

*In the Name of Allah
Most Gracious, Most Merciful*

The Bright Future

**Specialized Quarterly Periodical
Doctrine of Mahdism. Special Edition: Number 8. June 2013**

Publisher:

Bright Future Publication

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Within Mahdiology's Education: Choosing between Moderation and LNC, or Dajal and Dialetheism

Ali H. Al-Hakim¹

Abstract

Preparing for the establishment of a just society and to facilitate its likelihood to prevail, it is first imperative to present its required fundamental principles. In this article our main goal is to present two extreme human intellectual qualities that ought to be understood; the correct attribute being the one to be espoused and the incorrect option to be jettisoned together with its lack of consistency.

Introduction:

There is no doubt that education within Mahdiology norms has its distinctive features. Commenting on the tutelage that is promoted within this specific branch of Islamic eschatology, we ought to understand the key concepts included in the title, i.e. moderation, LNC, Dajjal and dialetheism.

As we approach the time for Imam Mahdi's (as)

1. Senior lecturer at IC, London, head of I.A.F.

reappearance on this earth, there will be a number of signs heralding his return; one of them is Dajj;l. I won't exclude other questions from this category, so let us sum them all up in the following:

- What is the Dajj;l?
- What are the excesses of Dajj;l, and what is its counter belief?
- In which sense is the Dajj;l a one dimensional monster?
- What is the Non-contradiction Law (NCL) of human thought?
- Why is dialetheism the modern opposite of the NCL?
- How can dialetheism be refuted through a perfect way of perceiving NCL?

In the next few paragraphs we endeavour to answer all these questions. The article is divided into two main parts. While the first part is dedicated to answer the first three questions, the second part is to provide the answer to the last three questions.

Part One: What is the Dajj;l? A Comparative Approach

We usually focus on the famous cry:

"Where is the one who is going to seek revenge and justice for what al-Husayn (as) has suffered?"

In answer to the question –the challenge- of how to understand this cry, Shi'ah Muslims respond that it is Imam Mahdi (as); he is the one who is going to extract revenge for Imam Husayn (as). Imam Mahdi, therefore, is the inheritor of the one who was mercilessly slain in Karbalah. How is he linked to the tragedy of Karbalah, and why is he the one to obtain revenge for that great tragedy?

Our first postulate claims that the opposite belief to Dajal is moderation, as much as the opposite to NCL is dialetheism! Let us work on the meaning of Dajj;l.

Dajj;l – the word is mentioned in many Sunni compilations of hadiths, especially those of the apocalyptic nature related to the signs of Imam Mahdi's (as) appearance.

However, the question as to what this Dajjīl is remains unanswered. *Dajjīl* actually means ‘deceiver’ or ‘impostor’. The character is also known as the false messiah in Sunni literature. It is an evil figure in Islamic literature and traditions.

The Dajjīl can be compared with the word ‘devil’ and used in the sense of a false prophet, Dajjīl, or even the word ‘evil’, while referring to the infinitive form, i.e. *ad-Dajjīl*. The word has been referred to by the Prophet Muhammad [sawas] as representing a specific phenomenon which will appear during the end of history – probably during our time – before the coming of the Mahdi (as). *Al-Masih ad-Dajjīl* has been in common vocabulary of the Middle East for 400 years before the advent of the Holy Qur’an. It is easy to trace the roots of these words and see how they infiltrated the Arabic language.

Sunni traditions further state that he will appear somewhere between Syria and Iraq – Palestine – near the lake which is called Tabaria/ Tiberius. He will be unable to enter Medina. Again, according to a couple of hadiths from Sunni sources – sahih Muslim – Allah is said to mention that one day the Dajjīl will come to the people in the morning and invite them to a false religion; they will affirm their faith in him and respond. He will impress them by commanding the sky and rainfall will descend plentifully upon the earth whereupon crops will grow as a consequence. Evening pastured animals will come with humps very high, their udders full of milk. He will then come to another people and invite them but they will reject him. What will happen to them? The Prophet [sawas] then refers to the two groups. After he has been rejected by one group, the Dajjīl will go away from them and leave them to their fate without his care. This group will experience drought and nothing will be left with them – nothing! The Dajjīl will walk in the desert and ask it, ‘Bring forth your treasure!’ and treasures will emerge to such a degree that it

could be said to swarm like bees. The Dajj;l will then make claims to divinity. He will claim to be a god.¹

In another hadith, this time from Bukhari, Anas said, 'No prophet has been sent who doesn't warn against the one-eyed liar.'² Every prophet has warned his ummah about this Dajj;l. Beware; he is blind in one eye and your Lord is not so – and there will be written between his eyes the word *kafir*.³ Abu Hurayrah and Ibn Abbas said that the Dajj;l will approach from the east with the intention of attacking Medina,⁴ and the angels will turn his face towards Medina, and he will perish in Sham, i.e. Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan.

While referring to the final destiny, the Sunni narrations mention that the Dajj;l gathers an army to lead them in a war against Jesus (as). This is why he is known as 'anti-Christ'. Jesus will be accompanied by an army of righteous people, and the Dajj;l, on confrontation with these righteous people, will disappear, in the way that salt dissolves in water, as a metaphoric

explanation of its final defeat.⁵ Sunni hadiths state that he sees with one eye! In conclusion we have, according to the narrations, a one eyed disbelieving monster.

Shi'ah narrations don't actually mention the word, *Dajj;l*, but rather use another term – *as-Sufyani*, which is again another despised phenomenon like the Dajj;l. We can either presume, therefore, that our imams (as) are referring to different phenomena, or perhaps they were referring to the same one. There are so many parallel descriptions that we could, also, conclude that they are possibly nothing but two faces or even the same face of the same coin.

Comparing with the Biblical Image amongst other Fake gods

Going back further in time, let us briefly cast an eye over

1. See Yawm al-Khalas, Kamil Sulayman, p. 714

2. Ibid, p. 715

3. Ibid, p. 716

4. Ibid, p. 716

5. See Mutakhab al-'thar, p. 428, Bihar al-'anwar, vol. 52, p. 194

the Norse myths. If we consider Odin, one of his eyes has gone, as he lost one of them. He gave up one of his eyes in order to drink!

The Ancient Greeks also mentioned one eyed 'gods' – the Cyclops – who were supposed to have been giants with only one round eye in their foreheads. We are talking about the same tendency here; a one – eyed 'god'. As for the Greek legends, their most sophisticated Greek gods, like Zeus, for example, who was supposed to have been above all the others, is yet another example of a one-eyed entity since they presented him in human shape, totally glossing over any divine factor. Can God be manifested in human shape? Of course not! They limited their concentration to the physical. There is, therefore, nothing beyond the material level in the case of Zeus, etc.; they depicted a human shape for him but ignored the divine factor beyond that of a physical shape and appearance. Pan, the so-called god of nature; now, this is a god of partying – wining and dining. Again, a one dimensional personification – partying and pleasure; life is all about pleasure, it is claimed. However, in real life this is hardly the case.

In the Arab pre Islamic era of *jahiliyyah*, the Arabs, themselves, had many one-eyed 'gods'.

Shiva, a god according to Hindus, has *three* eyes – and they reason that each eye refers to some specific field. Humans are restricted to two– this goddess is more sophisticated, having three, the extra one, on account of which she can see, so they claim, the future. We don't accept that because such a thing doesn't exist. We are created according to divine design or as what many call the 'divine image' which means that we are equipped in some way with some God-given characteristics, traits and abilities. Imam Husayn (as) knew he was going to die – did he receive this futuristic knowledge from Shiva? He received it from the Holy Prophet, [sawas]. He is the one who was so close to divinity that he knew the future.

And there's another problem related to eyes. The pharaohs used this eye – the eye amulet - to protect themselves from calamity. The eye of Hourus their falcon god; according to their myths, Hourus lost one eye in battle but grew it back so it became a symbol of healing.¹

In Christian eschatology, 'Antichrist' (or anti-Christ) denotes a person, or man-like entity who is the total embodiment of evil, similar to Islamic Sunni references.²

'Antichrist' is mentioned 5 times in the New Testament (John 1 and 2); once in the plural form and the rest in the singular, and is commonly considered to be an evil creature and, as can be understood from the makeup of the word, is regarded as being opposed to Jesus (as). The term is also often applied to prophecies regarding the "Little Horn" in Daniel 7, and is used with many end times teachings.

In conclusion it seems likely that the Bible speaks not merely of one but of a class of persons or beings when it mentions antichrists. John speaks of "many anti-Christ" who embody the spirit of the anti-Christ (1 John 4:3).

In Paul, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, a "man of sin", "the son of perdition" is prophesied to take control of the temple of God, on the pretence that he is God himself. Interestingly, rather like a pre or practice run, Antiochus Epiphanes, around 170 BC, commanded Jews to sacrifice pigs on the altar, four times a year on the Shabbat, in tribute to him as the supreme god of the Seleucids. Incidentally, in the Bible it says that any gods who are not gods are the devil.

In the time of the Roman Emperor Nero, Christians used

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1. It is important to make a point of not using these kinds of things, even as fashion accessories and objects. These are all myths; made up fabricated stories; so it becomes realistically wise to try to keep our two-dimensional eyes or perspectives wide awake and alive.
 2. The word 'Antichrist' is translated from the combination of two ancient Greek words αντί + χριστός ('anti+khristos), which can mean anti "opposite" (of) khristos "anointed" therefore "opposite of Christ" (the meaning of Christ as the 'anointed one', having become secondary to its meaning as the honorific of Jesus of Nazareth) or anti "as" (if) khristos "messiah" thus "in place of Christ" or a substitute for Christ. An antichrist can be opposed to Christ by striving to be in the place of Christ. (Source: Wikipaedia)

to refer to him as the Antichrist due largely in part to the fact that he gave them an extremely bad time, throwing them to the lions and other such torments. Martin Luther believed and wrote of the Papacy as being anti-Christ. Many Protestant reformers and founders following in Luther's wake shared and promoted this belief. The Catholic Church, however, defended itself by claiming that, since its founder and first Pope was St. Peter, such claims by Luther would inherently mean that Peter himself would have had to have been the first anti-Christ.

In summarizing both Islamic and Christian sources, one may conclude that they were referring to an entity, person, or tendency that leans towards opposing the genuine teachings of the prophets (as), and, according to Paul, the antichrist would be a man of sin. This broad way of deducing the meaning of the term can lead us to conclude that, in all the religious sources, this term is highly flexible and can be applied to a life-style or tendency of thought and type of argumentation applicable in daily life.

Critically Examining other Opinions

We cannot believe he is a specific human shaped individual, as some of the descriptions sound legendary; he has a donkey the distance between his two eyes which is something in the region of 17 or even 70 miles! In another description, we find that despite having two eyes he only looks through one of them. This sounds really complicated and hard to digest. How can you be talking about a human being like that?

First Opinion:

That is why some contemporary writers –such as Kamil Sulayman- have rejected this sign, saying that he really doubts it. He thought it was really suspicious, while recounting these different narrations and found them too much to bear with the rational mind. Not being able to grasp

them, he came to the point where he simply declared that he no longer believed in any of it. He maintained it all to be fabricated, as is mentioned in his book: [*Yawmu al-Khalass*] *The Day of Salvation*. As far as he is concerned, it simply doesn't exist. (I, also, personally don't believe that it exists in the form of an individual either, no!)

Second Opinion:

Some Western converts perceive the subject of Dajj;l as referring to 'Novum Ordo Seclorum'; that it refers to the new world order. One only has to read Daud Musa Pidcock's '*Satanic Voices*'.

Suggested Interpretation:

Everyone talks about Dajj;l and tries to manipulate people to his ideas in order to achieve something within the political arena. An objective view is likely to be the most enlightening on the subject.

If we concentrate deeper we can clearly see that what we have here is referring to a tendency to approach this world without moderation or without love for the Prophet Muhammad and his family [sawas]. The main distinction for this Sufyani character is hatred towards the Prophet Muhammad [sawas] and his family (as), and it is indeed another form of Dajj;l, due to its contradiction with the divine teachings of the Qur'an. As such, the Antichrist can and should be interpreted as anti-Adam, anti-Moses, anti-Jesus, anti-Abraham and anti-Muhammad (as). Based on these facts we insist it is not referring to a specific individual but rather to a tendency, a life-style or way of argumentation that is –beyond doubt- anti all the prophets (as). It is natural to assume that as the Prophet [sawas] emphasises that every prophet (as) has warned his respective community about the Dajj;l, it must be a phenomenon, which is very ancient, and therefore can be traced back to ancient epochs of mankind's history.

One may easily disagree with the first and the second opinion. It is unbelievable that it has anything whatsoever to do with American symbols, and I –personally– find these arguments quite simplistic. It has nothing to do with Americans, Europeans, or for that matter, any mystical orders, secret societies or groups. The prophets (as) were warning their people, while the USA did not remotely exist in those prehistoric days for one thing and warnings about the Dajjil are ancient, and can be traced from the annals of history back to the ancient of days; therefore, these interpretations are unacceptable, as they could be –at least– partly refutable.

Ayatollah Sadr –known as the second Sadr in Iraq-, the late father of the Mukhtada’ al-Sadr, devoted entire great sections of two books of four volumes to details of Imam Mahdi’s (as) minor and major occultation. In volumes three and four, while referring to the Dajjil, he states that the term metaphorically refers to the hegemonic Western civilisation. Obviously he does not mean by that the geographical west, rather the corresponding Western cultural heritage. This interpretation –like the previous - is not without a certain amount of interest, albeit being partly true. Clearly, however, Western hegemonic civilization did not exist during ancient times.

While facing all these different opinions, it is apparent that the divine warning is about something specifically different, and the Prophet [sawas] reiterated the admonition related to a tendency of how to approach life. From a worldview, it is a warning for us to examine how our beliefs must not depart from moderation, and for the practical way of action it warns us how we must approach things in all aspects of our daily lives. It is also crucial how we apply our approaches to the most practicable views. For instance, take the scenario whereby a brother, under the buzzword banner of equality, announces that he, as his sister is not presently fasting, he, also, is not going to fast. There are certain

differences, but our youth clamour for absolute equality. While she's not praying and fasting, etc., he wishes to abide by the same dispensation. The sister, for her part, may just as equally say, 'Why is he going out yet I am not; why don't they protect him?' not realising that girls, in general, require more protection. This importance of viewpoint also applies when speaking about very fundamental issues. Some people look at the world from a materialistic view, others from a spiritual outlook. The workable position is that we require both, simultaneously. The closer you come to Allah the more important it is to do certain duties; you have to pray, for instance.

That is actually what the Prophet [sawas] was referring to. He said words to the effect of, 'Don't think that he (Dajj;l) hasn't got two eyes.' Of course he has two eyes, but have you noticed that if you look at one of your fingers from just one eye, you will detect that it is in a certain position and in some circumstances you cannot even see it, whereas if you look with both your eyes, this blind spot disappears, and you will see it in its balanced position. Why? Because this eye is located in one position, and the other has a different location so we have different images. Once we look at things from different angles, we have different images; our eyes take these images to the brain and there they will be put in balance. People need to have balance. They have to have moderation in their analyses, and have to look at things from different views and different angles. This is where the Dajj;l differs, as this tendency means always looking at, or approaching things from one angle – not from various angles. Let us consider the present problem of Western civilisation, the people of which during the Middle Ages suffered so badly from church related problems that they subsequently pushed God away. They pushed Christianity, religions and God away altogether and resuscitated Greek philosophy and its worldview image of mankind, with the human being becoming, again, the central focus of the

whole universe, instead of God whereas, previously, it had only been God.

Now when a moderate observing investigator questions as to whether life should be centered on God, or human beings, s/he would soon reach the answer: categorically both. Mankind can and should never pretend that it can ever potentially replace God. He may emulate and follow the divine example, albeit while remaining a limited human being. Therefore, it is preferable, or rather inevitable for the one who is aware of God to become a human being following divinely approved ways. Man is human, but what is wished for is that he becomes a human obedient to the Divine; just like all the divinely guided prophets (as)

The problem lies when everyone looks at things solely from their own angle and ignores those of the other. It is this point which is criticized when the Imams (as) have constantly said:

‘Treat others the same way that you would expect to be treated!’

This can be defined as moderation. Muslims have been commanded to follow the divine example, which requires moderation, and the Qu’ran has stated explicitly that you are an *Ummah* in the middle way (*Ummatan wassatan*).

The Qur’an states:

2: 143 – thus have we made of you an ummah, justly balanced, as a witness.

Application to the Theory

Christianity’s Theological and Ethical Dilemma

This brings up the problem from which Christian theologians have suffered. They placed emphasis on Jesus (as) and exaggerated his position to then create him as God, while we are all aware that this is not the case and rather can never be so. The reality is that he was so close to God, and that is what made him, metaphorically speaking, and only

metaphorically speaking, 'a perfect divine human being.'

A similar explanation applies to the Prophet Muhammad [sawas] with regards to his elevated spiritual position. The Qur'an describes him [sawas] as being exceptionally close to Divinity. The Prophet [sawas] deserves to be 'a perfect divine human being.' It is neither fair, nor the godly desire that we would be deprived of our human nature and needs. The divine goal is to see amongst us some who are saintly individuals.

In the same line and practical-life problem, they emphasised and over-reacted on all the spiritual needs while having ignored the fundamental needs, even going so far as to deprive human beings of their natural needs in particularly celibacy among the priesthood. In order to marry they would have had to leave the cloth, and the same principle applied to women. They have ignored and willingly suppress their given natural needs. Living in celibacy has hardly anything to do with purity and genuine Islamic chastity and self-restraint. This is the firm standpoint of Islamic teaching, which fits perfectly with moderation. Moderation –according to this logic- allows a person to enjoy life as a normal adult human being having been awarded this gratification as a divinely guided pleasure. The human-friendly teaching of Islam has led individuals to an elevated position with which mankind is blessed, at the same allowing them to enjoy all aspects of life to the full provided they adhere to manifesting actions in the Islamic way, in order to become increasingly closer to Divinity.

Violating Rules of Consultation

Consultation is the fundamental principle of the political philosophy in Islamic Worldview. However, many examples of it in history have proved that it can be misused.

In brief, consultation (*shūrī*) -as an Islamic principle- is restricted to certain limits and regulations. One of the major

regulations of this principle is that any law or decision that is in violation of Islamic Law must not be acted upon, nor to be passed or enacted.

Imam `Alç (`a) is quoted to have said, “Consultation is the core of guidance.”⁽¹⁾

Imam `Alç (`a) is also reported as saying, “There is no support like consultation.”⁽²⁾

Consultation is the most reliable means that helps, supports and strengthens someone in his affairs and decisions.

Demonstrating the reasons for consultation, Imam `Alç (`a) says, “Consultation has been strongly urged because the opinion of an advisor is pure (from any whim) while the opinion of a seeker of counsel is usually mixed with personal whims.”⁽³⁾

Mentioning the logic and reasons for seeking consultation, Imam `Alç (`a) explains that a person who has a problem and needs a proper solution for it must have some purposes, notions, and psychological issues that play a significant role in the formation of his opinion and affect his decision making, while the opinion of a person whose advice is sought is pure and void of all these whims and factors. A consultant offers advice due to an external view of the problem; he can, therefore, see things that the advice seeker cannot see owing to the factors that affect his decision. Love and hate intervene in the decision making of the person who is involved in a problem; he is therefore required to listen to the opinions of others who are aloof from these emotions and whose opinions are, as described by Imam `Alç (`a), pure.

Referring to the first narration, one is able to state that consultation cannot be the core of guidance unless the person whose advice is sought gives an advice that is

1. Nahj al-Balighah, Aphorism No. 211.

2. Ibid. 54.

3. Al-`mudç, Ghurar al-`ikam, No. 3908.

compatible with Islamic Law; as any advice that is in violation of the religion misleads and takes to the wrong, is to be avoided.

For example: consider a family that is composed of father, mother and their children; if one supposes that the mother along with her daughters agree by consultation to lead a revolutionary scheme against the head of the family (i.e. the father) and decide to dismiss him from the house solely on account of the machinations of their personal taste, rather than Islamic codes of conduct against his disapproved behaviour. Such a “revolution” is valid in the concept of consultation as believed by Westerners or pro-democracy, but it has nothing to do with consultation (*shûrî*) in the concept of Islamic codes of ethics. Similarly, if a father and his sons hold an assembly of the so-called consultation and decide to dismiss their mother from the house, denying her favours and the years of her life that she spent on raising them, this is also in violation of the concept of *shûrî* as decided by Islam and moral principles. This is because the laws and decisions of *shûrî* must not violate the principles of Islam and moral principles and ethics. Everybody is first of all required to comply with the Islamic Law that specifies what is lawful and what is unlawful. It is therefore disallowed to agree on deeming lawful what has been decided as unlawful by the Islamic Law or deeming unlawful what has been decided as lawful by the same Law. For instance, members of an assembly of consultation are not allowed to cancel the Islamic law of the prohibition of intoxicants or the prohibition of adultery.

In fact, persons who give advices that are in violation of the religious principles, the Islamic teachings, reason, and logic are not friends; rather, they are foes.

