad-Din, 2001, "Roots of education from Imam Ali's viewpoint", *Ravesh Shenasi 'Uloom Insani*, vol. 27.

Pakizeh, Mahmood, 2006, "Study of some roots of desertion of religion and some practical solutions to their prevention", *Aeene Hekmat*, vol. 29, p 7-31.

Rafipoor, F. 1999, *Expansion and Contradiction*, Tehran, Sherkat Sahami Enteshar.

Sajedi, Abolfazl, 2005, *Why Abandonment of Religion ? How tending to religion?*, Qum, Entesharat-i IKI.

Sharifinia, Mohammad H, 2010, *The integrative psychotherapy models with emphasis on integrative monotheistic therapy*, Qum, Pazhuheshgah Hawza wa Daneshgah.

Tabatabaee, Syed Mohammad Hosein, 1997, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, 5th ed, Qum, Daftar Entesharat Islami, Jame'at Modarresin, Hawza Elmiya Qum.