Calling attention to holders of true advice, Imam al-ʿidqī (a) is quoted as saying, “Actually, seeking of advice must be within its four limits; so, if one ignores (or violates) these limits, harm will exceed benefit. The first of these limits is

that the consultant whose advice is sought must be wise. The second is that he must be honourable and pious. The third is that he must be a brotherly friend. The fourth is that when you tell him your secret, he must know it as accurately as you know it and then he must keep it secret and concealed. If the consultant is wise, you will then benefit from his advice. If he is honourable and pious, he will exert all possible efforts to give you the best advice. If he is a brotherly friend of yours, then he will conceal your secret after you demonstrate it before him. If he understands your secret to the same degree as you do, then he will give perfect counsel and seamless advice.”¹

In conclusion, there is an essential condition on which consultation must be based, which is guidance to the truth and aloofness from whatever disagrees with the religious teachings and laws.

In the previous lines, I have tried to shed light on the issue of consultation, expressing the characteristics that a true counsellor must have and warning against some categories of people whose advice must be shunned, but have also referred to some typical examples of misunderstood examples of consultation, where individuals may act like imposters (*Dajjil*) manipulating others and/or misleading them whilst pretending to be giving guidance.

Nassibi's cul-de-sac

Another example of *Dajjil* that was voraciously referred to in Shi'ah narrations is the *sufyani*. Those narrations refers to some individuals, due to their evil tendency develop hatred towards the Prophet [sawas] and his family (as). They have succumbed to the dead-end, where we mean any situation, through which further progress is impossible. This has been the characteristic of the descendants or intellectual inheritors of Abu Sufyan, his son, Muawiyah, and his own son, Yazid.

1. Al-°urr al-`amilç, Wasj'il al-Shç'ah 8:426-427, H. 8.

This group of Muslims are called 'sufyanis'. This doctrine can be manifested as a one eyed monster, which is equal to human negativity, hatred or in general: one dimensionalism. Such an outlook, far from bringing on a state of happiness, leads to the destruction of whole universe.

Sunni and Shi'ah Muslims will all be saved as long as they love the Prophet Muhammad [sawas] and his family (as). By this we mean deep love not merely that of words; something tantamount to being in love with them.

Love functions in the form of positive deeds, for instance, charity, and becomes a ticket to help a person reach paradise, while love to the Prophet and his family (as) would serve like a passport to enter everlasting happiness. It is not desirable, but rather disgusting to be like Dajjal. Rather, a Muslim needs to become an all-inclusive thorough human being.

So far we clarified the answers to the first three questions (Q. 1+2+3), which were presented in this paper. Let us elaborate on answers to the last three questions (Q. 4+5+6)

Part Two: Dialetheism the Modern Opposite of LNC

One studies contradiction in Aristotelian formal logic in simple concepts also particularly in propositional. The definition and the conditions are different compared to social field and political philosophy. It is obvious and clear enough that the logical definition of contradiction – within Aristotelian frameworks - solely applies to the logical field of reasoning, as both the concepts and compounds within the formal logic claim apply this fundamental principle.

In logic, the Law of Non-Contradiction is the second of the so-called three classic laws of fundamental thought. The oldest statement of the law is that contradictory statements cannot both at the same time be true, e.g. the two propositions A is B and A is not B are mutually exclusive. A may be B at one time, and not at another; A may be partly B and partly not B at the same time; but it is impossible to

predicate of the same thing, at the same time, and in the same sense, the absence and the presence of the same quality. It takes no account of the truth of either proposition; if one is true, the other is not. This is all within the field of logic and philosophical premises. However, within sociology and political field, things can and must be totally different.

What we mean by the opposite, i.e. LNC, is the law of Non-contradiction. It is not possible to base any logical reasoning or any educational effort without relying on this fundamental premise. Therefore, any educational argument must be based on this fundamental premise, where no logical thought can be on its right position, if this logical premise were to be denied.

A new approach was presented during the last century, which came to be named: Dialetheism. A dialetheia is to be known crucially as a sentence or any definition in terms of propositions, statements, or whatever one takes as one's favourite truth-bearer, as this would make little contextual difference, where A, and its negation, $\neg A$, are true. Thus a dialetheia is a sentence which is simultaneously both true and false. We can state that dialetheism is the view that there are dialetheias. Also, one can define dialetheism as the claim that there are true contradictions. Based on that, any logical mind would perceive dialetheism as directly opposing the Law of Non-Contradiction (LNC). LNC can, and has been, expressed in various ways, but the simplest and most perspicuous for our purposes is probably the following: for any A, it is impossible for both A and $\neg A$ to be true.

As a challenge to the LNC, therefore, dialetheism flies in the face of what most philosophers take to be axiomatic or common sense. Actually, that dialetheism challenges the LNC needs qualification, since the LNC is accepted as a general logical law in the mainstream versions of the theory.

Some Basic Concepts and Distinctive Features

Though dialetheism is not a new view, the word itself was introduced by Graham Priest and Richard Routley (later Sylvan) in 1981. Its inspiration was taken from a passage in Wittgenstein's *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, where he describes the Liar sentence ('This sentence is not true') as a Janus-headed figure facing both truth and falsity (1978, IV.59). Hence a di-aletheia is a two (-way) truth.

However, dialetheism should also be clearly distinguished from para-consistency (see Berto, 2007a, Ch. 5). Whereas a dialetheist had better embrace some para-consistent logic or other in order to avoid trivialism, a para-consistent logician need not be a dialetheist. The core thought behind para-consistency is to provide logics that do not permit one to infer anything indiscriminately from inconsistent premises. These may arise in databases, counterfactual-impossible situations, inconsistent evidence presented in a trial, works of fiction, etc., and a para-consistent logician may not want to assume their truth in order to provide a satisfying treatment. This position is sometimes called weak para-consistency in the literature, and opposed to dialetheism, taken as a 'strongly' para-consistent view. Most relevant logicians, the Brazilian proponents of the para-consistent logics of formal inconsistency, and those who embrace a form of logical pluralism on the nature of entailment (see Beall and Restall, 2006), can be weak para-consistentists: they can treat inconsistent models, in which contradictions hold as useful mathematical tools without admitting that they represent real possibilities.

The major argument is perhaps used by modern dialetheists invokes the logical **paradoxes of self-reference**. It is customary to distinguish between two families of such paradoxes: **the semantic** and **set-theoretic**. The former family typically involves such concept as truth, denotation, definability, etc. The latter, such notions as membership, cardinality, etc. After Gödel's and Tarski's well known

formal procedures to obtain non-contextual self-reference in formalized languages, it is difficult to draw a sharp line between the two families (among other things, because of the fact that Tarskian semantics is itself framed in set-theoretic terms). Nevertheless, the distinction is commonly accepted within the relevant literature.

Russell's paradox is prominent among the set-theoretic paradoxes (it arises when one considers the set of all non self-membered sets), and Cantor's (which arises in connection with the universal set, which can be taken as the set of all sets, or also as the set of everything, depending on one's favourite version of set theory).

We will now satisfy ourselves with analysing the semantic family with the first case, while the set-theoretic family with the second mathematical example. There are –altogether– four main examples of the possible arguments that can be used by dialetheists. These are: **The semantic**, i.e. the paradoxes of self-reference, **the mathematical**, i.e. ‘the set of all sets’, **the philosophical**, i.e. ‘the father and son’s contradictory model’ and finally **the physical**, i.e. the ‘nuclear entity behaviour’ approach.

1. The Semantic: the Logical Paradoxes of Self-reference

Contemporary philosophy, more particular the second half of the twentieth century, saw a resurgence of dialetheism, driven by largely new considerations. Prominent among the semantic paradoxes is the so-called ‘Liar paradox’. Although cases for the existence of dialetheias can be derived from almost any paradox of self-reference, we will focus only on the Liar, given that it is the most easily understandable and its exposition requires no particular technicalities.

A Simple Case Study: the Liar Elaboration:

In its standard version, the Liar paradox arises by reasoning on the following sentence:

(1) (1) is false.

As we can see, (1) refers to itself and tells us something about (1) itself. Its truth value? Let us reason by cases. Suppose (1) is true: then what it says is the case, so it is false. Then, suppose (1) is false: this is what it claims to be, so it is true. If we accept the aforementioned Law of Bivalence, that is, the principle according to which all sentences are either true or false, both alternatives lead to a contradiction: (1) is both true and false, that is, a dialetheia, contrary to the LNC.

Problem: True contradiction is proved through this sentence because objectively if he is the liar, he may also be lying here; however his statement is be considered as both true and false!

Various authors (notably Martin, 1967, van Fraassen, 1968, Kripke, 1975, Field, 2008) have proposed to solve the Liar paradox by dismissing Bivalence, that is, by admitting that some sentences are neither true nor false, and that the Liar is one such truth value 'gap' (it is a subtle issue, which we will not discuss here, whether being a gap should count as lacking any truth value, or as having a non-classical value distinct from both truth and falsity). These approaches are nowadays often labelled as paracomplete.

Solution: This statement shows subjectively -as he is a liar- logically he is describing himself to always be untrue which in fact a true statement is. Daily Life example of the Liar's statement, so to formulate it in a different way: The argument states that: A liar says "whatever I say is not true".

If we consider his statement as: Truthful then it means it is not, because he is liar by nature.

There is a contradiction because the person is a liar hence his statement could be both true or false; there is an equal probability, hence a contradiction.

The solution to this reasoning is that we must apply the principle of translucent distinction between subjectivity and objectivity. The person and how one judges him based on

his character, i.e. the subjectivity is to be examined independently. While the statement he makes has to be judged based on the principle of objective assessment of the content. As such, despite the fact that he is a liar, with focus on his subjective world and attitudes, the statement -in itself- is true, taken into consideration the objective dimension.

The Holy Qur'an has explained this dilemma when it refers to the statement of the hypocrites. The hypocrites stated that "the holy prophet Mohammed is the prophet of Allah ". The Quran states that Allah (swt) commented on this by saying what they say is a true statement, however in their hearts there is solely disbelief, hence they do not mean what they have stated. The "hypocrites" are being judged on the principle of subjectivity, albeit their statement is being judged on the principle of objectivity. Thus the statement was a fact and truthful.

2. The Mathematical: The Set of all Sets:

The argument goes: If there are various individual sets out in the world. Once a mathematician decides to form: a set of all these individual sets, then we have a statement which would read:

'If this is a set of all sets, then it's not, if it's not, it is!

Problem: The dialetheist outlook argues that the existence of "the set of all sets" is contradictory", as follows: if (A), thus $\neg A$, and if $\neg A$, thus A.

This is because the moment one says it is (it exists) it is not. If one says it is not (it does not exist) it is. According to these thinkers, if this bigger set exists it is part of itself then it will be one of all these sets!

The reasoning in this form of thinking appears to be based on how narrowly the concept of set is being viewed. These thinkers view the larger set in the same light as all the individual sets. Hence they are manipulating us to think in the direction that this bigger set is also considered one of all

the other sets which means it is part of itself. Their outlook is that it is fine to view the reality in the world in this manner; there should be no strict boundaries in viewing realities.

Solution: The above formulated argument is fallacious. As the moment one has described the above statement that “it is a set of all other sets “ we have defined it as being a different type of set so then, we must move forward in our reasoning and regard it as a set distinct from all other individual sets. Hence one must conclude yes, it is a set but **not like other sets**. And it cannot be considered as a set containing itself. This Set of all sets does not exist in a contradictory way.

Or to make it shorter:

Statement: If this set is a set of all sets, it is not, if it is, then it is a set of all sets.’

Problem: The statement has contradiction within itself according to dialetheists. Although it is a set of all other sets, but it is not considered a set that would contain itself in definition.

Solution: the solution in logic is that this is a set of all sets, but not like all other sets, beyond this point it is a created and non-existent definition.

3. The Philosophical: The Son And Father Contradictory Model:

The argument goes: if we say the Father came first – biologically- while the son came second.

Looking at the same individuals –from another angle- if the son is the qualified teacher and the father is his student learning from this teacher, who is his son. Thus he (son) would come first, as such the situation must be contradictory, despite the fact that both propositions are true.

The son (as the first proposition comes at second level) has now gained the first position.

The father -in the role of a student- has assumed the second position, according to the second level.

As such: The father can be both first and second – depends on which angle/which context one is viewing the reality from. A similar statement can be used referring to the son.

The statement can be formulated in this way: Who is superior, or comes first: father being a student or son being a teacher?

Problem: It is argued the son is superior to his father as he has more knowledge to teach.

Solution: If we look from another angle we summarize the father comes to claim a higher rank because he brought up this son from childhood. The father has made this son what he is today, as such looking at them from this angle, the father would come first. Although he –the son- has more knowledge, and -in educating the father- he would come first, therefore they are two different angles and one cannot suppose that it is contradictory.

4. The Nuclear Entity Behaviour Approach

One may discuss a serious case from quantum physics; based on discoveries in physics we can form the followings:

Statement: Problem: If an electron has no energy and the neutrons circulate the electron rapidly does the electron gain energy or not?

There are scientific arguments that there is contradiction in the view with regards to energy being emitted by electrons according to Niels Bohr¹ and at the same time there is also another view that energy is not emitted from electrons according to Max Born².

Solution: We say it depends upon the condition of the

1. Niels Henrik David Bohr (7 October 1885 – 18 November 1962) was a Danish physicist who made fundamental contributions to understanding atomic structure and quantum mechanics.

2. Max Born (11 December 1882 – 5 January 1970) was a German physicist and mathematician who was instrumental in the development of quantum mechanics.

condition of the circulators, when it is in a circle it has energy, otherwise the electron itself has no energy. Based on the discoveries of quantum physics, this suggested contradictory has been refuted.

The explanation with regards to resolving the claimed contradiction within the field of quantum physics leads us to realize that yet again this is not a contradiction and it can be explained as follows: There are different conditions, which are crucial to the energy emission such as:

- Collision;
- Unification;
- Separation;
- Acceleration of movement;

These influence as to when energy is emitted and when energy is not emitted. Niels Bohr and Max Born were both correct, as such there is no such a thing as contradiction.

Consistency is the law that must be accepted. NCL is the most fundamental ground for all beliefs. The law of non contradiction is applied in judgment when one views the reality or a proposition from the same perspective, same location, same time, the same angle and the same entity.

We think it fair to say that, since Aristotle's defence of the LNC, consistency has been something of a shibboleth in Western philosophy. The thought that consistency is a sine qua non for central notions such as validity, truth, meaningfulness, rationality, is deeply ingrained into its psyche. However, consistency -alone without focusing profoundly on LNC- is not a sufficient base to build on the logical system of thought. Therefore, LNC is, and shall remain the fundamental principle that can never be dismissed. One thing that has come out of the modern investigations into dialetheists' claims appears to be how superficial such a thought or claim is to assert that there are irrefutable examples that contradict the LNC. If consistency is, indeed, a necessary condition for any of these notions, it would seem to be for reasons much deeper than anyone has

yet succeeded in articulating. And if it is not, then the way is open for the exploration of all kinds of avenues and questions in philosophy and the sciences that have traditionally been closed off. It would be something which leads to the most illogical and unacceptable premises that LNC is both true and false. It is doubtful that any reasonable and sensitive educational officer, nor any parent will be able to teach any child -based on these premises- as they would quite probably prefer to espouse the common sense way of thinking that recognizes no contradiction.

Conclusion

- The Mahdiology method of education is based on two fundamental principles one is theo-practical, which is moderation while the second is pure intellectual, i.e. NCL.
- The Dajjīl, which is a sworn enemy from the apocalyptic category, has been mentioned as the declared enemy of al-Mahdi (as), and can be interpreted in different ways.
- The adopted interpretation of the Dajjīl is to be profoundly referring to a one-dimensional trend, tendency and sets that would voraciously be qualified to lead animosity towards the final leader of justice.
- The pretended examples, which had served for the dialetheists to oppose LNC, are all incorrect and refutable.

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Ground-setting Education, Strategy and Approaches as Reflected in [madressa.net](http://www.madressa.net) Weekend Madrasah Syllabus

Dr. Mansoor L. Limba¹

Abstract:

In countries where Muslims are in minority, Sunday school or weekend *madrasah* is a significant training ground and educational facility for Muslim children to preserve their Islamic identity and know their religious responsibilities. One such *madrasah* is the London-based Shia Ithna'asheri Madressa (SIM) whose syllabus which is constantly being revised and updated has been adopted by other *madrasahs* across the globe. Since its inception in 1985, its teaching methods have been introduced and for the new millennium, SIM (www.madressa.net) has branched out onto the Internet, thereby giving students worldwide free access to the teaching material and manuals (e.g. Course Notes 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2012). Complete with 11 Course Notes for students from age four to 16 (pre-school to high school), the *madrasah* offers four subjects, viz. *Akhlaq* (ethics), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Tarikh* (history), and Qur'an.

This paper attempts to examine the educational strategy

1. PhD Director Shajaratun Muntazirah Educational & Research Institute (SMERI) Cotabato City Philippines

and approaches adopted by SIM for setting the ground for the Mahdi's advent (*zuhur*). Aimed at molding students and producing graduates with a Qur'anic worldview as its target profile, SIM syllabus includes lessons which introduce the Mahdi's blessed personality, lofty station and reformative mission in the future as well as the believers' responsibility toward him and his movement, in three subjects, viz. *Akhlaq*, *Fiqh* and *Tarikh* in all age levels (from 4 to 16).

These lessons about the Mahdi wholly or partly are guided by the following conceptual frameworks: "self-development and societal wellbeing" as inspired by the Prophet's dictum, "obedience to Allah and service to mankind" (*tā'at al-khāliq wa khidmat al-makhlūq*), for *Akhlaq*; the *risālah* of *marji' al-taqīd* as inspired by the Qur'anic verse "Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he (or she) be faithful—We shall revive him with a good life" (*Sūrat al-Naḥl* 16:97), for *Fiqh*; and the establishment of a just and an equitable society, as is so eloquently stated in the Qur'an, thus: "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" (*Sūrat al-Ḥadīd* 57:25), for *Tarikh*.

Keywords: weekend *madrasah*, education, strategy and approached in education, *mahdawiyyah*/Mahdism, Islamic eschatology

Introduction

This paper attempts to examine the educational strategy and approaches adopted by Shia Ithna'asheri Madressa (SIM) for setting the ground for the Mahdi's advent (*zuhur*).

In this paper, instead of the Latinized 'Mahdism' or 'Mahdiism', the transliteration *mahdawiyyah* of the Arabic word is used because the latter is historically and linguistically more accurate than the former. The former can be considered an anachronism that has little significance in an age in which cross-cultural understanding is a pressing

concern. Moreover, the suffix ‘-ism’ in ‘Mahdism/Mahdiyyism’ is used to form an abstract noun. The word *mahdawiyyah*, however, is a term which signifies not a set of concepts or propositions per se, but rather an activity or movement.

Conceptual Framework

Before presenting the conceptual framework of this study, some concepts used in this paper must be clarified.

Mahdawiyyah

Mahdawiyyah is the Islamic eschatological belief in the coming of a global savior or redeemer, called the Mahdi, in the future. In a Prophetic tradition (*hadith*) upon whose authenticity Muslim schools of thought agree, Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said:

If there were to remain in the life of the world but one day, God would prolong that day until He sends in it a man from my community and my household. His name will be the same as my name. He will fill the earth with equity and justice as it was filled with oppression and tyranny.¹

It is said that the establishment of this global rule will usher in a golden age for mankind characterized by spiritual and moral excellence, diffusion of knowledge, technological advancement, agricultural abundance, economic prosperity, and political stability. According to Prophetic traditions, people of the world will be so contented that ‘The younger ones wish they were grown-ups, while the adults wish they were younger....The good become even more good, and even the wicked ones are treated well’² and ‘The inhabitants of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth will be

1. Quoted in Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba’i, et al. ‘Messianism and the Mahdi’, in *Expectation of the Millennium: Shi’ism in History*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, et al. (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 8; Najmuddin Tabasi, *An Overview of the Mahdi’s Government*, trans. Mansoor Limba (Tehran: Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly, 2009), pp. 117-118.

2. Quoted in Harun Yahya, *The End Times and the Mahdi* (Maryland: Khatoons, 2003), p. 53.

pleased with him [i.e. the Mahdi] and such plants will be produced by the earth that the living will wish the dead could come back to life.’¹

Ground-setting Education

Ground-setting education refers to a type of training and education that attempts to mold a society prepared for the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (*'a*). In other words, it is the same Islamic education which emphasizes the centrality of the Imam’s personality and universal mission.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the ground-setting weekend *madrasah* education can be clarified by attempting to define our target profile. In other words, what kind of product is to be produced? What kind of graduate we want to have? The simple answer is to produce a graduate with a Qur’anic worldview.

According to Murtada Mutahhari, the great contemporary Iranian teacher and thinker,

“‘Worldview’ means a kind of understanding, an interpretation and a kind of analysis that a person has about existence and the universe as well as man, society and history... Worldview informs us of what exists and what does not exist; what law governs the universe and man; what law governs society; which movements and motions lead to which direction; how nature moves; and what is the very thing called ‘existence’.”²

Based on this definition of “worldview”, it can be understood that “Qur’anic worldview” is the worldview in which the ultimate source and authority of all knowledge is the Qur’an which is expected to provide a natural basis for the integration of all courses taught in the Islamic institution of learning.

1. Ibid., p. 54.

2. Murtadā Mutahharī, *The Theory of Knowledge*, trans. Mansoor Limba (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2011), pp. 12-13.

In this regard, the Holy Qur'an states:

“We did not send any apostle before you but We revealed to him that ‘There is no god except Me; so worship Me.’”¹

Tawhīd or the Islamic system of belief in the Oneness of Allah is, thus, the all-encompassing reality that constitutes the overarching theme of the Qur'anic worldview.

Guided by this Qur'anic/*tawhidic* worldview, the conceptual frameworks of *aqā'id* (Islamic beliefs) and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) courses are *usūl al-dīn* and the *risālah* of *marji' al-taqlīd*, respectively, as inspired by the following Qur'anic verses, among others:

“Should anyone renounce his faith, his work shall fail and he will be among the losers in the Hereafter.”²

“Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he (or she) be faithful—We shall revive him with a good life.”³

Meanwhile, “self-development and societal wellbeing” serves as the conceptual framework of *akhlāq* (ethics) course as inspired by the Prophet's dictum, *tā'at al-khāliq wa khidmat al-makhlūq* or obedience to Allah and service to mankind.

The framework for *tārīkh* is rooted in the ultimate goal that Islam cherished for human society, i.e. the establishment of a just and an equitable society, as is so eloquently stated in the Qur'an, thus:

“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.”⁴

Justice implies enactment of law based not on the interests of individuals or a class, but based on human wisdom guided by divine revelation. Equity signifies treatment of

1. Sūrat al-Anbiyā' 21:25. Translation of Qur'anic passages are adapted from Sayyid 'Alī Qūlī Qarā'ī, *The Qur'an with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation* (London: ICAS Press, 2004).

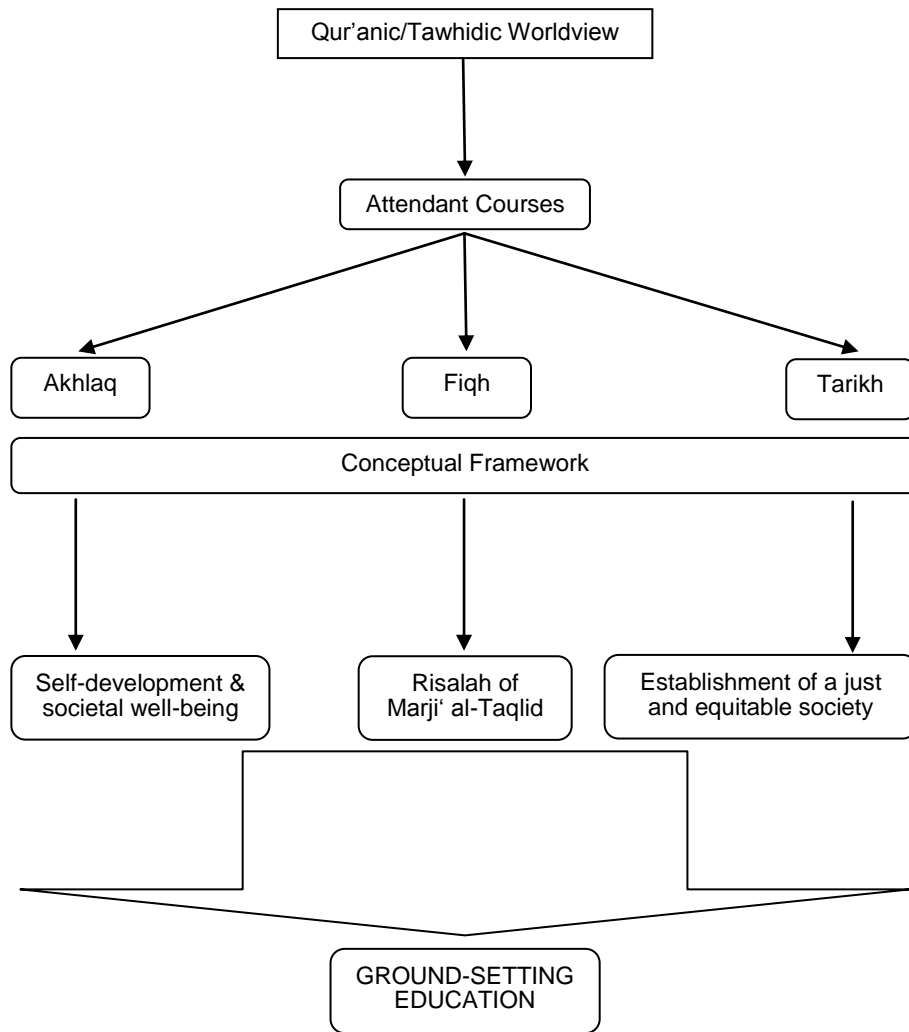
2. Sūrat al-Mā'idah 5:5.

3. Sūrat al-Nahl 16:97.

4. Sūrat al-Ḥadīd 57:25.

individuals based solely on their ethical behavior without regard to their social class or position in society.

In sum, the conceptual framework of this study can be represented by the diagram below:¹



1. The diagram is adapted from “Diagram E: Building up to the Conceptual Frameworks for Madrasah’s Core Courses,” available at <http://www.naieb.org/ieb/posters/Diag%20E%20Conceptual%20Framework.pdf> a few years ago.

Weekend Madrasah Education

In countries where Muslims are in minority, Sunday school or weekend *madrasah* is a significant training ground and educational facility for Muslim children to preserve their Islamic identity and know their religious responsibilities. Besides completing the national schools, the majority of Singaporean Muslim children, for example, gain their Islamic religious knowledge and moral values through the part-time structured education or usually called “weekend *madrasah*” or Sunday Islamic school. As such, weekend *madrasahs* in Singapore have gained popularity among Muslim parents.¹

madressa.net

One such *madrasah* is the Stanmore-based Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa (SIM) which was founded by the London Shi’ah community (*jama’ah*) in January 1985. Mainly aimed at meeting the growing religious needs of the children of the community, the Sunday classes were held at the then newly-acquired Huseini Shia Islamic Center in Stanmore, and consisted of only five classes and 60 students learning an elementary syllabus. After less than a month, the number of students exceeded a hundred, and within a year SIM registered 15 classes and 262 students and came up with a syllabus.²

In 1987, according to its website, the *madrasah* began computerization of its administrative data and turned into a financially self-sustaining body by introducing a voluntary tuition fee. The syllabi of its core subjects, viz. *Tarikh* (history), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Akhlaq* (ethics) and *Qur’an*, were also comprehensively revised. By 1988, SIM moved to

1. Nora Rustham, et al. “Teaching Methodologies in a Weekend Madrasah: A Study at Jamiyah Education Centre, Singapore,” *International Journal of Arts and Commerce*, vol. 1, no. 2, p. 150.

2. “Our History,” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, <http://www.madressa.net/sim/history>, accessed: April 29, 2013.

larger premises at Park High School in Harrow and had 380 registered students which increased to over 500 students the next few years.¹

The 1990s witnessed the *madrasah*'s progress in the educational structure and extracurricular activities with the introduction of teacher training workshops and awareness seminars to improve teaching and communication skills, as well as the promotion annual sports days, summer camps, and annual activity trips. In 1998, the then newly renovated Husseini Islamic Center in Stanmore has become SIM's site once again.²

Currently with over 100 teachers and volunteers for 750 students and 25 classes, the *madrasah* has a syllabus which is constantly being revised and updated and has been adopted by other *madrasahs* across the globe.³

madressa.net Course Notes

Since its inception in 1985, its teaching methods have been introduced and for the new millennium, SIM has branched out onto the Internet (<http://www.madressa.net>), thereby giving students worldwide free access to the teaching material and manuals. Its syllabus in four subjects or Course Notes have been undergoing revisions every two years since 2004 (i.e. Course Notes 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010,⁴ and 2012).⁵ Complete with 11 Course Notes for students from age four to 16 (pre-school to high school), the *madrasah* offers these four subjects, viz. *Akhlaq* (ethics), *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), *Tarikh* (history), and Qur'an.

Ground-setting Education and Strategies in the Course Notes

These lessons about the Mahdi wholly or partly are guided

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. The author of this paper had personal copies of the previous Course Notes (2004, 2006, 2008, and 2010) which were downloaded from SIM website.

5. "Madressa Course Notes 2012," Shia Ithna'asheri Madressa, <http://www.madressa.net/sim/history>, accessed: April 29, 2013.

by the following conceptual frameworks: “self-development and societal wellbeing” as inspired by the Prophet’s dictum, “obedience to Allah and service to mankind” (*tā‘at al-khāliq wa khidmat al-makhlūq*), for *Akhlaq*; the *risālah* of *marji‘ al-taqlīd* as inspired by the Qur’anic verse “Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he (or she) be faithful—We shall revive him with a good life” (*Sūrat al-Naḥl* 16:97), for *Fiqh*; and the establishment of a just and an equitable society, as is so eloquently stated in the Qur’an, thus: “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” (*Sūrat al-Ḥadīd* 57:25).

Course Note 1

In Course Note 1 for four years old students, there is one lesson in *Fiqh* and another in *Tarikh* which deal with Imam al-Mahdi (‘*a*fs). In Topic 11 about *Salawat* of *Fiqh*, four years students are taught thus,

“Whenever you hear the name of our Holy Prophet (s) or his family, you should recite Salawat. Our last Imam is Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a). Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) is still alive and is the Imam of our time. When we hear or say the name of our 12th Imam (‘a) we should put our right hand on our head, bow down, and recite Salawat.”¹

Topic 11 in *Tarikh* is no less than the Twelfth Imam (‘a). It is thus inculcated to the students:

“Our 12th Imam is Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a). He is the Imam of our time. As he is still alive, when we say his name we should stand up, bow our heads, and recite Salawat to show our respect for him. Allah has promised all Muslims that He would never leave them without a teacher and for us it is our 12th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a). Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) is in

1. “Fiqh Syllabus – Class 1 (4 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/01_F_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

Ghaybat.”¹

Ghaybat is explained in the lesson in this way: “*Ghaybat* [means that] he is hidden from us and we cannot see him. But he can see us and he knows when we need his help and he comes to help us.”²

Furthermore, the Imam’s (‘a) advent in the future is explained, thus:

“When you want something you should ask Allah through the 12th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) because he is closer to Allah than we are, and insha’ Allah, Allah will make your wish come true. Remember, if your wish does not come true it is not because Allah is not listening but because Allah only does what is good for you and it may not have been good for you to have what you wished for. There will come a time when our 12th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) will no longer be in Ghaybat. Only Allah knows when this time will be. He will come and fight all the bad people in this world and only the good people will be left on the earth.”³

Finally, the following moral lesson is highlighted: “You should make sure that you are good so that you can fight on the side of the 12th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) and not against him.”⁴

Course Note 2

In Course Note 2 for five years old students, the previous *Fiqh* lesson on *Salawat* is repeated as a lesson in *Akhlaq* in a more concise manner.⁵ As Topic 11 in *Akhlaq*, the following manners of waking up are taught: “You should remember to do the following when you wake up in the morning: remember Allah first, say *salam* to our 12th Imam (‘a) and

1. “Tarikh Syllabus – Class 1 (4 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/01_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. “Akhlaq Syllabus – Class 2 (5 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/02_A_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013.

greet, hug and kiss your parents.”¹

As Topic 9 in *Tarikh*, the Twelfth Imam (‘a) is introduced in this manner:

“One day, a good man called Sayyid Muhammad ‘Amili was travelling through the desert with a group of people, when he got lost. Sayyid ‘Amili searched and searched for his group but could not find them. It soon became dark. He was tired, hungry, frightened and alone in the hot desert. He was preparing to die when suddenly he saw some water. He went to the water, drank some and then did Wudu’ (ablution) and prayed his Salat. After his Salat he felt very weak, and just lay there. All of a sudden he saw a person riding a horse getting closer and closer to him. When the rider reached Sayyid ‘Amili, he greeted him and asked him what the matter was. Sayyid ‘Amili explained that he was lost and hungry. On hearing this, the rider asked why Sayyid ‘Amili had not eaten the melons that were behind him. Sayyid ‘Amili turned around, and was surprised to find some melons. The rider then told him to eat one melon and take the rest with him and pointed out the direction he was to go in to find his group. Then the rider disappeared. Sayyid ‘Amili then realized that it was our 12th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a), who had helped him. Sayyid ‘Amili reached his group safely.”²

As moral lesson of the story, it is pointed out that “Although we cannot see our 12th Imam, he can see us and he knows when we need his help, and he comes to help us.”³ As part of our duties during the *Ghaybah* (occultation) of Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘atfs), these points are mentioned:

“15th of Sha‘ban is a very special day in the Islamic Lunar Calendar, because it is the birth date of our 12th Imam (‘a), our living Hujjah (proof), Imam al-Mahdi (‘a). While we wait eagerly for Imam al-Zaman (‘a), a title our 12th Imam (‘a) is known as, to come back, there are we should

1. Ibid.

2. “Tarikh Syllabus – Class 2 (5 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/02_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

3. Ibid.

recite the Du‘a’ (supplication) for his safety, as well as other supplications like Du‘a’ al-Nudbah which our Imam (‘a) himself says is very good for us to recite. We must also try and do only good deeds so we can get closer to Allah and then also try and guide others to the right path so that when our Imam (‘a) returns he has lots and lots of helpers.”¹

Course Note 3

In Course Note 3 for six years old students, three lessons are partly or wholly about the Twelfth Imam (‘a). His name is mentioned in Topic 2 (Names of *A’immah*) and Topic 7 (*Ma’sumeen*).² Topic 6 is a partial account of the birth of the Imam (‘a):

“As soon as our 12th Imam, Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) was born, he did Sajdah. Soon after his birth one of the maids went to see Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a), who was lying in his cradle. The maid said ‘Salam’ to the Imam (‘a) and the Imam (‘a) answered her salam. The maid was surprised. The maid then sneezed and Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) said from the cradle: ‘Yarhamukallah,’ it is a blessing from Allah and you can be sure to live for the next 3 days.”³

The following points are enumerated are the story’s moral lessons:

“When anyone says Salam to you it is Wajib on you to answer and you should try to answer more than what was said to you. When anyone else sneezes you should say Yarhamukallah; when you yourself sneeze you should say Al-hamdulillah.”⁴

There is also a supplementary story about “The Hidden Imam.” In the end, this point is stressed:

“Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (s) said that in Ghaybah,

1. Ibid.

2. “Tarikh Syllabus – Class 3 (6 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/03_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

our Imam al-Zaman (‘a) is like a sun hidden behind the clouds. So, even though we do not see Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), he is near us all the time and will help us whenever we ask him. Sometimes when we are lost or frightened somewhere, he helps us even if we don’t ask.”

Course Note 4

In Course Note 4 for seven years old students, the Twelfth Imam (‘a) is an integral part of two *Akhlaq* lessons. In Topic 1 on “Necessity of Good *Akhlaq*,” the students are told: “During the *Ghaybah* of our 12th Imam, we all have to take care of Islam!”¹ In the lesson (Topic 4) on “Manners of Talking,” the students are thus urged: “Think before you speak, and imagine if our 12th Imam (‘a) is standing next to you, would you still say what you are going to say?”²

In *Fiqh* subject, apart from mentioning the name of the Awaited Imam (‘a) in a poem entitled “Learning the Names of Our 12 Imams” (page 18),³ in Topic 8 (Imamat) of *Fiqh*, the students are admonished, thus:

“Our last Imam (‘a), Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) is alive and is with us all the time. He guides us but it is up to us to remember him and make him happy. At the end of every week what we have done during the week is checked by our Imam (‘a). All our good deeds make him happy but all our bad deeds make him sad. So we have to be careful not to make him unhappy. Also, remember that when we hear his name we should stand up, put our right hand on our head, and bow our head down, to show our respect for him.”⁴

In *Tarikh* subject, in addition to mentioning his name in Topic 2 (The *Ahlul Bayt* Titles),⁵ the Twelfth Imam (‘a) is

1. “*Akhlaq* Syllabus – Class 4 (7 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/04AB_A_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

2. Ibid.

3. “*Fiqh* Syllabus – Class 4 (7 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/04B_F_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

4. Ibid.

5. “*Tarikh* Syllabus – Class 4 (7 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa,

also highlighted in Topic 14 (Prophet ‘Isa (‘a)), hence: “When our 12th Imam (‘a) reappears, Prophet ‘Isa (‘a) will come down from the heavens and pray behind him.”¹

Course Note 5

In Course Note 5 for eight years old students, the Imam of the Age (‘a) is mentioned as the Last Imam in a lesson of Imamate (Topic 12 for Girls).² The Imam is also mentioned in relation to *Khums* (Islamic tax) as part of *Furu‘ al-Din* (branches of religion): “Everyone has to pay fifth of their year's savings. The money is divided between *Sadat* (descendants of the Prophet (s) and our 12th Imam (‘a); during his *Ghaybah* it is given to the *Mujtahid*.”³

Course Note 6

In Course Note 6 for nine years old students, the Imam of the Time (‘a) is mentioned thus in a *Fiqh* lesson on Imamate (Topic 11):

“Our last Imam is Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a). Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi (‘a) is still alive and is the Imam of our time. When we hear or say the name of our 12th Imam (‘a) we should put our right hand on our head, bow down, and recite Salawat.”⁴

In *Tarikh* lesson (Topic 14 for Girls) on *Dhu‘l ‘Ashirah* (first public Prophetic invitation of the Prophet (s) in Makkah three years after his prophethood), this question is included in the ‘Moral Box’: “When the 12th Imam (‘a) comes and asks us to join him, will our responses be like

http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/04AB_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

1. Ibid.

2. “Fiqh Syllabus – Class 5 (8 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/05A_F_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013. It is Topic 19 in the syllabus for boys, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/05B_F_2012.pdf.

3. Ibid. It is Topics 21-23 in the syllabus for boys.

4. “Fiqh Syllabus – Class 6 (9 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/06A_F_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification. It is Topic 19 in the syllabus for boys.

that of Imam ‘Ali (‘a) or Abu Lahab?’”¹

Course Note 7

In Course Note 7 for ten years old students, this admonition is included in the ‘Moral Box’ in relation to a lesson (Topic 20) on the Prophet’s conquest of Makkah eight years after the Hijrah: “We must prepare for the time when our 12th Imam reappears so that we are on the side of truth and not on the side of falsehood.”²

Course Note 8

In Course Note 8 for eleven years old students, the Awaited Imam’s (‘a) name is mentioned in a review lesson (Topic 19) on *Fiqh*.³

Course Note 9

In Course Note 9 for twelve years old students, four *Tarikh* lessons are wholly devoted to the Awaited Imam (‘a). Topic 7 which is about his birth is summarized as follows:

“The mother of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a), Bibi Narjis Khatun’s arrival into Samarra was quite strange. Bashir ibn Sulayman has narrated this. The 10th Imam (‘a) asked Bashir to purchase a female slave from Umar ibn Yazid. The female slave would be speaking in the Roman language and he gave Bashir a letter to hand over to the female slave. The lady was bought for 120 Dinars and brought to Samarra to Imam ‘Ali al-Naqi (‘a) who welcomed her and handed her into the care of his sister Halimah Khatun. This lady was none other than Bibi Narjis Khatun (‘a), the granddaughter of Kaiser, the king of Rome. She had seen a dream in which the Holy Prophet

1. “Tarikh Syllabus – Class 6 (9 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/06AB_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.
2. “Tarikh Syllabus – Class 7 (10 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/07AB_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013.
3. “Fiqh Syllabus – Class 8 (11 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/08A_F_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013. It is Topic 23 in the syllabus for boys.

(s) had asked for her hand in marriage to our 11th Imam (‘a) from Prophet ‘Isa (‘a). Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (‘a) was married to Bibi Narjis Khatun. Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) was born in Samarra at dawn on Friday, the 15th of Sha‘ban 255 AH in the house of his father. Immediately upon his birth, he first prostrated in Sajdah and raised his right index finger towards the sky and recited the Kalimah. This was the practice of all our Imams (‘a).”¹

The lesson is interspersed with this question: “Most of the signs of the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) have already come about, are we ready and prepared to help him?”²

Dealing with the political circumstances of the Imam’s (‘a) birth, Topic 8 is summed up as follows:

“The ‘Abbasid Caliph Mu‘tamad had tried to prevent Imam’s (‘a) birth but had been unsuccessful. The Imam (‘a), like the Prophets ‘Isa (‘a) and Yahya (John the Baptist) (‘a), had the ability to speak in infancy and used to recite verses of the Holy Qur'an from the cradle. Imam Hasan al-‘Askari (‘a) only let a few trusted companions into the secret of his son and advised them that he would be his successor. At the time of his death, his brother Ja‘far was preparing to lead the funeral prayers when the Imam (‘a) told his uncle to move aside because only an Imam (‘a) could lead the funeral prayers for another Imam (‘a). He was only 5 years old and most people had never seen him. When Mu‘tamad heard that the prayers had been led by a young boy, he knew that he had failed in his plan. He increased his efforts in locating and killing the Imam (‘a) before any harm came to himself. Again he was unsuccessful because Allah protected His Hujjah, who had to serve mankind till the last days. The Holy Prophet (s) has said that if one dies without knowing the Imam of his time, his death is that of an unbeliever. There have been two periods of Ghaybah. The first was Ghaybat al-Sughra (260 AH to 328 AH). During that time his followers could not see him, but they could communicate with him through his special deputies. They were ‘Uthman ibn

1. “Tarikh Syllabus – Class 9 (12 Years Old),” Shia Ithna‘asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/09AB_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

2. Ibid.

Sa'id, Muhammad ibn 'Uthman, Husayn ibn Rawh, and 'Ali ibn Muhammad Samri. After the last deputy of the Imam ('a), Ghaybat al-Sughra came to an end and Ghaybat al-Kubra (Major Concealment) began. This is the period we are living in today. The two main signs of the Imam's ('a) reappearance are the rising of the Sufyani army from Syria, and a loud voice will be heard from the sky announcing the presence of the Imam ('a) and will be understood by every person on earth."¹

The lesson is interspersed with these questions: "Our Imam ('a) has been waiting since he became Imam (at the age of 5) to bring justice in the world. How old is he now and are we still not ready for him? What are our duties to our Imam ('a)? Do we mean it from our heart when we call him to come out of his *Ghaybah*? What are the other signs indicating the reappearance of our Imam ('a)?"²

Topic 9 which is about the Imam's Major Occultation (*ghaybat al-kubra*) is summarized as follows:

"The period of Ghaybat al-Kubra (Major Concealment) began in the year 328 AH. Since then, the Imam ('a) has been concealed from us. Nobody can claim to be his deputy and there is no direct way of communication with him. In place of the special deputies, our Mujtahids are regarded as representatives of the Holy Imam ('a). We all benefit from the Holy Imam ('a) while he is concealed, just as the earth benefits from the light and heat of the sun even when it is temporarily hidden behind a cloud. Following are examples where the Imam ('a) has guided his followers: Once 'Allamah al-Hilli (r) advised that a pregnant lady be buried in the same condition. As the people were about to bury her, a horseman came saying that the 'Allamah had ordered that the child be now removed. This was done. A few years later, the 'Allamah was visited by the same child who had been removed from his mother. The 'Allamah immediately realized that it was the Holy Imam ('a) who had come to his aid, otherwise he would have been guilty of burying a living child. One day a Sunni minister who was an enemy of the Shi'ah brought a pomegranate to the governor with the names of Abu

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and Imam ‘Ali (‘a) on it. The minister claimed that this was a sign from Allah that the Shi‘ah belief was incorrect and that the Shi‘ah should not be regarded as Muslims. Again, our Imam (‘a) came to help, and told Shi‘ah scholars of the minister’s tricks. When the governor found out about the minister’s treachery, he was executed, while the Shi‘ah scholars left with honor and dignity.”¹

The lesson is interspersed with these questions: “What is the role of a *Mujtahid*, and which *Mujtahid* are you and your family following at the moment? Our Imam (‘a) is always there to help us in times of need. What are we doing to prepare ourselves to help him?”²

Finally, the lesson is concluded with ‘Moral Box’ which contains these points: “Even though we may not be able to see our Imam (‘a), he is always there to help. We need to prepare ourselves, so that we may be ready when he calls us to him.”³

Dealing with our duties during the period of *Ghaybat al-Kubra*, Topic 10 is encapsulated in this way:

“The Imam (‘a) is aware of our prayers, deeds, actions and troubles. Any believer who sincerely seeks help from him receives his assistance. It is the duty of every believer to remember the Holy Imam (‘a) and pray for his safety and well-being, and give charity in his name. One can write a petition (‘aridah) to the Imam (‘a) stating their needs, and deposit it into a well or river at any time. Provided the person practices Islam, prays, fasts and restrains himself from committing sin, the Imam (‘a) will come to his aid. It is important to constantly remember our Holy Imam (‘a) and make preparations for his appearance. There are some definite signs before the Holy Imam (‘a) will appear. Some of these are: Dajal will emerge; there will be two eclipses in the holy month of Ramadan; the sun will rise from the west; an image of a man will appear in the sky opposite the sun; a loud voice will be heard from the sky announcing that the Mahdi has come; and Sufyani will rise

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

with his army and will wage a fierce war in his attempt to destroy the Holy Imam ('a). The Imam ('a) will appear in Makkah near the Holy Ka'bah. Three hundred thirteen Muslims will go to Makkah to swear the oath of allegiance to him. Later, more Muslims will follow.”¹

The lesson is interspersed with these questions: “Our Imam ('a) is aware of our deeds. Are our deeds pleasing or upsetting for him to see? Would we consider ourselves being one of the believers the Holy Prophet (S) has described in the tradition [which says, ‘Although these Muslims will have never seen me or their Imam, they will remain true to their faith despite being surrounded by calamities and hostilities caused by their enemies’]?”²

Finally, the lesson is concluded with ‘Moral Box’ which contains these points: “We should constantly ask Allah to hasten the re-appearance of the Holy Imam ('a). Our actions should be such that when the Imam ('a) sees them, he is pleased with them and not upset by them.”³

The syllabus on *Tarikh* also mentions Imam al-Mahdi ('a) in lessons about Imam Hasan al-'Askari ('a) (Topic 6) and Prophet 'Isa ('a) (Topic 16).⁴

Course Note 10

In Course Note 10 for 14 years old students, the Twelfth Imam ('a) is mentioned in a lesson on life after death, particularly on the concept of *Raj'ah* (Return) or *Qiyamat al-Sughra* (Minor Resurrection):

“Prior to the total resurrection, the Final Day of Judgment or Reckoning, there will be a period of *Raj'ah* or *Qiyamat al-Sughra*, i.e. Partial Resurrection wherein the Holy Prophet (s) and the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), a group of people perfect in faith and belief, and a group of extremely wicked people will be brought to life again. This will take

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

place during the period when the expected and the awaited Imam al-Mahdi ('a), the twelfth and the last successor of the Holy Prophet (s) will appear on this earth.”¹

In the lesson on *Qiyamah* (resurrection), particularly on *Hisab* (reckoning), the Imam’s advent is also identified as one of the signs prior to the Day of Judgment:

“There will be many signs before the Day of Judgment. One of these signs is the re-appearance of the 12th Imam ('a). He will reappear when the world will become full of injustice. Hadrat ‘Isa ('a) will come down to help him in spreading the true faith and Imam al-Mahdi ('a) will rule the whole world.”²

Course Note 11

In Course Note 11 for 15-16 years old students, the Awaited Savior ('a) is mentioned in *Akhlaq* lessons on backbiting (*ghibah*) and slander (*tuhmah*):

“...Ghibah weakens and breaks up a whole community. This allows those who want to see Islam diminished enter the cracks and cause them to split. Slowly damaging and destroying the community as we spend time fighting and arguing amongst ourselves. In doing so, we lose sight of the priority, which is to improve ourselves and our communities for the advent of the 12th Holy Imam ('a).”³

In a nutshell, the lessons which partly or wholly deal with Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi ('a) in the *madrasah* syllabus are shown in the following table:

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1. “Fiqh Syllabus – Class 10 (13-14 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/10AB_T_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.
 2. Ibid.
 3. “Akhlaq Syllabus – Class 11 (15-16 Years Old),” Shia Ithna’asheri Madressa, http://cdn.madressa.net/public/notes_2012/11AB_A_2012.pdf, accessed: April 29, 2013, with slight modification.

Course Note	Subject		
	Akhlaq	Fiqh	Tarikh
1		11 – Salawat	10 – Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi ('atfs)
2	7 – Salawat		9 – Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi ('atfs)
	11 – Manners of Waking up		
3			2 – Names of A'immah 6 – Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi ('atfs) * Hidden Imam: Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi 7 – Ma'sumeen ('a)
4	1 – Necessity of Good Akhlaq 4 – Manners of Talking	8 – Imam Poem: Learning the Names of Our 12 Imams ('a)	2 – The Ahlul Bayt ('a) Titles 14 – Prophet 'Isa ('a)
		8 – Imam	
5 Girls		12 – Imam 13 – Furu' al-Din	
5 Boys		19 – Imam 21-23 – Furu' al-Din 1	
6 Girls		11 - Imam	14 – the Invitation of Dhul 'Ashirat
6 Boys		19 - Imam	
7 Boys			20 – The Conquest of Makkah - 2
8 Girls		19 – Terminology	
8 Boys		23 – Terminology	
9			7-10 – Imam Muhammad Mahdi ('atfs)
			6 – Imam Hasan al-'Askari ('a)
			16 – Prophet 'Isa ('a)
10 Girls		Life after Death – Raj'at: Qiyamat al-Sughra	
		Qiyamah - Hisab	
11	7 – Backbiting and Slandering		

Conclusion

From above table, the following conclusions can be:

1. The pertinent lessons are not limited to a single subject, say *Tarikh*, but to all subjects, viz. *Akhlaq*, *Fiqh* and *Tarikh*.

2. The ground-setting instructions contained in the lessons are not confined to a particular age bracket but available in all age groups, i.e. from aged 4 to aged 16.
3. These lessons introduce the Mahdi's blessed personality, lofty station and reformative mission in the future as well as the believers' responsibility toward him and his movement.
4. These lessons about the Mahdi wholly or partly do not digress from their respective conceptual frameworks: "self-development and societal wellbeing" for *Akhlaq*; the *risālah* of *marji' al-taqlīd* for *Fiqh*; and the establishment of a just and an equitable society for *Tarikh*.

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Education of Universal Values

A Step towards Socio-Economic and Ethical Transformation for Ground Setting of Appearance

Dr. Syed Nisar Hussain Hamdani¹

ABSTRACT

Universal values are the values which are equally valued in the world regardless of discrimination caused by religion, culture, ethnicity or other prejudices. These are the values respected everywhere and by majority of people such as justice, honest, truth, care, respect, peace, freedom, and human dignity etc. There is a long list of such universal values. All the traits of Imam Mahdi [ajj.] narrated by the Holy Prophet or other infallibles very clearly indicate that the Imam will be a source of blessing for the whole humanity and not only for one religion or sect. Due to his appearance, a system of justice will be developed that not only the humans but also animals will benefit from peace and tranquility. How this will happen? The answer lies in prevalence of universal values among Imam [ajj] and his close companions. This noble group will be a source of justice, prosperity and dignity of human beings regardless of

1. Professor of Economics & Director Kashmir Institute of Economics, University of AJ&K

race and creed. It is obvious that any individual or society which is endeavoring for the ground setting of early appearance has to promote such values so that an alignment could take place between the values liked by the Imam [ajj.] and those prevailing among such individuals or society.

The present paper has three parts; part one presents a review of world values, scientific and ethical theories and the debate about what values are universal and what not. In part two, the point of view of different religion about values as mentioned in their holy scriptures has been presented. With reference from the Holy Qur'an and the narrations of the infallibles, a set of values is identified which are not only common among religions but also are known as values of humanity, therefore, can be well placed in the universal set of values. In the last part, people's perception have been analyzed using the fresh survey data on how people perceive the universal values, how far those are prevailing among them and what are the socio-economic outcomes of such values in perspective of ground setting for Imam of the time[ajj.]. The econometric modeling and estimation used in the analysis have been elaborated with the help of graphs and tables. Some useful insights for future research and a few recommendations have been presented in the end about how education of universal values can help towards socio-economic and ethical transformation for ground setting of appearance and alignment of human growth and development within the framework of universal values which are in conformity with the values of post appearance era.

Keyword: Universal values, education, Mahdism, ground setting, post-appearance values

Introduction

Universal values are the values which are equally valued in the world regardless of discrimination caused by religion,

culture, ethnicity or other prejudices. These are the values respected everywhere and by majority of people such as justice, honesty, truth, care, respect, peace, freedom, and human dignity etc. It could be something that has a universal value when everybody finds it valuable or as Berlin says, 'a great many human beings in the vast majority of places and situations, at almost all times, do in fact hold in common, whether consciously and explicitly or as expressed in their behaviour' or it could have universal value when all people have reason to believe it has value [Sen, 1999]. It is mainly this interpretation that fertility, pleasure, and democracy are being considered as universal values.

According to Jeremy Bentham, pleasure and pain are universal values in while other things are of value only due to their quality of producing pleasure or pain¹. Hence, utilitarians hold 'any actions are right when they maximise pleasure and minimise pain, when everyone is considered equally'.

Schwartz defined 'values' as conceptions the action and events. According to him, there are related to biological, social and welfare or survival needs of humans. Schwartz's identified ten types of universal values viz. power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security.

Schwartz also tested an eleventh possible universal value, 'spirituality', or 'the goal of finding meaning in life', but found that it does not seem to be recognised in all cultures [Schwartz, 1992].

In brief, values are standards to guide action, judgments, and attitudes. These define what is worthwhile, beneficial, or harmful.

1. Interested readers may study about intrinsic values.

Concepts and Definitions

Surprisingly, values are used and considered by everyone but still it means many things to many people. Here, some concepts and terms are explained that may help understanding about values and their types.

The term moral universe is referred to the concept that we live in a spiritual universe¹ 'that is somehow ordered by a higher power, by invisible feelings of good and bad, a 'cosmic order'. Moral universalism or moral objectivism or universal morality are the concepts that some system of ethics is applicable universally regardless of distinctions in culture, race, sex, religion, nationality etc. In Schwartz's empirical study, Universalism was found a universal value with specific other values such as; broadmindedness, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace, a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment, and inner harmony.

When basic concepts about universal values are clear, it becomes easy to understand what is meant by education of universal values. Since Mahdi's governance and systems will be universal in nature on the basis of promotion of universal values, therefore, education of universal values is integral to Mahdism doctrine. Hence, in order to ground setting for Imam ajj. it is responsibility of all lovers of peace and justice to promote universal values as a preparation to his welcoming.

1. Fred A Wolf (1996), *The Spiritual Universe: How Quantum Physics Proves the Existence of the Soul*, Simon & Schuster

Table 01: Summary of Terms and Concepts

Values Types	Description
Held values	ethical constructs about what is right and wrong
Assigned values	the worth of thing, the value we assign or ascribe to something
Instrumental values	when we value things because they are useful to us.
Intrinsic values	when we recognize that things have value in and of themselves and not as a means toward some other ends.
Egoistic values	values central to defining our identities and "self-focused" orientation.
Altruistic	values directed outwardly, what is good for the world or society.
Attitudes	Likes and dislikes. A learned predisposition toward some object
Beliefs	what we believe to be TRUE or FALSE as opposed to what we believe to be GOOD or BAD.
Behaviour	what we do
Behavioural intention	what we say will do
Socialization	the process through which our values are formed. How we learn what is right and wrong, good and bad.
Spiritual/Moral values	values of love, affection, reverence, and respect

Source: Beckley, Dr. Tom, (2001), Social values in forestry – Lecture 3, 16 January, University of Brunswick available at [http://www.unb.ca/courses/for4005/LECTURE %203%20NOTES.htm](http://www.unb.ca/courses/for4005/LECTURE%203%20NOTES.htm)

Organization of the paper

The next part presents a review of world values, scientific and ethical theories and the debate about what values are universal and what not. In section 03, the point of view of different religion about values as mentioned in their holy scriptures has been presented. With reference from the Holy Qur'an and the narrations of the infallibles, a set of values is identified which are not only common among religions but also are known as values of humanity, therefore, can be well placed in the universal set of values. In 4th section, people's perception have been analyzed using the fresh survey data on how people perceive the universal values, how far those are prevailing among them and what are the socio-economic outcomes of such values in perspective of ground setting for Imam of the time[ajj.]. The econometric modeling and estimation used in the analysis have been elaborated with

the help of graphs and tables. Some useful insights for future research and a few recommendations have been presented in the end

Emphasis of religions on values

Among the ethical theories, there is one theory known as ‘Divine Command Ethics’ which means that things are right or wrong because of the Divine authority as “God commands it”. Almost All religions have one common goal, that is to make them perfect humans. Qur’an says “... and the Lord has decreed, observe rights, help the needy, do not kill, do not fornicate, do not cheat.” Jewish Law is its Ten Commandments of Prophet Moses (a.s.) which are “do not”, because of the corresponding value. For example, ‘Do Not kill- because of the value of life itself, Do Not steal – because the value of private property, Do Not commit adultery- because of the value of life, family and tradition’. Christianity values life to the extent to say “Say love to your enemy”.

Types of people and values

People differ in their attitudes, behaviors and values. For example, hypocrites subscribe to one set of values while do the others. In contrast, the faithful ones are those who have well identified their values and they have life of purpose with clear meaning and direction

There are so many types and a long list of values. We can classify them into two broad types and many sub-types as under;

1. Universal values
2. Contextual values

The first type represents those values which prevail everywhere, at all times regardless of race, religion, culture and other affiliations. The contextual values, however, are ‘values in a context’. There may be other ways to see the types of values; moral, material, aesthetic, intrinsic,

extrinsic, group values etc.

Islamic Values vs. Muslim Values

The Muslims claim that Islamic values are, in fact, humanity values. But actually, in different societies, there prevail some values that are different from other Islamic faith or these are not values of Islam even. Therefore, this a note here that all Muslim values are not Islamic values. Atiq Ebady (2001) talked about this misconceptions. ‘Islamic values are those that are set out in the Quran and the practice of the noble Messenger, Muhammad (S). Muslim values are those that are created as part of the culture of the Muslim communities. These include the day-to-day interaction between the Muslims and their outlook on Islam's rules and regulations. The difference is that Islam is perfect and pure, while the values formulated by the Muslims may or may not be in accordance with Islam’.

This difference arises by a relaxation on the enforcement of Islamic laws and the practices that become common among Muslims which they gradually start justifying until they become part of Muslim culture. The need remains there to make Muslim values the same as Islamic values.

Ethical Theories

There are philosophers and economists who believe there can be no universal values or ethics. For example Marx and Engels hold this view because according to them, these are relative to the economical circumstances of any particular individual or society that requires its own system of ethics. Thus in their belief, all morals and ethics are relative. There are many theories relating to ethics and values. These are; Consequentialism, Deontology, Virtue ethics, Ethics of care, Pragmatic ethics, Particularism, Role ethics etc. For a better understanding, Rosalind Hursthouse describes the relationships between different kinds of theories;

Table-2: Rosalind Hursthouse relationships between Ethical Theories

	Consequentialism	Deontology	Virtue Theory
Example	Mill's utilitarianism	Kantian ethics	Aristotle's moral theory
abstract description	An action is right if it promotes the best consequences.	An action is right if it is in accordance with a moral rule or principle.	An action is right if it is what a virtuous agent would do in the circumstances.
more concrete specification	The best consequences are those in which happiness is maximized.	A moral rule is one that is required by rationality.	A virtuous agent is one who acts virtuously, that is, one who has and exercises the virtues. A virtue is a character trait a human being needs to flourish or live well.
personal identity (what is essential to the self?)	will & reason + desires	will & reason (desires are thought of as outside forces with the potential to thwart rationality)	will & reason + desires + character traits
Rationality	getting what you want	doing what reason requires (at a minimum, not having inconsistent or self-contradictory policies)	having the kinds of desires which reason determines are best
central question	what ought I to do? (act orientation)	what ought I to do? (act orientation)	what's the best sort of person to be? (agent orientation)
primary object of evaluation	consequences (states of affairs)	Acts	people (agents)
the good	BASIC NOTION (for most consequentialists, maximum happiness or something similar)	right action itself (? or possibly states of affairs brought about by right action? or states of affairs in which people who act rightly are rewarded?)	whatever results from the actions of good people? happiness? acquisition of goods internal to practices (MacIntyre)?
the right	actions that maximize the good	BASIC NOTION	the sort of thing a virtuous person would do in the situation
Virtue	being disposed to maximize utility	positive attitude toward doing one's moral duty(?)	BASIC NOTION (but may be analyzed, e.g. as those dispositions necessary for the attainment of happiness)

From the above table we can note people can be classified into types and the ethical theories too. Broadly, Consequentialists and Deontologist theories are about the conduct of people and Aristotlian is about their character. Other theories such as Divine Command theory is about the conduct or character as ordained by God.¹

Economics and Values

In Economics, values are usually discussed as things having some price. Despite that Economics recognizes why an individual spends money on everything he purchases – because he values those things, yet this remains an ignored subject in economics that ethical, religious, and spiritual aspects are valued by individuals and these aspects affect the whole pattern of time and resources allocation. The concepts of prices and elasticities are very familiar in economics but not the things about which we feel strong. It is in fact the values which set our relationship with goods and services and give us direction and consistency in allocation behavior. No matter Economics ignores, it remains a fact that ‘happiness comes from letting values decide your behavior and goals’.

1. For additional details, <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/2282738/Ethical-Theories-is-what-is-not-legally-prohibited-morally-permissible>

Table-3: WORLD RELIGIONS AND VALUES

RELIGIONS	VALUES			
	I: Commitment to something greater than the self	II. Self – respect, humility, self-discipline, and acceptance of personal responsibility	III. Respect and caring for other individuals (i.e., the Golden from Judaism)	Iv caring for other living things and the environment
JUDAISM	To love the Lord your God and to walk in all His ways and to keep His commandments, and to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and soul. Joshua 22:5 Lord who may sojourn in your tent, who may dwell on your holy mountain? He who lives without blame, who does what is right, and in his heart acknowledges the truth. Psalm 15:1-2 Happy are those who act justly, who do right at all times. Psalm 106:3	Yea, man is bowed, and mortal brought low; brought low is the pride of the haughty. Isaiah 5:15 Pride goes before ruin, arrogance before failure. Better to be humble and among the lowly than to share spoils with the proud. Proverbs 16:18	Love your fellow as yourself. Leviticus, 19:18 You shall not murder. Exodus, 20:1 Thou shalt not bear false witness against the neighbor. Exodus, 20:16. You shall not steal. Exodus, 20:15	The lord God took the man, and placed him into the garden of Eden to till it and tend it. genesis 2:15 A righteous man knows the needs of his beasts. proverbs 12.10
CHRISTIANTY	You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:32 Love the Lord your God with all your heart	From inside, from the heart, come evil thoughts, acts of fornication, theft, murder, adultery, greed, and	Always treat others as you would have them to treat you. Mathew, 7:12 Do not murder, don't	What man shall there be among you, that have one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath

	and with all your soul, and with all your mind. Matthew22:37	malice: fraud, indecency, envy, slander, arrogance and folly all these evils come from within and they are what defile a person. Mark. 7: 22-23 who ever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Mathew. 23:12	commit adultery, don't steal, do not give false evidence, honor your father and mother and love your neighbor as your sel. Exodous, 19:18 if someone ask you to go a mile with him, go to. Exodous, 05:41	day ,will not lay hold of it and lift it out?mathew 12.11
ISLAM	Adore your Lord who created you, he did those before your. Koran 2:21 Do not confuse the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth knowingly, Koran 2:12 Oh, you who believe, be custodians of justice Koran 4:135	If you give alms openly it is well but if you do it secretly and give it to the poor that is better. Koran.2:271A and those who fulfills they trusts and convenient who uphold their testimonies and those who are mindful of their moral obligations; they will leave in garden of honor. Koran.70:23-35	Don't take a life, which God has forbidden except in just cause. Koran, 17:33 as for the thief, weather woman or man cut his hand as punishment from God. Koran, 5:38 He who fabricate lies his doom to failure, Koran, 20:61	His knowledge extends over the heavens and the earth ,and the earth ,and the preservation of them both tires him not Koran 2.255
HINDUISM	Truth alone prevails. The way of the God. . . . Proceed to the Highest Abode of the Ture	Whoever give up all selfish desires goes free from craving, his free of egotism and self interest	Don't kill. Bhavad Gita, 16:2 Don't lie. Bhavad Gita, 16:2	Not rejecting any creature, always friendly and compassionate .(characteriza

	<p>Mundaka Upanishad, III.i.5 Eternal peace belongs to the wise who perceive Him within themselves. Katha upanished, II.ii.13 For He, the supreme self, is not born, nor having come into phenomenal existence, will he ever cease to exist. Bhagavad Gita 2:20</p>	<p>and he attains true piece. Bhagavad galita. 2.71 Hypocrisy, arrogance, egotistical pride, anger, violence oaf speech and ignorance these are the characteristic s of one who is born to the demonic way of life. Bhagavad galita. 2.71, Gitta. 16.4The immature run after pleasure katha upamishad 11.2</p>		<p>tion of the yogi)bhagavad Gita 12.13</p>
TAOISM	<p>Hold to the truth. Tao Te Ching 8 Justice is the expression of divinity. Tao Te Ching 16 From Confucianism Gentlemen set their hearts on moral force. Analects IV.11 Be ready to due for the Good way Analects VIII.13</p>	<p>Life of for your centre not your senses. tao te ching. 12 The sage remains sensitive avoiding extremes , avoiding extravagance , avoiding excess. . tao te ching. 29. A man who boost of his achievements has no merits. A man who brags will not endure. . tao te ching. 24</p>	<p>In dealing with other, be gentle and kind in speech, be true in ruling, be just. Tao Te ching, 8 The sage takes care of all men and abundant no one. Tao Te ching, 27</p>	<p>Love the world as yourself, and you'll be able to care for it properly, Tao Te Ching, 13</p>
Confucianism	<p>Gentlemen set their hearts on moral force. Analects IV.11</p>	<p>A gentle man..... must remove all trace of violence or arrogant.</p>	<p>Never do to others what you would not like then to do to you. Enelects,</p>	

	Be ready to due for the Good way Analects VIII.13	Analects VIII .5 The gentle man is dignified but never haughty. Analects VIII .26	15.23 keep promises, Analects, 1.7	
Buddhism	And should one live a hundred years not seeing the immortal state; better still is one day lived of one who sees the immortal state. Dhammapada 8:16	Themselves the wise does tame. Dhamma pada. 6.5 Whoever dwells saying the pleasurable in senses unrestrained, immoderation in food indolent inferior of enterprise over him in deed. Mara prevails like the wind over a victory. . Dhamma pada. 1.5	What are the four voices of action that it gives up? They are injury to life, taking what is not given base conduct in sexual matters, and false speech. Digha Nikaya,	One who is harmless to all living beings is called noble Dhammapada 19:15
Humanism	'The Goal of the humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. Humanist Manifesto I p.3 Each person's future in some way linked to all. Humanist Manifesto II. P.6	The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanist value. Humanist manifesto. 11. p.4 Individual should be encouraged to their own betterment. Humanist manifesto 11 p.5	The goal of Humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common goods. Humanist manifesto, 1, p.2 We are concerned for the welfare of the aged. The infirmed, the disadvantaged, and also for the out	The planet earth must be considered a single ecosystem The cultivation and conservation of nature is a moral value, we should perceive ourselves as integral to sources of our being in nature. Humanist Manifesto II,p.6

			casts/ the mentally retarded, abandoned or abuse children, the handicap, prisoners, and addicts/for all who are neglected or ignored by society. Practicing humanist should make it their vocations to humanize personal relations. Humanists manifesto II, p.5	
Atheism	The goal of atheism is freedom of the mind. Introduction American Atheists, p.2 There is no divine guardian of truth, goodness . . . man must defend them or they will perish from the earth. Atheism teaches that, p.1	Man came and must create his own destiny. Atheist and purpose, P.1 We must face the consequences of our acts. Atheism Teaches That, p.1 There is no chance after to "We must do it now or never. Atheism Teaches That, p.1	To encourage the development and public and public acceptance of human ethics systems stressing the mutually sympathy, understanding and interdependence of all people. Aims and purpose. Point 5 The cooperation of man is the only hope of the world atheism teaches that, p.1	We Affirm that life is precious and that the ecological balance of our planet must be conserved. Atheist Manifesto, p.1
United Natlons	Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of		All human beings... should act towards one	Peace, development, and environmental

	the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world . U.N Declaration of Human Rights Preamble, p.1		another in a spirit of brotherhood u.n.declaration of human rights ,preamble,p.1	protection are interdependent and indivisible U.N. Conference on Environment and Development. Principle 25, p.5
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Source: Adopted from Kinner at el (2000) available at <http://personal.tcu.edu/pwitt/Universal%20Values.pdf>

Rushworth M. Kidder is the President of the Institute for Global Ethics. He has identified a list of common human values shared by most cultures throughout the world

Table-4: Universal Values List by Kidder, Institute for Global Ethics

Achievement	We want to have proven accomplishments and general success. Appeals to a universal "ambition" or "work" are made.
Benevolence	Goodwill, kindness, charity, honesty, truth, and friendship. Having a sense of ownership of one's acts for others or on the behalf of others. This is often promoted in religious beliefs. We serve others to find self-actualization.
Conformity	The issue of respect for one's people, elders and customs can be seen throughout cultures.
Enjoyment	Simply put, we want to feel good!
Power	This is the capability to be in command. We seek apperception and recognition from others. Power can take the form of social influence or even wealth as well as more destructive means.
Security	This we seek in the home with interpersonal relationships as well as with physical safety of ourselves and our loved ones. Security is also a governmental issue in domestic and international levels. We want to know that we can grow in a physically, emotionally, and spiritually healthy way.
Self-Direction	We seek a freedom of choice! The empowerment to determine what direction we will choose to focus our lives upon.
Stimulation	We want to be involved in creative, intellectual and physical challenge.
Tradition	Many cultures want to know that there is a solid past from which they can still hold unto in a sometimes chaotic world.
Unity	Holistic outlook which promotes oneness with others. Justice and equality are often stressed. Peace, and trust are valued.

Sources: Kidder's book *Shared Values for a Troubled World*. Also available at: http://www.roch.edu/people/lhalverson/universal_values.htm;

Similar to the Ten Commandments in the Bible, the Holy Qur'an presents social and moral standards which are not only valuable by Muslims but are valuable for the whole humanity.

Table-5: Islamic Moral Commandments

Commendment	Verses	Reference
Worship only God:	Take not with Allah another object of worship; or thou (O man!) wilt sit in disgrace and destitution.	(Quran 17:22)
Be kind, honourable and humble to one's parents:	Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none but Him, and that ye be kind to parents. Whether one or both of them attain old age in thy life, say not to them a word of contempt, nor repel them, but address them in terms of honour. (Quran 17:23) And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: "My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood."	(Quran 17:24)
Be neither miserly nor wasteful in one's expenditure:	And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift.	(Quran 17:26)
Do not engage in 'mercy killings' for fear of starvation:	Kill not your children for fear of want: We shall provide sustenance for them as well as for you. Verily the killing of them is a great sin.	(Quran 17:31)
Do not commit adultery:	Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils).	(Quran 17:32)
Do not kill unjustly:	Nor take life – which Allah has made sacred – except for just cause. And if anyone is slain wrongfully, we have given his heir authority (to demand qisas or to forgive): but let him not exceed bounds in the matter of taking life; for he is helped (by the Law).	(Quran 17:33)

Care for orphaned children:	Come not nigh to the orphan's property except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength...	(Quran 17:34)
Keep one's promises:	...fulfill (every) engagement [i.e. promise/covenant], for (every) engagement will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning).	(Quran 17:34)
Be honest and fair in one's interactions:	Give full measure when ye measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight: that is the most fitting and the most advantageous in the final determination.	(Quran 17:35)
Do not be arrogant in one's claims or beliefs:	And pursue not that of which thou hast no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of (feeling in) the heart will be enquired into (on the Day of Reckoning). (Quran 17:36) (Quran 17:37)	

Empirical Evidence about people's perception of universal values

It is said that a value is a statement of one's personal beliefs and a fact is established by observation and measurement. A group of psychologists led by Schwartz empirically investigated whether or not there exist some universal values.¹ His work was based on a series of studies that included surveys of more than 25,000 people in 44 countries. He hypothesised that universal values would relate to three different types of human needs: i. biological needs, ii. social co-ordination needs, and iii. welfare and survival needs.

According to empirical evidence from different cultural types, Schwartz concluded that there are fifty-six specific universal values and ten types of universal value.[8] as given below along with the specific related values:

- Power: authority; leadership; dominance

1. Schwartz defined 'values' as "conceptions of the desirable that influence the way people select action and evaluate events".[7]

- Achievesaament: success; capability; ambition; influence; intelligence; self-respect
- Hedonism: pleasure; enjoying life
- Stimulation: daring activities; varied life; exciting life
- Self-direction: creativity; freedom; independence; curiosity; choosing your own goals
- Universalism: broadmindedness; wisdom; social justice; equality; a world at peace; a world of beauty; unity with nature; protecting the environment; inner harmony
- Benevolence: helpfulness; honesty; forgiveness; loyalty; responsibility; friendship
- Tradition: accepting one's portion in life; humility; devoutness; respect for tradition; moderation
- Conformity: self-discipline; obedience
- Security: cleanliness; family security; national security; stability of social order; reciprocation of favours; health; sense of belonging

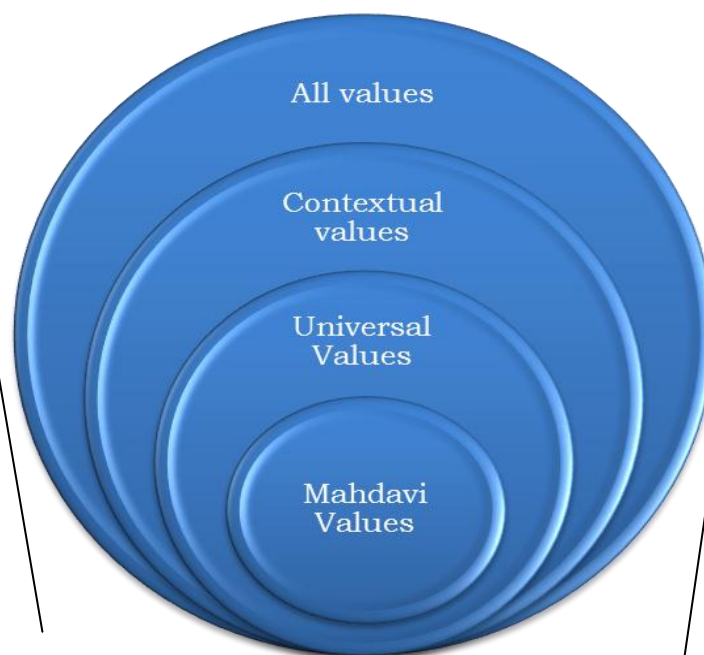
The Case against Universal Values

The idea of universal values has remained a controversial subject. Many Western scholars have argued that 'promotion of certain values as universal too often is really the disguised promotion of the dominant culture's values'(Linton, 1954). Others consider that universalism is also a form of "oppressive cultural imperialism" Fowers and Richardson (1996). However, in general, a consensus exists about prevalence of some values that are so general that these can be placed in values-list of different religions, sects, cultures and geographic regions. Hence, universality can coexist with diversity. Hence, not only religious but also secular organizations including United Nations support the promotion of universally shared values.

Universal Values and Mahdavi Values

From the above discussion and lists of Universal Values

as perceived or prepared by different scholars and researchers, one can easily find that most of the perceived universal values are Mahdavi values too. This claim can be easily proved by any future researcher with the help of following figure and the proposed methodology;



The outer circle represents all types of values of which the contextual values are a subset [religion, sect, culture, etc]. The Universal values are a subset of contextual values [which means that some values which are contextual to a specific environment or society are universal values too]. One can derive from the religious resources of all religions that the qualities of a savior of the world are the the same or similar to those known as the universal values in today's literature such as justice, trust, respect, human dignity, universalism, Conformity, benevolence, equality, security, freedom, and peace at world. The main difference between Mahdavi values and the universal values is not in their nature but in perception that Mahdavi values are Divine Values too which are the ultimate values of humans to be

prevailed in the Kingdom of God when it will be established after appearance of Mahdi a.j. and second coming of Jesus (a.s.).

Dr Abul Hassan 2013 in an article “Al-Mahdi-A Universal Leader” will possess all qualities that will make justify him to be a universal leader. According to the Islamic theological sources, al-Madhi will possess the following qualities:

- Mahdi will gain the love and trust of his people world wide.
- He will have full control over social, economic, political and other problems
- According to Veliankode (1999) “The Mahdi will establish right and justice in the world and eliminate evil and corruption. He will fight against the enemies of the Muslims who would be victorious”(p. 277).
- He will implement the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (upon him be peace and blessings) in letter and spirit without any deviation from original.
- His global transformation will bring peace and happiness for the mankind in the whole world without prejudice of race, region and religion.
- Al-Mahdi will be realistic leader having correct and perfect information of conditions all over the world at the same time he will possess of full knowledge both of Qur’an.
- He will be a courageous to resist all the difficulties and resolve all problems.
He will uplift the poorest without any discrimination based on Islamic ethics
- Abul Hasan writes that ‘To follow the leadership al-Mahdi will not be a choice but will be only one; and not a way, but the only one’.

All the traits of Imam Mahdi [a.j.] narrated by the Holy Prophet or other infallibles very clearly indicate that the Imam will be a source of blessing for the whole humanity and not only for one religion or sect. Due to his appearance,

a system of justice will be developed that not only the humans but also animals will benefit from peace and tranquility. How this will happen? The answer lies in prevalence of universal values among Imam [ajj] and his close companions. This noble group will be a source of justice, prosperity and dignity of human beings regardless of race and creed. It is obvious that any individual or society which is endeavoring for the ground setting of early appearance has to promote such values so that an alignment could take place between the values liked by the Imam [ajj.] and those prevailing among such individuals or society. For example he will establish a systems such that behaviors incompatible with the moral values of religion shall be transformed into behaviors aligned for universal co-existence;

- As revealed in the hadiths, in the time of Hazrat Mahdi (as), nobody's nose will bleed, nobody will get harmed
- In the time of [Hazrat Mahdi (as)] no one will be woken up from his sleep or have a bleeding nose. (Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Al-Qawl al-Mukhtasar fi `Alamat al-Mahdi al-Muntadhar, p. 42)
- Hazrat Mahdi (as) ... will walk in peace. (Al-Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li-ashrat al-sa'ah, p. 173)
- [Hazrat Mahdi (as)] will follow the way of the Prophet (saas). HE WILL NOT wake up a sleeping person or shed blood. (Al-Barzanji, Al-Isha'ah li-ashrat al-sa'ah, p. 163)
- Values of Qur'an and Sunnah will prevail all over as Miqdad Ibn Aswad says: I heard Rasulullah (saas) say, "There will be no land, house of mud or tent (in the desert) that the religion Islam does not enter." (Majma al-Bayan, commentary on verse 33 of Surat at-Tawba.). Qur'an says, It is He Who has sent His Messenger with Guidance and the Religion of Truth to exalt it over every other religion,

though the idolaters hate it. (Surat As-Saff, 9)

Since this is a widely accepted belief shared by different religions and sects that a savior will emerge as a Universal leader, who will abolish all unjust socio-economic structures and establish human dignity, peace and justice everywhere, then there arises a question how it would happen; by a miracle, or through developing a system?¹

A Model of Universal Values and Human Behaviors

The Divine Model of Human behavior can be simply interpreted as follows; Humans are divinely designed entities who value some common natural attributes, some religious attributes,² and some spiritual attributes³ and view all economic values within perspective of the natural, religious and spiritual values. Here, natural values are those which have been built in human nature across the world and at all time in history. The religious values vary from religion to religion. However, broadly these can be classified into five; obligatory actions; admired but not obligatory; neither obligatory nor prohibited; not prohibited but undesirable [abominable]; and prohibited. The spiritual values also vary across individuals, religions and environments and may have different meaning or weightage in one's life. These are virtues and vices related to different powers and faculties of

1. In Christianity, Prophet Jesus is believed to be that leader who will return and establish kingdom of God on earth. In Islam, such character is known as Imam Mahdi. Abundant ahadeeth exist in Shiite and Sunnite resources about Mahdi's universal governance. Abdullah bin Mas'ood said that Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his pure progeny) said, "This world will not come to an end until one person from my progeny does not rule over the Arabs, and his name will be the same as my name" (Tirmidhi). In another hadith which Imam Ali (may God be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his pure progeny) said, "Even if only a day remains for Qiyamah to come, yet God will surely send a man from my family who will fill this world with such justice and fairness, just as it initially was filled with oppression" (Abu Dawood).

2. It is possible that some people possess none of them and others possess all of them or maximum.

3. Like religious attributes, it is possible that some people possess no spiritual attribute and others possess many of them

soul.¹ The economic values like income, prices, wages, taxes etc. are valued by individuals, however, this valuation process and outcome varies systematically across faiths and spirituality patterns.

The subsequent paragraphs provide a little further explanation of the concepts involved in the model.

Among philosopher, virtue is said to be the “**mean**” between excess and defect and is also called *Golden Mean* or *Golden Rule* also.² The following examples are from Aristotle. According to him, in a dangerous situation the excess way to act would be *rash*, the virtuous (means) way to act is with *courage*, and the defect would be to act with *cowardice*. for the case of self-expression, boasting is excess, truthful is virtue and meekness is a defect. Similarly in social relations, obsequious (too friendly) is excess, being friendly is virtue and being rude is a defect. In case of spending, being thrifty is a virtue while prodigal and tightness is excess and defect respectively. A much more elaborate philosophy of virtues, vices and moderation has been presented by Naraaqi

Naraaqi’s View of Faculties of the Soul and Generation of Good and bad Values

According to religious resources, man’s soul is created as pure and clean tablet with nothing good or evil. ‘As one progresses through life, he develops faculties which are directly related to the way he lives, thinks, and acts. The speech and deeds of man, when repeated over a long period of time, produce a lasting effect in the soul which is known as a *faculty*’ which serves as ‘the origin and cause of human man actions’ both noble or perverse behaviour. According to Naraaqi, if these faculties are virtuous, the soul shall have

1. See ethical philosophy especially of Naraaqi and other Muslim Philosophers.

2. See Hicks, 1992; Maciver, 1952) "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" found within all of the major religions. The case for the universality of the Golden Rule is most impressive”.

eternal bliss, and if they were wicked ones, it shall face eternal damnation.¹ The reward and punishment will be given to the soul.² “The soul (nafs) is that heavenly essence which employs the body and uses its various organs to attain its goals and purposes. The soul has also other names as spirit (ruh), intelligence (ʿaql), and heart (qalb) although these terms have other usages as well”.

Naraaqi identified four most important faculties of the soul:

- The power of intelligence (al-quwwah al-aqliyyah)-angelic.
- The power of anger (al-quwwah al-ghadabiyyah)-ferocious.
- The power of desire (al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah)-animalistic.
- The power of imagination (al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah)-demoniac.

The function and value of these powers have been explained as, “ If man did not have the power of reason, it would have been impossible for him to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, true and false. If he did not possess the faculty of anger, he could not defend himself against attack and aggression. If the force of sexual attraction and desire did not exist in man, the continued existence of the human species would be endangered. And finally, if man lacked the power of imagination, he could not visualise universals or particulars, and he would be unable to make any inferences based on them”.

In a hadith from Imam Ali (A), he is related as saying:

“Surely God has characterized the angels by intellect

1. The ultimate aim of the purification of the soul and aquirement of a moral and ethical character is to attain felicity and happiness. The most consummate felicity and happiness for man is to be the embodiment and manifestation of Divine attributes and characteristics. The soul of a truly happy man is developed with the knowledge and the love of God; it is illuminated by the effulgence emanating from the God head.

2. The Quran says: And every man-We have fastened to him his bird of omen upon his neck and We shall bring forth for him, on the Day of Resurrection, a book he shall find spread wide open. Read thy book! Thy soul suffices thee this day as a reckoner against thee. (17:13-14).

The day every soul shall find what it has done of good brought forward, and what it has done of evil; it will wish if there were only a far space between it and its deeds. (3:29)

without sexual desire and anger, and the animals with anger and desire without reason. He exalted man by bestowing upon him all of these qualities. Accordingly, if man's reason dominates his desire and ferocity, he rises to a station above that of the angels”

The soul experiences pleasure in its conditions harmonious with its own nature and pain when it is opposite. According to Naraaqi, the pleasures and pains of the soul correspond to the four Spiritual faculties

Table-6: Four Faculties of Soul – source of pleasures, pains and values

REASON
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PLEASURES : in gaining knowledge about the real nature of things; TIt is the strongest and the purest of pleasures which is inherent , natural and not subject to the changing experiences in daily life. •PAINS: pain lies in ignorance and deprivation from such knowledge.
IMAGINATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PLEASURES : lies in the visualization of particulars which lead to the appearance of carnal desires and demonic tendencies, •PAINS: in the insufficiency and inadequacy of these visions.
PASSION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PLEASURES : in enjoyment of foods, drinks, and sexual association •PAINS: in denial of such experiences.
INTELLECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PLEASURES : in the feeling of being victorious. •PAINS: in the feeling of being overpowered and defeated.

Source: Prepared from - Naraaqi, Mohammad Bin abi Zar, Jami Al-Sahadat, [The collector of felicities], Year unknown.

We model the human behavior on the basis of these faculties and their pleasures and pains which lead humans to adopt and change their values. Moreover, since these powers, faculties, pleasures and pains are built in humans in an almost uniform manner, therefore, it is logical to expect some of common linking and disliking and some of the values which are shared across the globe. As mentioned

earlier that humans are created pure. Later, within their environments based on the level and types of *Divine Capital*, they they choose to perform in alignment or against certain values. He following quote tells why there is a tendency among human beings to display a similar behavior regarding certain values;

“This most sublime of pleasures is attained through love and knowledge of God, and acquired through abiding effort to be ever nearer to Him. When one's whole effort is directed towards attaining this real and lasting pleasure, sensual pleasures will be overshadowed; they shall take their proper place in man's life, being pursued in moderation”.

Need for Value-Based Education and Universal Values Education

Education is an integrated process of knowledge, enlightenment, adaptation and change management. These goals of education can be achieved through some ideals that are acceptable by all or majority of people. For example, love, peace, happiness, respect, tolerance, forgiveness, co-existence and non-violence are generally desired by everyone.

Globally, the rapid emergence of economic problems, deprivations, individualism, terrorism and voilance, has badly affected human happiness, wellbeing, health an overall deterioration. If not tackled with the wisome humans are endowed with, the peaceful existence of humankind will become a past. In these circumstances, the need for values based education has been increased manyfolds.

The modern world is divided not only politically or economically also about values. There exist people who have no meaning and purpose of life on earth except to fulfill demonic material desires driven by excessive use of power of passion and others who possess a set of values moderated by power of reason. In other words, although some people may not be convinced that there exist some universal values, yet as already mentioned, a substantial

majority on earth is observed to have some shared values either due to natural human design or due to other contexts. Hence, this shared interest can be used to promote global harmony, peace and prosperity.

According to the theory of balanced education, all people should be provided education of heart, then majority of them should also be educated about norms and then comes general, technical and other forms of education.

Since all the major world religions lay emphasis on moral development of humans, but today's prevailing educational system has largely ignored this aspect. General education can be transferred through books and general teaching methods but values-based education (VBE) can be transferred through role model teacher in addition to other conducive environment having what we call *Divine Capital*. In VBE, the pedagogical methods give more importance to parables, stories, prayers. Likewise, assessment also includes the assessment of values among the learners over the period in school college or university. The cultural life is also values-oriented. In fact, in values based education, the mission statement of institution is values-based and the mission statement prevails the whole organization.

Yogi (2013) narrates a number of reasons why values-based education is preferable to contemporary system of education. The conventional education is no doubt necessary and useful for human progress and growth in science and technology but values based education can do much in addition to that; it purifies heart, adds sincerity with skills, teaches us importance of this world while not undermining the role of family, contemporary education tells us how to adjust with the circumstances [adaptability] but values based education tells how we can become complete. In contrast to conventional education through which we learn our limitations, the values based education opens our minds, heart and wisdom to get freedom. With VBE, we can promote moral virtues and control vices to

free the society from current state of cruelty and injustice.

Summary and Concluding Remarks

In this paper, one the most important but neglected topic relating Mahdism has been discussed, that is, the universal values. This is a step towards socio-economic and ethical transformation for ground setting of appearance. It has been shown that the humanity has certain values which may be classified into many types that are personal values, religious and sectarian values, cultural and ethnic values, regional and economic values etc. Some of these values are common across the humanity which are called universal values. Some ethical theories are compared and concept is developed for understanding mahdavi values. a model of universal values and human behaviors is also presented. utilising Naraaqi's view of faculties of the soul, the values based teaching and learning has been justified.

With the clarity of concept that Mahdavi values are actually universal human values, it becomes understandable that the education of universal values shall serve as ground setting for the establishment of Kingdom of God on earth under the universal leadership of Imam Mahdi a.j.j. with the support of Jesus [peace be upon him]. Through universal values education, the diseases of the powers of soul may be reduced and virtues may be promoted; the worst conditions of the world caused by excessive use of soul powers shall be controlled and the conditions of the weakened people will be improved by removing the deficiency of soul powers within people. And a state of moderation can be achieved that is the noblest of Divine attributes and shall be the most prevalent value among people. When due to dominance of values and virtues over vices will happen, this will result in a holistic alignment of everything with nature there will be no storms and earthquakes, no drought and food scarcity, no pollution and resource misuse and no injustice and tyranny of any form.

To achieve this, the whole educational system needs a transformation. As Hamdani (2012) suggested that

“ a change of mindset of the experts, educationists, curriculum writers, theoreticians and other stakeholders of the education system in Muslim countries. They need to evolve futuristic creativity and revise and reform the existing educational pattern, policies, programs, textbooks, training modules and procedures that are according to their own context and are not adopted from the footsteps of Western theories or non-Islamic codes”.

The universally acceptable values need to be taught from religious seminaries through schools, colleges and universities and be promoted at workplaces such that human growth and global development takes place in conformity with the noble values of post appearance era.

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Universal Leadership of Al-Mahdi, Media and Islam

Dr. Abul Hassan¹

1. Introduction

One often hears, Muslims complain that they suffer from a leadership crisis, that they have no leaders, in the true sense of the term, to guide them. There is, undeniably, a serious leadership crisis among the Muslims. In one hand, since September 11, 2009, Muslims all over the world have felt under siege. The United States and most of the European countries lumped all Muslims together after Twin-Tower incident. Not just in the West but also in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine and some of the Middle Eastern countries in particular. The governments in the Muslim minority countries demanded that Muslims must condemn the terrorist actions of other Muslims. This meant whole Muslim community is associated with terrorists. Most disgraceful matter is that the non-Muslim did not know about Islam and who Muslims are. Therefore, world-wide most of the non-Muslims believe exactly what the media and governments tell them about

1. Dr. Abul Hassan is a Lecturer in Banking and Finance at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education (Gloucestershire University)

Islam.

On the other hand, it is very unfortunate that the Muslims all over the world are made up of individuals with many different viewpoints. There is a Muslim Ummah (community), but its views are incredibly varied and therefore it does not have a single, united leadership. Throughout history, pious Muslim leaders have led great civilizations and made great contributions to humanity. During the period known as the Islamic Renaissance, dated from the 8th century to the 15th, the positive effects of the Muslims were immense. But now there are no such charismatic Muslim leaders in the Muslim world with a strong following, not even at the regional level. Instead, the leaders they have are all dependent on the patronage of some of the materialistic as well as nationalistic political parties or the other, and lack grassroots links and an independent voice of their own.

Moreover, the corruption is eating away at the unity of the Muslim Ummah, and in addition to this we have within Islam, groups forming their own fraternity. These groups are deviating from the original enlightenment of Islam, thus causing an increase of conflict within the hearts of the Ummah. There is such a large amount of people of differing views claiming the cloak of leadership, that it has caused the validity of this position to be saturated with doubt in the Muslim people's minds. Thus the Muslims are not inclined towards accepting anyone at face value - they need to know the person inside out, his spiritual and religious leaning and his capacity in dealing with the huge anti-Islam operation instigated by the enemies of Islam. As these enemies of Islam are the ones who monopolize the entire media market, anti-Islamic propaganda material is being splashed throughout the world.

To lead the Muslims out of this situation of internal dispute and partitions, to extract the Ummah from the mire of conflict caused by the anti-Islamic groups, to improve

upon the standard of the Muslim nation, to establish unity of faith and to enact the merger of an all powerful Islamic force which will wipe out all existing evil from the surface of the earth and the core of humanity, a leader possessing extraordinary spiritual powers, free from any geographical and biographical attachments (thus giving rise of acceptance from the entire Ummah), is needed.

All these relevant qualifications will be fulfilled satisfactorily for restoring the order of the humanity and the person to take on this demanding role will be Imam Al-Mahdi. He is a promised universal leader, will descend from the family of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), thus eradicating any relation to a geographical origin. He will abolishing any favouritism or rejection, due to familial origin, from the Ummah. He will be conferred with global leadership and honour by the Almighty God. As Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ood said that Rasulullah (peace be upon him) said, "This world will not come to an end until one person from my progeny does not rule over the Arabs, and his name will be the same as my name" (Tirmidhi). In an another hadith which Hazrat Ali (may God be pleased with him) narrated that Rasulullah (peace be upon him) said, "Even if only a day remains for Qiyamah to come, yet God will surely send a man from my family who will fill this world with such justice and fairness, just as it initaly was filled with oppression" (Abu Dawood).

The remaining part of this paper will focus on two important aspects. Firstly, a logical discussion for better understanding on al Mahdi- who is one of God's signs and he will appear as a global transformational leader whose truth soon be made evident to the whole mankind by Almighty God. Secondly, to explore the role of media in educating the public on al-Mahdi-an universal promised leader of the Ummah who will bring much awaited peace and happiness for the mankind in the entire globe. Beginning with an analysis on al-Mahdi (peace be upon

him) as a transformational leader, the traits he will inherit as an universal leader has been discussed. The paper then identifies media's role for educating the public on the appearance of al- Mahdi who will established the Caliphate based on the Prophetic Method after centuries of despotic rule and preventing negative image on Islam and Muslims.

2. Leadership in Islam

Last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came to this world during a period of ignorance. He came as a messenger of Almighty God, who equipped him with the Holy Quran, through the channel of divine revelation, as a means of shining the light of Islam through the darkness of ignorance, and enabling people to discover the true reason for life itself. The Prophetic Method is universal in its mission and strength and it is God's guidance for the creatures. Therefore, last Prophet (pbuh)'s actions and sayings are still and will be emulated as benchmarks of both spiritual and temporal leadership.

Muslims refer to believers collectively as al-Ummah, the Community. Both the sense and reality of community are strengthened by the Five Pillars of Islam, which are integral to religious practice and underscore the primary spiritual values of charity, unity and justice. These actions also underscore the belief that all creatures are created equal and that humanity must therefore strive for balance and harmony (Qur'an 11: 86; 49: 7–8). Based on the example of Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him), spirituality is an integral component of leadership in Islam (Amini, 1996). By obeying God and following the Method of His Prophet, the whole humanity will succeed triumphantly.

In Islam the role, and attendant responsibility of leadership is not to be chased after as an ambition; rather, leadership is a God gifted matter. A spiritually guided leader engages in what Kanungo & Mendonca (1994) call

“socialized power” and is enjoined not to seek “personalized power”, where “socialized power is the use of power for the service of others” (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1994, p. 181). In the Qur'anic teaching monotheism was organically linked to the idea of justice (‘adl). Here, justice (‘adl) in Islam is perceived as the primary link between the community and the leader. According to the scholar Sachedina (2009), Islamic teachings differentiated themselves from other monotheists teachings. Sachedina (2009) further argues that the concept is so closely embedded in Islam that the Qur'an (107:2–8) states: “...in the absence of seeking the general welfare of men, worship of God— even of one God— is not only meaningless but sheer hypocrisy.”

At heart, Islam desires to reintegrate each and every human being as part of the natural order. While Islamic civilization has come to life in long drawn out battles against colonialism and imperialism that has unleashed a humanistic spirit. The future vision of the Ummah must be drawn from Al-Quran, tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the cultural resources from Islamic history. Using these resources there is need to engage with other civilizations through dialogue. The need of the hour is to increase the manifestation in behaviour of the qualities of justice (‘adl) and mercy within the different communities of the world. In the 7th century, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (may God pleased be with him) best summarized the power and the importance of the role model of leaders when he said: “With respect to their morals, people resemble their rulers more than they resemble their fathers” (Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 17, p. 129). The importance of the leadership role model in Islam is therefore critical to the welfare of both the individual and the community.

However, MuslimUmmah does not have a charismatic leader. No person has yet professed his suitability as a leader of Islam, to the Muslims. As each candidate when scrutinized thoroughly yields abnormalities in nature,

rendering him incompatible for this post. In addition to this, the breakdown of unity and the division among Muslims has contrived to make them acceptable leaders from among their own groups only. Thus a leader is not chosen due to his moral and religious character, but rather his genealogical background and geographical origin and which sect he adheres to, are all factors taking precedence over his religious attributes, when appointing a leader. This divided Ummah is not prepared to accept anyone who is outside of their particular sect, as a leading authority.

Due to injustice and violence situation prevailing within the whole world, Muslims today are eagerly awaiting the appearance of an Universal leader known as *al-Mahdi*. The entire landscape of the Muslim world and the rest of the world will dramatically change as a result of his appearance. God Almighty will send al- Mahdi to the humanity to put its affairs in order after they have been corrupted and injustice and misery have become widespread. This Imam will eventually come as a token of God's compassion for His slaves to give them the opportunity to repent, so that the corrupt may be distinguished from the good and those who strive from those who hang back. It is part of the Divine Wisdom which will complete the history of humanity.

A true Islamic leader brings out to the world the glad tidings: "And We Have indeed honoured the Children of Adam" (Al-Quran 17:70). A true Islamic leader will adhere to the duties of human dignity in its generalities and particularities. The first of those duties, and the most sacred that honours the human being, is God's exclusive worship. In the court of Ruston, the leader of the Persians in the first era, of the Muslims engaged in *Jihad* and *Da'wah* (Islamic preaching) said: "God has sent us to bring forth whomever He will from the worship of human divinities to the worship of God, from the hardship of this world to its welfare and from the tyranny of religious to the justice of Islam."

This statement was uttered by a soldier from the army of a

nascent and potent force. The world will only hear this statement from Muslims if they become strong by God's help, by their unity and by the establishment of an exemplary brotherly community and inspires people with its purity, justice, prosperity and utmost care for the human dignity. Furthermore with the appearance of al-Mahdi who will be a promised universal leader, whole world will see this statement as an exemplary, attractive, inviting, liberating and manifest in an entity that is united, so that the Islamic ummah will become one as God commanded. Adhering this message, Imam al-Mahdi will inform to every human being of his and her rights. Indeed, it is a statement that is stimulated by faith , not a dictate that is imposed by the strong on the weak.

According to the modern definitions of transformational leadership and its characteristics, Imam al-Mahdi will possess all the characteristics of a transformational leader. The detailed of transformational leadership based on modern literature is discussed in the following section.

3. Transformational Leadership

In the literature on leadership, there are two types of leadership qualities are discussed: (i) transformational leadership; and (ii) transactional leadership. The recent theoretical interest in transformational leadership and charisma intensified with Burns's (1978) distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is characterized by an exchange that aids individual interests. The emphasis is on motivation followers with an example. In contrast, transforming leadership shapes alters and elevates the followers' motives and values (Burns, 1978). It unites diverse people in pursuit of higher goals, the realisation of which is tested by the achievement of significant change that represents the pooled interests of the leader and followers. Another difference

between the two is that transactional leadership involves motivating followers to make small changes whereas transformational leadership motivates followers to make large changes. There is a significant amount of evidence that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership in achieving higher goal of a state such as bringing justice, equality, peace and welfare (Abdallah and Al-Homoud, 2001).

Bass (1988, 1990); Avolio and Bass (1988) develop the concept of transformational leadership to include charisma, inspiration, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation. Greenleaf (1998) emphasizes the importance of vision in transformational leadership. Quinn(1996) argue that charisma is characteristic of mobiliser of the community whereas a transformational leader is a reformer and lead the society for all round development of a state. Cooper(1997), Kriger and Seng, (2005) developed the theory transformational and charismatic leadership. Further Kriger and Seng (2005) discussed this theory in respect of several historical examples, most importantly their interpretation of the respective roles of the ancient Jewish prophets and priests. Armstrong (1997) and Ascough & Cotton(2005) also discussed the Biblical examples of prophets in their seminal works.

The bottom line is that a transformational leader is an individual capable of motivating and inspiring followers by appealing to higher goals and the common good rather than individual needs and self-interest.

4. Transformational Leader- al-Mahdi

Present era is the era of the “knowledge power”. A transformational leader should have highest knowledge on all most modern aspects of the world and field which we call “knowledge power.” Before going to discuss about the traits of al-Mahdi’s transformational leadership, we need to

understand about “knowledge power” and what are the current challenges before a global transformational leader related to “knowledge power”.

We see, there are three aspects of modern era which are challenging before a global community. Firstly, we have the capitalist world-system of modernity. Secondly, we have the equally non-convergent random world of post-modernity. It is found to repeat the modernist socio-scientific doctrines in the way of pluralism, rationalism and hegemonic competition with alienation among agencies. Thirdly, we have the intrinsically united world view of globally interaction, integrative and evolutionarily world-system whose principal reality is the substantive meaning of knowledge and power as casually interrelated interactions leading to integration and evolving epistemologically premise on Divine Unity. Nasr (2009) and Choudhury (2004) defined this epistemology of unity is based on Divine knowledge where the sources of power of a spiritual leader prevails within the premise of the Unity of God (Tawhid). Here question may be asked are: What are we? Where are we going? Whence do we come?

On the lands of the *Jahiliah* (ignorance) people, numerous skyscrapers have been erected. The atomic sciences are a horrible force, electronics and computer science are a baffling vortex and the breakthroughs in medicine and genetic engineering portend a frightful horizon. Then who will let the human beings concentrate on themselves and remember their Lord and their meeting with Him? Who will spare a human being a moment to switch of the earthly screen and lock the comparative window so that he can go out into the open space of God’s custom, viewing the future with confidence and learning from history?

Kernel of history is God’s sending of the Prophets (blessing and peace be upon them) for guidance of creatures. There was previous history in which God sent Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. There will

be a future history in which we will be like cattle, if we are not imbued with the core of the Message, which made that fellow who went out from the Mosque and declared with forceful eloquence in the courts of Rustam: “God has sent us to bring out whoever He will from the worship of human divinities to the worship of God, from the hardship of this world to its welfare and from the injustice of the religions to the justice of Islam. He has sent us to His creatures in order to invite them to Him”

In order to carry the above message to the human beings , a transformational leader in Islam should be equipped with the teachings from al- Quran, life of the Prophets and Imams without any deviation in effectiveness in his transformational leadership (Afsaruddin, 2002). There are many transformational Islamic leaders we find in the history. Some of these leaders were charismatic. Across the ages, many people - both believers and non-believers – accepted them as their role models, examples, and metaphors.

History stands testimony to the fact that the last century and the beginning of the 21st century have been an era of wars, unrest and wrath, with bloodshed, conflicts between nations and the terror of terrorism-that has doddered each heart living in apprehension in this dangerous and critical situation .The lure and pursuit of material pleasures has set the human race on the path of reckless exploitation. In order to prevent the human race from the scourge of war, untold misery destruction, devastation, and frustration, the Islamic political scientists feel that the power based on only materialistic knowledge will never be able to address these problem by any modern leader. There is need a holistic approach to peace- immediate requirement to overcome situation.

It is high time, the entire humanity to have a global leader, who will be more than just accomplished as an administrator and head of the state. The only teaching, which enjoys these features and potentiality, is Mahdism. The "Doctrine" of Mahdism is based on the reliable sources of Islamic theology and religious teachings.

Moreover, "Mahdism" is the sole teaching, which includes all the features of a global transformational leader (Amini, 1996). The following traits of al-Mahdi are adored him as a transformational global leader of the whole world.

4.1 Al-Mahdi- An Universal Leader

A leader gains the love and trust of his people and is followed by them in proportion to his competence in solving their problems, whether personal or public, related to individual, private life, or to social, economic, political affairs touching the community as a whole. Evidences of contemporary leadership of the different countries say that , in order to solve the problems; we find that, in one way a leader may resort upon his subjects to force and terror, or apply sanctions or punishments like exile, imprisonment or depriving the guilty of the rights of citizenship, or torture people, or spy into their affairs. However, none of these ways can bring desired outcome in the long term; rather, they will bring about a vicious circle, in which a leader may struggle to solve the problems by such means, the more he entangles himself in them.

According to Islamic theological sources, however, al-Mahdi (upon him be peace), will solve all problems so skilfully (Sachedina,1980) and easily that no one will disagree with the issue of his decisions. Although he have to face to the human beings by nature and habit quarrelsome, ignorant, wild and rebellious. However, al-Mahdi will bring happy and peaceful life in the society based on good morals and universal values such as love, mutual respect, compassion, and altruism which are based on the example of God's Messenger Muhammad (upon him be peace and blessings).

Al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) is believed to be a global leader who will not only rule over the Muslim world, but also the whole world. Al-Mahdi is said to lead a global Islamic revolution that will establish a new Islamic global order throughout the entire earth. As Veliankode (1999) said

that “The Mahdi will establish right and justice in the world and eliminate evil and corruption. He will fight against the enemies of the Muslims who would be victorious”(p. 277). Al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) will have all the qualities a leader is supposed to have. He will be a leader not only in one aspect of life but he will led his community to success in every field according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (upon him be peace and blessings).

Following traits of al-Mahadi will reveal that he will appear as a global transformational leader of the Ummah to bring much awaited peace and happiness for the mankind in the entire globe. He will appear as an exemplary commander, statesman, religious leader, spiritual guide, etc. According to the Islamic theological sources, al-Madhi will posses the following qualities:

- Al-Mahdi will be realistic leader; his messages and demands will inconsonance with Islamic way of life. He will consider the conditions surrounding him and his community as they actually are. He will be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of contemporary period.
- He will be such type of universal leader that he will posses of the knowledge both of al-Quran and the contemporary modern worldly knowledge and convinced of the truth of the message he will convey to people. He will not falter in his convictions and be resolute in conveying the message of Islam with full vigour and example.
- Al-Mahdi will be a leader of courageous in nature. Even if people left alone to himself, he will find in himself as much courage as to resist all the difficulties he might encounter.
- Al-Mahdi will have a strong will-power and resolve and never he will fall into hopelessness.
- He will be aware of his responsibility and nothing should be able to prevent him from fulfilling it. Especially the charms of the world and attractions of life will not be able to intervene between him and his responsibility.

- As an universal leader he will be far-sighted and determined his goal well. He will get the mental capacity from God, to discern the developments he may encounter in the future.
- Al-Mahdi will have a strong character and be equipped with praiseworthy virtues. He will be determined in carrying out his decisions but capable of flexibility; he will know when to be unyielding and implacable; when to be relenting and compassionate.
- As an universal promised leader of the Ummah, he will not cherish worldly ambitions and abuse his authority. He will live like one who is the poorest of his community and never discriminate among his subjects. He will love all of them, prefer them over himself and be able to make himself loved by them sincerely based on the ethics of Islam and be able to secure their loyalty and devotion.

Considered from the viewpoint of all these and many other qualities al-Mahdi possesses as an universal and will also be seen to be the greatest leader. To follow the leadership al-Mahdi will not be a choice but will be only one; and not a way, but the only one.

4.2 Imam Mahdi-Caliph of Islam

Recent unrest in the Arab world exposes the discontent among the people that has been building for decades. It indicates that the historic seat of Arab culture and power has been upended and there is also a call for the restoration of the Islamic Caliphate in order to restore unity and leadership to Islam worldwide. It is important to understand that when Muslims call for the restoration of the Caliphate, it is ultimately al-Mahdi. Because there is no any other leader which is capable to bring the unit of the Islamic Ummah. Imam al-Mahdi is the awaited final Caliph of Islam. As such, Muslims everywhere will be obligated to follow him.

Al-Sadr and Mutahhari stated in their prologue that “He (Imam Mahdi) will reappear on the appointed day, and then he will fight against the forces of evil, lead a world

revolution and set up a new world order based on justice, righteousness and virtue...ultimately the righteous will take the world administration in his hand and Islam will be victorious over all the religions” (p. 4). In support of this argument, followings are the two Hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) in which one stated, “If you see him, go and give him your allegiance, even if you have to crawl over ice, because he is the Vice-regent (Caliph) of Allah, the Mahdi” (Ibn Maja, Kitab al-Fitan No. 4084). Another Hadith stated that “He will pave the way for and establish the government of the community of Muhammad... Every believer will be obligated to support him. (Sunan Abu Dawud, Book 36). Al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) will receive a pledge of allegiance as a caliph for Muslims. He will lead Muslims in many battles. He will also invade all the places between East and West. His reign will be a caliphate according to traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

4.3 Prophet Isa Will Follow Al-Mahdi’s Leadership

Hazrat Isa Ibn Maryam (peace be upon him) is a Prophet and in spite of his prophet-hood, he will follow the leadership of al-Mahdi. While al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) has been clearly described as being, “the Vicegerent (Caliph) of God” (Ibn Maja, Kitab al-Fitan #4084, p. 231). Whereas Prophet Isa is described as being one who will “espouse the cause of the Mahdi” and “follow him” (Said I Nursi, 2001, p. 60). The partnership between Imam al-Mahdi and Hazrat Isa is one of the leader and his follower and indeed based on the spirit of Islamic brotherhood .

In a Hadith, last Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) said: “a section of my people will not cease fighting for the truth and will prevail until the Day of resurrection. He said: Jesus son of Mary would then descend and their (Muslims’) commander (al-Mahdi) would invite him to come and lead them in prayer, but he would say: No,

some amongst you are commanders over some” (Sahih Muslim, Book 001, Number 0293). In support of this Hadith, prominent researcher Veliankode (1999, p. 351) stated that Prophet Isa ibn Maryam will descend to meet the army of al-Mahdi who will be preparing for a battle drawing up the ranks. Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and based on the relevant Hadith, Islamic scholars seem to be in universal agreement that Imam al- Mahdi will ask Prophet Isa to lead the prayers. But Prophet Isa will then refuse this request and will defer instead to al-Mahdi to lead the prayer. He will pray behind al-Mahdi which shows signify Prophet Isa’s profound respect to al- Mahdi (al-Sadar and Muthhari). Indeed Prophet Isa (peace be upon him) will accept al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) as an universal leader of the era.

5. Role of Media in Educating Public on Islam and Imam al-Mahdi

Technology has made the media the most important immediate influence on opinions and understanding in the industrialised world and has significantly heightened media impact in the Muslim countries as well. Media has a powerful capacity to encourage global awareness thereby promoting cross-cultural understanding, tolerance and acceptance of ethnic, cultural, religious and gender differences in communities across the globe. Unfortunately, the media’s potential to be a force for good can easily backfire.

Former American Black Muslim leader Late Al-Haj Malcom X said that “If you are not careful the media will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing”. Truly the media magnification of extremism is nowhere more challenging than at the intersection of religion and politics. In the Europe and United States, for example, are inundated with television news about Islam, Muslims and Arabs. The coverage “is also dominated by the Afgan, Iraq War; Osama

bin Ladan, Abu Musab Al Zarqwari, terrorism and beheadings” (Shehata and Stromback, 2011). In this all-bad news, Islam has become synonymous with jihad and jihad is understood as irrational, unjustified, religiously-based violence usually against non-Muslims. This equation of Islam with extremism has also been fuelled by the false perception, often un-clarified in the media, that traditional form of dress (such as head cover and veil) for Muslim women is a sign of the oppression of women. Another critical example is the influential idea of the clash of civilizations. No where has the reproduction of the so-called clash been more powerful than in the media markets of in the world.

It is not being suggested at all that the role of the media is not to tell the truth, investigate and present stories that are in the public interest, but in countries where Islamic-belief are largely been destroyed with malice, where Islamic traditions and cultures have been trampled on by those purporting to represent civilisation, does the media not have a rôle to play in promoting transformation, enabling healing and in particular building a sense of hope in the future?

The governments of the Muslim countries should play vital roles in clearing misconception about Islamic and Muslims and through media. There is need an action plan to educate the public through media that Divine Justice obliges God Almighty to send a man to humanity to put its affairs in order after they have been corrupted and when injustice and misery have become widespread. The Media should also project that the Muslims today are eagerly awaiting the appearance of *al-Mahdi*. The entire landscape of the Muslim world and the rest of the world will dramatically change as a result of his appearance of the Imam. This message will give solace and hope to the Muslim Ummah.

However, the challenge remains for Islamic world to develop its own media character, one which is Islam-centric, representing the Islamic values. The Muslim countries need that type of media which will tell the truth of Islam and

Muslims while refusing to mimic the American-Eurocentric model where bad news is seldom interrogated, where good news is viewed cynically and where transformation/healing are callously ignored. As Pope John Paul II (2010) said, "There cannot be forgotten the great possibilities of mass media in promoting dialogue, becoming vehicles for reciprocal knowledge, of solidarity and of peace. They become a powerful resource for good if used to foster understanding between peoples, a destructive 'weapon' if used to foster injustice and conflicts." As the world grapples with the challenge of developing a peaceful world, the experience of different regions of the world has shown that the media can become instruments for intensifying the sense of otherness, hence, impede the process of integration and cooperation in divided societies.

Muslim countries are changing, governments are beginning to reform and newly empowered consumers are making their presence felt. Let's hope the media can, and will, play a proactive role in disseminating the news about promised universal leader al-Mahdi and in shaping the future of Islamic world and emerging. In the attempts of the governments of the Muslim countries to gain the confidence of its citizenry and build a new social order on the basis of Islamic values, the media could become a crucial factor. The outreach capacity of the media is enormous and it can affect respect for and appreciation of Islamic values throughout the world. Through television, media broadcasts, internet and print media, it should be possible to increase understanding on Islam and Muslim between differing communities and set a tone of respect for the Muslim Ummah that will make up the much needed global community.

6. Conclusion

The wakeful and active members of the Islamic uprising generation are reading Al-Quran and studying the Method

of their Prophet (peace be upon him). The liberation of the Muslim mind represents for them a priority ahead of all priorities. The liberation of the Muslims' mind is liberation from the deeply rooted races of the invasion that are heaped on their traditional weakness and embodied in a westernized elite that rules and imposes its will by force. This has made ultimately incapable of fulfilling Muslims' historical task and is meeting failure in every sphere. Liberation of Muslims' mind is absolutely essential. It will enable the Muslims to recognise that their backwardness in the sciences, the branches of industry, strength and the necessities of life. This situation arises because it is the result of their negligence of Islam and the abandonment of the Quran, not the opposite.

There is no stability of the Muslim nations without *Shura* and no unity on the basis of nationalistic democracies that are variance with Islam. This is also at variance with the course of the material civilisation whose peoples are joining together, leaving the Muslims to follow the mirage of the nation state that colonising snake has worn since nineteenth century. Now it is attempting to slough off so that the Muslims may wear it as tattered rags.

The Muslims are closely linked to the world as human beings and as committed missionaries. They are the envoys of mercy, truth and injustice for the world. It is essential for the Muslim mind to be liberated from the illusion inspired in the Westernised materialistic mind. The choice of the free Muslims mind is that they should strive with all their efforts, so that some day in future, Almighty God will bless them with an universal leader who is popularly known al-Mahdi. He will lead the human caravan, while being fully aware of the content of the Message of God and duties toward human beings and all other creatures.

The free Muslim minds look toward God's future destiny and toward God's requirement that they do their utmost, using strategy and tactics in the long run. Unity of the

Muslims is their horizon. There is no place in the world, today and tomorrow, for flimsy entities, nor any mission for ethnic groups confined in small geographic territories. In order to fulfil their mission, the first foremost important of the Muslim Ummah is the world of communications, which may unify humanity on the basis of Islamic way of life and turning it into as a 'global Islamic village.' It is not enough to use the media simply to spread the message and teaching of Islam. It is also necessary to create an appropriate atmosphere for practical implication of the message into the 'human culture' through modern communications with new languages, new techniques and adopting scientific methodologies with the spirit of "enjoying good and forbidding evils" what Al-Quran commands to the Muslims.

In order to make this world full of peace which is an ultimate aim of Islam for mankind, the media should play a leading role in propagating the message of Islam. Furthermore, for benefiting the entire human beings, the message and action of promised universal leader al-Mahdi should reach to them . That is what the whole humanity deserves. The media has also unique and often gruelling responsibility of reporting fair and unbiased news on Islam and Muslim Ummah. This will make the role of the media as informer and educator to the public a crucial one, particularly when they are reporting to a global audience about Islam and Muslims.

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Underlying Principles and Purposes of Art that Pave the Ground for Appearance

Shamshad Haider¹

Art in the contemporary Muslim world is an important medium for propagation of rational thought. Despite the attention of the western media and culture toward sensory and imaginative aspects of a person, Islamic art can promote intellectual ideas and concepts like true human freedom from attachment of this world, true justice in the realms of body and spirit, and knowledge based on reason and *Burhan*.

Art, in the form of painting, music and sculpture, is mostly seen as a sensory and imaginative entity. This same medium can transcend the apparent layers of matter and speak to the metaphysical world if the artist is inspired by the light of reason and intellect on one side and revelation and narration on the other. Shedding light on the significant events in history, contemporary issues facing society and divine vision for the future an artist can correct the thinking and mood of a society.

By focusing on these aspects, the forgotten past can be re-

1. Professional Counselor MA, NCC, LPC-I Dallas-Fort Worth, TX

enacted and the promised future can be visualized. Secular media has, for long, dominated the minds of our youth. Now is the time to free our youth from the bondage of their physical aspirations of this temporary world, and help their spirits fly toward the eternal world of *Akhirah* that caters to the whole human self. More than anywhere else, the West is in need of this sort of freedom, justice and knowledge. Especially in this age of technology and media, hearts and minds can be influenced through message of reason that is based on undeniable universal principles and common human values that connect the masses with the reality rather than indulge them in fiction and fantasy.

Education and media in the West have successfully promoted relativism, secularism and skepticism, and the product of this 'war on reason' is a confused and depressed generation that does not see any meaning and purpose in life except 'life itself'. Money, power, war and fun, has kept this generation intoxicated for long but with the current rate of unemployment and economic hardship, even those means are becoming either inaccessible or much less effective.

American dream that has kept the society going is now appearing outside the reach of most young people. Recent protests all across the nation could very well be the tip of an iceberg. With Europe showing signs of ever growing financial and emotional distress, it is only reasonable to reach out to the young people in the West and build a common ground regarding issues affecting all of us. Imam Ali (as) said 'People are either your fellow brothers in faith or your like in creation'.

In the article I would shed more light upon the rational basis for an artistic dialogue, and discuss the social issues in the West that can be addressed through the Art which can, God willing, the pave the way for the Appearance.

Introduction

Human being is, without any doubt, an intelligent being

who has the ability to think. The Glorious Creator has endowed him with the bounty of Reason which he uses to distinguish between Truth and Falsehood in matters of belief, and Vice and Virtue in issues related to practice. The thought process is a natural phenomenon that is subject to a collection of specific laws based upon certain innate foundations inside human nature.

Wise men of the ancient past strived to discover those laws and were able to compile them in the field of Logic which became the standard for correct reasoning. If an intelligent person wants to protect oneself from mistakes in thinking, then the only way available is to observe these natural laws which correlate with healthy functioning of the human mind.

Certainly, the Glorious Lord has favored the humans with a set of tools for knowing the reality such as Intellect, Senses (experiment), Revelation and the Heart (personal inspiration). Each of these means is subject to certain laws within the field of Logic. Furthermore, each of these means has to follow some specific rules in order to show the reality through a certain channel.

These resources, when used in their right places determined by true and stable reasoning, will enable a person to acquire a correct system of thinking in terms of theory and practice. When that happens, a person will perform his individual and collective actions on their basis. If, however, this route is not followed there will be a conflict between those tools of learning and rebellion of one tool over another which would cause confusion and deviation.

For above reasons, the epistemological discussion about the limits of these four means of unveiling the reality, and their relationship with the other tools is of highest degree of intellectual value after the study of logic.

What is The Role of Art?

Art mediates between the sensory, imaginative and the

intellectual aspects of an individual. It is important to know that the artist must choose the right approach to reflect upon a truth or a reality of the age and time one lives in. Artist must realize that to know a reality one must chose the right approach. If the viewer is to sensually motivated, then the artist would use the physical means and pictures to highlight the trancient aspects of this life. Same goes to the imaginative and illusionary aspects. But the challenge is to bring intellectual flavor to art and arouse the intellect of the audience or the viewer.

In the science of Theory of Knowledge (*nazariatul-ma'refah*) we study how human beings gain **knowledge** (*ma'refat*) in order to discover reality. Theory of knowledge involves the classification and evaluation of the different **approaches to knowledge**, including the applicability and limits of these approaches to particular **subjects** and **issues**. Choosing the right approach requires the careful and creative work of the artist because he is mostly dealing with colors, materials, clothes or environment that is totally material. He is not teaching philosophy, rather molding the philosophical ideas in her sculpture to speak to the intellect of the audience.

Often, the approach we and others use to illustrate a reality are misapplications of an otherwise valid approach to knowledge. It's like using valuable tools, but using them for the wrong job. The story below will provide an analogy to clarify this point.

“The Carpenter and the Flat Tire”

One morning, a man walked out to his car and saw that he had a flat tire. The man happened to be a master carpenter with a

Workshop full of woodworking and construction tools. He thought to himself, “Fixing this flat tire clearly requires some sort of repair tools. Luckily, I have plenty of repair tools in my workshop.” The carpenter looked through all of

his tools and chose the ones that he could use to remove the flat tire from the car, patch the flat, and then fasten the tire back to the car. He chose a saw, a hammer, nails, a bottle of wood glue, and some scrap pieces of wood.

The carpenter worked all day, first sawing the wheel off of the car, then gluing some wood over the punctured part of the tire, then hammering the tire back onto the car. After hours of work, his car was in much worse shape than before. Not only was the tire still flat, but now the wheel and hub were warped and damaged and the bolts were sawed into pieces.

Later that evening a friend of the carpenter stopped by. The friend, who was an auto mechanic, found the carpenter lying in the driveway next to his car in despair. The carpenter said to the auto mechanic, "I'm a complete failure. I've been fixing furniture and repairing houses all my life, but when I get a simple flat tire, all of my tools and experience are worthless."

The auto mechanic consoled his friend, "Your tools and experience are not worthless. They are extremely useful and valuable, but you're trying to use them for the wrong job. You need a different set of tools to do repairs on a car. I know how you feel, though, I once tried to use my wrenches and screwdrivers to repair the roof of my house. It was a disaster!"

The carpenter felt much better and thanked his friend for correcting his mistake.

For an example of someone using the wrong approach to knowledge, read the story below.

"The Scientist Who Wanted to Prove God's Existence"

A young physics student, who had been taught by his parents to be religious, began doubting the existence of God, because many of the great physicists did not seem to give much importance to religion. The student had immense respect for scientists and the achievements of science in general, but he also felt strongly about his religious beliefs.

He decided that one day he would be the first to prove God's existence through science.

The student finished his studies and became a respected scientist, but his internal conflict never left him. Finally, he took a sabbatical and devoted himself full time to proving the existence of God. By this time he was extremely skilled at both theorizing and designing experiments to verify his theories. He spent years trying to devise testable theories to either prove or disprove God's existence—all to no avail. He could not figure out any scientific way to test the existence of God. In the end, he decided that if God's existence cannot be verified by science, then either God did not exist, or—even if He did exist—he was completely unknowable. This conclusion deeply depressed the scientist because his belief in God was the foundation for all sense of value and meaning in his life. It seemed now that the universe was a cold, empty, meaningless place.

After weeks of despair, the scientist happened to see a colleague from the philosophy department on campus. The philosopher noticed the scientist's troubled emotional state and the scientist explained to him what had happened.

"My dear friend," the philosopher said, "you've been trying to find God using your senses, but if there is a God, He would be—by definition—impossible to measure with sight, hearing, smell, touch or taste."

"But the senses are what science and knowledge are based on! What is the point in believing in something that you can't prove or know?" the scientist asked in frustration.

"You're quite right to say that science is based on the senses, but there are other sources and approaches to knowledge besides the senses," the philosopher replied. "The intellect, for example, can acquire knowledge through pure reasoning, sometimes even without relying on the senses. So if the existence of God is to be questioned, it must be done with the intellect."

"This is truly amazing," the scientist exclaimed, "I did

not realize that I am trying study a spiritual entity using physical means”.

A poet using imagination and words that are made for material objects runs into an almost similar difficulty. If he transcends the material while using those same words, then the reality will shine upon the reader’s heart and mind. But if he limits himself to the sensory, imaginative or illusionary aspects of an individual, which are about this worldly life only, then he will fail to highlight the existence and meaning of God. Because human experiences are the result of a mix of our choices and God’s will and actions, the artist must show the world of creation as a manifestation of the Knowledge and Power of Almighty.

What is Truth? How do we unveil it?

This subject is particularly important for any artist to know. Here we will first try to understand the correct meaning of *Haqq* or Truth. We will also look at the false meanings of Truth. After developing the right concept of the term *Haqq*, we will start with the explanation of the first and most familiar approach to understand the reality which is the sensory approach.

Before we talk about the Truth, let us remind ourselves that Truth cannot be relative. This point was established at the end of the previous chapter and we mentioned that for anyone to say: ‘Truth is Relative’, this statement amounts to a contradiction in itself. This is because this statement itself would become meaningless and inapplicable except for the person who says so.

In other words, we must accept that Truth or *Haqq* must always ‘stay the same’ and must not change ‘from person to person’ and ‘from time to time’ otherwise it would become relative and relativism is wrong because it is self-contradictory and accepting relativism would mean denying relativism. Accepting relativism means there is no absolute statement which includes this statement (i.e. ‘Truth is Relative’) itself. Thus, the assertion ‘truth is relative’ would

mean that ‘truth is not relative’.

Definition of Truth

‘Truth is that which always corresponds to the reality’

Before we explain the above definition, it is important to understand that *Haqq* should be understood both in relation to ‘things as they

are’ and ‘things as they should be’. For example: *Haqq* could be seen in matters such as ‘earth is round’ as well as in statements such as ‘honesty is good’.

There are many who believe in a wrong meaning of the word *Haqq* or Truth, and thus they knowingly or unknowingly abuse this word. Another synonym of Truth is ‘Right’. There is a historic controversy surrounding these words; with conflicting parties using these words to forward their agenda. We want to be aware of the various correct and incorrect connotations in which these words are used in order to avoid falling in a trap. The different interpretations of the words *Haqq* or Truth or Right are:

1. *Haqq* (the right course or statement) is that which is profitable and *Batil* (the wrong course or statement) is that which is harmful.

This is the logic of the so-called pragmatists or opportunists. According to this logic, for a certain course of action, decision or statement to be *Haqq* it must be put to a test or an experiment and if that test produces any material profits or benefits it will be accepted as *Haqq*. The criterion, therefore, is not our intellect and whether we distinguish something as right. Instead it is the practical experiment that leads to certain material benefits that will demonstrate the correctness of a statement, position or stance.

Most western artists are playing the cord of the media and politicians. They portray what seems profitable.

2. *Haqq* is that (statement, assertion or course of action) which is popular and *Batil* is that which is unpopular.

Hijab in a non-Muslim society is definitely not popular

while wearing clothes that reveal the figure is a popular way of dressing up. According to this definition of *Haqq*, *hijab* will be *Batil* and revealing and tight clothes will become *Haqq*. *Haqq* is that which is powerful, dominant and victorious while *Batil* is that which is weak and defeated.

This is the logic of the arrogant people. In their view, if a certain point of view or agenda dominates it must be right. In other words, *Haqq* is that which wins; if it doesn't win then it is wrong. The whole emphasis is on winning and gaining victory over the 'opposition'. The big powers use this logic and prove their 'Truth' by a 'shock and awe' strategy. Many singers and comedians in the West make fun of the religious values and practices because they are unpopular in their countries. They organize beauty contests and trample upon the dignity of women.

Example from Holy Qur'an:

'And We made the children of Israel to pass through the sea, then *Fir'aun* and his hosts followed them for oppression and tyranny; until when drowning overtook him, he said: I believe that there is no god but He in Whom the children of Israel believe and I am of those who submit' (*Yunus*: 90).

The logic of *Fir'aun* was that whoever dominates the other will be *Haqq* and whoever loses will be *Batil*.

Examples from History:

When the Holy Prophet(s) reached Makka with an overwhelming force, Abu Sufyan came to him(s). The Holy Prophet(s) said to him: 'Abu Sufyan, isn't it time for you to finally believe that there is no Lord except Allah?'

Abu Sufyan replied: 'O Muhammad, if there was any other Lord except Him, it (that one) would have helped me.'

Thus, in the eyes of Abu Sufyan the powerful Lord who helps him win is *Haqq*; and if he (Abu Sufyan) loses then it is *Batil*.

Haqq is that which corresponds to reality, and accurately

reflects the way things really are and *Batil* is that which does not match up with reality.

In this last definition of *Haqq*, material benefit, popularity or power do not make something *Haqq* and True. It is only on the basis of objective understanding of reality that truth can be discovered. As discussed before, reality exists and we have a way to know it. So now, we will start talking about the four ways or approaches of knowing the reality. The first way to know the reality is through the senses; which is discussed in the following chapter with the help of the Almighty.

An intellectual artist does not care about the popularity, profitability or material power of a person, group, thought or movement. Her main focus is upon the correspondence with reality and how best to portray the reality without getting distracted by all those other things.

Let us look at our sensory powers and their function in our lives:

The Domain of Senses: We have two kinds of senses: Outer and Inner

Outer Senses

The five outer senses are sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch. These become the medium through which our spirits know about the realities present around us.

Inner Senses

Inner senses are those that our spirit perceives directly i.e. without the help of the five senses. Examples of such perceptions are hunger, thirst, fear, happiness, and sadness. When you are hungry, you directly sense hunger within yourself. Similarly, you feel happiness inside without the help of your eyes or ears. Such perceptions are beyond the scope of our discussion.

Let us now focus our attention on the outer senses since inner senses are not related to Logic or Theory of

Knowledge. Outer senses are used to perceive external features of physical objects (which are called *al- 'Awariz al-Maaddiyah*). In other words, these five senses help us in knowing about the outer qualities of material life. As the Holy Qur'an says:

'They know the outward of this world's life, but of the hereafter they are absolutely heedless'. (Rum: 7)

Senses perceive color, weight, texture, taste, smell and the like of the physical entities. They do not perceive concepts or entities like existence, ownership, human, animal, chair, man, woman, god, angels, etc (Note: our eyes see skin color, and shape of head of a person not the reality of being a human; same goes for all other examples). For some of these concepts human intellect takes charge –for others we have other ways. Intellect receives sensory data through eyes, ears, nose etc and extracts concepts like human, existence, man etc. The domain of senses is, therefore, limited to the outer qualities of material objects and not the reality or essence of matter or Metaphysical concepts such as 'existence' some of which fall into the domain of 'Aql or Intellect.

Senses are 'honest messengers' i.e. they do not make a mistake or go wrong as proved in the previous discussions. The mistakes are attributed to the Intellect whenever 'Aql does not use the right scale called *Burhan* as studied in Logic.

We can deduce from this discussion that intellect must have a prominent and governing role, and must rule the media, art and culture of a country like in the concept of the *Al-Madina al-Fazila* of Plato. It is therefore a big challenge trying to reinstate the government of Intellect in a society driven by material (*Hissi*), Imagined (*Khiyali*) and illusionary (*Wahmi*) goals.

Many *Ahadith* that discuss the reality of this worldly life use *Tamseel* invoke the imagination of the reader and then transcend beyond the material to the spiritual. For example,

it says: ‘Dunya is like a bridge over a river that you just pass over once and never come back to’. ‘Dunya is like a rented house that you will leave soon’, ‘Dunya is like a feast you have been invited to for a short while’, ‘Dunya is like the shade of a tree you stopped under while on a long journey’ or ‘Dunya is like money you got while you were sleeping and when you wake up you don’t find it anymore’.

This is the *Khitabi* language of Hadith and Qur’an. Qur’an is art in both script and its style of expression. Why? Because it is talking to humans who are ruled by sensory, imaginative and illusionary powers. But to rise to the intellectual level, an artist must be a philosopher – a thinker who is flying beyond the physical to the metaphysical. One who is promoting justice (*Adl*) and truth (*Haqq*) despite the social pressures that surround him. Whether she lives or dies, she will help in uplifting the society and prepare the ground for Reappearance of the Twelfth Imam (as).

The Wisdom of Mahdaviat

Dr. Olivier Souan

“May Mary, Seat of Wisdom, be a sure haven for all who devote their lives to the search for wisdom.” (John Paul II, Fides et Ratio)

Introduction

1. The Mahdaviat

The Mahdaviat is by definition the effort that a given society, regulated by the principles of Shia Islam, exerts on itself in order to bring forth the Mahdi. Even to the uninitiated, the idea may sound interesting: the efforts and the qualities of a given society are someday reflected in its leaders. It is the illustration, on the societal scale, on the well-know law according to which you reap what you sow. Indeed, "we have the leaders we deserve." Mahdism makes a program and an imperative of this constance, inserting it in a more pervasive religious framework, where God Himself will send the Mahdi when the time is ripe. Judaism also knows something similar: the coming of the Moschiah depends on the good deeds and on the study of the Torah. Christianity also speaks of Jesus' return and of the Paraclete,

but does not really compel the believer to act in such and such a way, except to warn him to firmly maintain its expectation.

2. Islam and the question of Wisdom

The Mahdi, in Shia Islam, epitomizes a good and just leader. Many hadiths insist on his just character.. Islam, in general, presents ideals of just leaders: firstly, the Prophet Muhammad, and then the Imams, especially the last Imam. This latter is considered as having constant infallibility in islamic affairs, in a way which is reminiscent of the infallibility of the Catholic Church and its pope established at the Vatican I Council in 1870.

But what was the ultimate foundation of this justice and infallibility?

- 1) On the qualities of the soul?
- 2) On a natural knowledge acquired by hard labor?
- 3) On "infuse" supernatural knowledge?

One could spontaneously put the emphasis on 1) and 3), especially in the case of the XIIth Imam. But this would not make justice to the truth. Indeed, the founder of Islam, prophet Muhammad, held knowledge in high esteem, and once said: "to seek knowledge is incumbent upon every Muslim"(Bihar al Anwar, vol I, p.55. All the subsequent quotes are extracted from Allamah Tabataba'i, A Series of Islam and Shi'a, Qum, 2005). Likewise, according to the tradition, Ali was preserved from error and sin in his actions and sayings (Ghayat al Maram, pp.539-540); he was also very learned in the Islamic sciences (ibid, p.528: "After me, the most learned of men is Ali"). But his interest also went to pure metaphysics (falsafah ilahi) (Nahj al Balaghah, Tabatabai, p.75). In general, the Shi'a tradition emphasizes the importance of the 'intellectual sciences', and metaphysical knowledge, in order to draw closer to God through the meditation on the order of the universe. This knowledge, usually called the "kalaam theology", remains

in full harmony with the totality of Islam; moreover, it cannot be separated from a more spiritual gnosis, allowing access to the celestial realms and attaining “sure knowledge” (*ilm al yaqin*, Quran, XII, 5-6). Al Farabi (Virtuous City, §26-27), Ibn Rushd and Avicenna likewise insisted on the importance of intellectual knowledge, which they connected to spirituality.

Thus, it is possible to speak of a "Wisdom" of the Mahdi, whereby the Mahdi is just and wise; insofar it has some characters of absoluteness and perfection, this Wisdom, however, is also the model for the Wisdom of the Mahdaviat, and more precisely for the type of knowledge which is needed in the higher education system, which will pave the ground for a better society.

In what follow it will be shown (I) that spirituality is essentially part of higher education (II) that it rests on a Wisdom which has many senses (III) that this Wisdom has a spiritual character.

Part I. Higher education and religion

Whereas Islamic education is firmly grounded in spirituality, as we have seen, the influence of Western Culture has introduced a higher education system which is foreign in spirit to religious values. However, a careful philosophical and historical examination of (Western) higher education shows that this was originally not the case. It will then be possible to speculate on the possibility of a higher education system combining the best from the Western and the Islamic tradition, and following the spirit of the Mahdaviat.

7. Phenomenology of education

In order to make our spiritual perspective more precise, it is useful to start with a phenomenology of the process of education grounded in historical facts.

Education is by nature a process which transforms the

soul of the individual by a threefold process: 1) an information, or more exactly an active form (*eidos, logos*) is received from the outside. This form is abstract and spiritual, but can be acquired from a human being, a teacher 2) this activity molds the soul in such a way that it acquires good dispositions, 3) this activity helps it actualizing the inner richness of its individual nature.

In any case, a teacher is necessary. The words (and behavior) of the teacher impact and influences the soul of the disciple in such a way that good dispositions are planted within him. Plato, in his *Phaedrus*, compares the process to sowing seeds in a garden. Education is not only transmission of information, but above all transmission, even if partial, of the essence of a (human) being. That's why the teacher must be of quality, since he somehow communicates something of his own spiritual substance to his disciples, who takes him as a model.

But a question arises: where to start? What was the first teacher? A secular view would consider that it is by trial and errors that man acquired knowledge, and then transmitted it to others. This is true, but ethnology shows us that man, at the very beginning, wanted to acquire information not from the mere uninformed observation of physical nature, but rather from the spiritual world. Beyond learning the social values and codes of a tribe from the parents and family, education, in its higher meaning and stages, was all about accessing the spiritual worlds in order to receive information from them. Indeed, those worlds are the worlds of pure forms and active intellects (angels, etc), ie they are worlds of pure information. This is not only the teaching of Aristotle, Saint Thomas, Ibn Sina and Al Farabi, but also the teaching of ethnology, which insist of the spiritual nature of the teaching activities in the first societies. Thus, formation and education must always somehow proceed from the higher worlds, and true education must also include a phase where the human teacher learn his disciple to safely access

the spiritual world or at least be in contact with it.

9. The birth of philosophy

Higher education always had a spiritual components; spiritual masters and rites and initiation can be found everywhere from the earliest ages. It is true that Philosophy first appeared in Greece, but it is to note that the Greek philosophers, especially in the Hellenistic times, spoke of the "philosophies" of the other people (including the Egyptians, the Celts, etc.). If basic education was granted by the families, the pedagogues and the State, the more evolved forms of education were private.

There were first the mystical initiations. Indeed, among the three forms of religions known by the Greeks (solitary practitioners, sanctuaries, thiasas), the thiasas were the more common forms adopted by mystery cults. They were fraternities, or corporations, created for religious purposes (Walter Burkert, *Les Cultes à Mystères dans l'Antiquité*, Belles Lettres, p.37). The individual could be initiated therein, received esoteric teachings concerning the gods, the rites, the afterlife. In the Athenian context, the Eleusis mysteries were likewise initiations into the Attic mysteries.

It has been remarked that the first and main examples of higher education establishments were, at their beginnings, such mystery societies or fraternities. Marrou points out that state higher education was inexistent during the Roman Empire, with a few exceptions (like the Museum) which tend to confirm the rule. The only distinctive trait lies in the presence of a strong leader around which the community is organized and its private character: the prefiguration of "academic freedom". The Pythagorean communities in Great Greece, chiefly in Croton, were mystery societies; mathematics, the natural sciences and religions were taught simultaneously. Plato's Academy, in Athens, was likewise dedicated to Apollo and his muses. Aristotle's *Lycaeum* followed a similar pattern. Later, in Alexandria, the

Museum was, at its beginnings, a fraternity dedicated to the Muses where an esoteric teaching was dispensed to a little number of initiates (Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité*, p.284, p.216). Of course, the bulk of education, in those circles, was decidedly intellectual; but it took place in a setting full of religiosity, not to mention the fact that its content and even its method were in continuity with religion: the intellectual formation, indeed, was a prerequisite to reach the perception of the Good (Plato), or the pure actuation of the Intellect, in a way similar to God's (Aristotle). Even much later, in the Hellenistic times, higher education was religious: while it was less concerned by political affairs, it became centered on culture and the arts for their own sake – but saw in their practice an effective tool for immortality and reaching paradise in the afterlife.

Greek higher education, nonetheless, was not restricted to the philosophical élite. It also took the form of master of rhetorics, the sophists, unscrupulous masters who taught politicians how to captivate their audience. This aptitude was a requirement for democracy and civic life, rhetorics, first dismissed by Socrates and Plato, became integrated in philosophy by Aristotle and was further developed as an autonomous discipline by Isocrates. Marrou points out that philosophy and rhetorics were two distinct and rival strands in higher education, the first originating in Pythagoras and Plato, and culminating in the “Quadrivium”, the four main sciences (arithmetics, geometry, music, astronomy); the second originating in Isocrates and giving birth to the “Trivium”(Grammar, Logic, Rhetorics) – the Trivium and Quadrivium being the elaboration of Greek higher education by later authors (Boethius, Capella), thus forming the seven “liberal arts.”

In this context, teaching institutions, in Antiquity, were 1) freely organized as fraternities 2) founded by masters who wanted to transmit their knowledge. 3) The studies

integrated theological components 4) The life in those fraternities also had a religious aspect.

10. Higher education, philosophy and monotheism

Surprisingly, the rise of the three monotheisms did not fundamentally alter this picture, each one delivering their own wisdom to their followers. The development of philosophy and the profane sciences was somehow restricted and subordinate to religious teachings: this was the case of the Cathedral schools in the Early Middle Ages, of the mosques in Islam, etc.

11. History of higher education system: the rise of the universities

The first university was, according to a majority of scholars, the University of Bologna, closely followed by the Sorbonne. Those universities were created by associations of masters and students, soon recognized by the King and the pope. They still had a spiritual character, but with time the atheist tendencies took over

12. Mahdaviat and education.

From the short history we have drawn, many elements can be put together into an “ideal-type” indicating what could be higher education in a society. This question is of importance since the educational system is a mold, a matrix for the whole of society. The motto of the University of Bologna is “Alma Mater” – the university is like a nourishing mother for the graduates, an old term stemming from the cult of the Mother Goddess (the Earth). Hence the need for the universities to self-reflect on their role and function in order to prepare a better society (this being the essence of the Mahdaviat).

We have seen that the transcendent, spiritual dimension was essential to “higher teaching”, this kind of teaching who went beyond the more simple teaching of language, tribal

codes and basic aptitudes for survival – which were nonetheless imbued with a sacred significance. This dimension has been progressively obscured, but is still present in Greek philosophy, Islam and the Middle Ages. It has totally disappeared today, at least in the West. According to this perspective, the teacher is not only transmitting a tradition, but is also representative of something higher, having his own source of inspiration enabling him to contact the higher realms of knowledge. This archetypal view is very present in Christianity, where the Christ is the true Pedagogue – the true Teacher; as it is in Islam, where the Imam provides guidance (even if he is not considered divine). For the imperfect beings we are, relentless research must be articulated with constant teaching. In any case, the traditional ordering of learning: science as taught - research – theology – asceticism and mysticism must be acknowledged.

The second point of importance is the corporate nature of teaching, present in ancient Greek and in the medieval system of the universities, all the more than those confraternities were also religious in nature. Corporate does not necessarily mean corporatist, as the confraternities of the Renaissance played a great role in the scientific revolution, while the universities were left behind.

Academic freedom, in this context, helps the teacher / researcher to evolve in his quest for truth and knowledge, without the pressure of external constraints which cannot but diminish his own potential and God's will upon him. The corporate nature of teaching means that this academic freedom must be concretely realized in relation with his students and his peers. Moreover, a teacher authentically dedicated to truth and God will certainly obey the recommendations arising from legitimate state authorities.

Academic freedom not only means freedom from ill-devised theories which are always in need of further examination for a better formulation. It also means freedom

from financial constraints in order to be purely dedicated to truth. In Ancient Greece, “scholè” (hence English ‘school’) meant: “free from working“, i.e. having the status of a free individual, distinct from the slaves which were the only workforce they knew. That’s why Aristotle attributed to the class of priests, in Egypt, the invention of mathematics. Even if the deep injustices brought by ancient societies cannot be repeated, the distinction between ‘pure research’ and ‘professional formation’ must be maintained. The higher education system must maintain the ideal of disinterested research at its very core, while also providing for a professional formation in order to have its students inserted in the economy.

This does not mean that education must be centered on the teacher. It must also be, like an ellipse, centered on the student. According to the spiritual approach, the individual is not only an anonymous entity having equal rights to the other; he has a distinct personality, with inner talents and competences that remain to be fully expressed in his social and professional life. René Guénon (“L’initiation et les métiers”, in *Mélanges*, Gallimard, 1976), even wrote that in a traditional setting, the exterior activities of the individual manifested dispositions that were the vehicle of sacred forces. There is no such thing as a ‘profane’ activity, in this perspective, where every individual deploys an activity which expresses his inner being, his own nature, for his greater good and that of society. As a consequence, the individual must be introduced with the function which is in harmony with this inner being, this latter being part of a wider scheme of things. The ‘job’ then manifests the deepest nature of the cosmic order and helps God to unfold his plans within the universe. Guénon compares lower education to the “little mysteries” of traditional initiation, where man must be brought to his perfection by acquiring the basis of a universal knowledge; the subsequent specialization process which corresponds to his inner

nature; and thirdly the “great mysteries” that help him having access to the “superior states of being.”

II. The dimensions of Wisdom

13. The acquisition of Wisdom: Plato.

How would one characterize the essential of Greek philosophy? This latter, considered very generally, does not consist in the acquisition of knowledge for the sake of it, but rather in the acquisition of an intellectual competence, called "Wisdom."

Pythagoras is credited for having invented the word "philosophy", even if some scholars think that this reference is spurious. For Plato, true Wisdom cannot be possessed by the human beings, who must instead philosophize (*Phaedrus* 278d); only the gods do possess Wisdom (*Symposion*, 204a). Likewise, Aristotle, in *Metaphysics* A, 2, presents "Wisdom" as being the first of all sciences. It deals with the first principles of all things. This science is more divine than human, and its intermittent possession by mortals confers bliss (*Ethica Nichomachea* XI), insofar the pure intellect inhabiting our minds is totally active, like God's. Wisdom is firstly a state of the intellect, whereby it is purely active, free for all kinds of passivities and hindrances that can arise, for instance, from its union with the body. But in what does consist this pure activity? It consists in perceiving the pure forms that constitute the essence of reality. But a training is needed in order to develop this aptitude to 'see' the forms; drafted in Plato's *Republics*, it will be at the origin of the trivium and quadrivium of medieval education. The contemplation of the pure forms by Wisdom can of course be articulated back in a rational discourse. It has also an ethical function, as it helped to see what is really good. Lastly, it has a political function, as it helps to implement within the city the perfect harmony existing in the ideal domain. The study of all the sciences is thus a prerequisite

for the acquisition of Wisdom, which ultimately leads the individual to moral and practical perfection, and the city to political perfection.

As we have seen, this concept of Wisdom, which is the genuine one, has been impoverished and distorted with time. Wisdom is no longer meant as a way to transform the individual and to open him to the spiritual patterns underlying the fabric of reality, in order to fine tune society. Wisdom is now reduced to a bunch of uncoordinated disciplines which remain external to the individual and who have only a social function.

14. A system of the sciences founded in Wisdom

Nowadays, the 'sciences' are scattered, cut from spirituality, or considered only by their technological consequences. From the old Greek conception, only the ideal of 'academic freedom' remains. But this conception saw in the sciences a compact and unique body of knowledge, encompassing not only the material beings, but also the Forms and, last but not least, the spiritual beings. Moreover, this conception stood in continuity with religion, not only with dogmas but also with rituals. This can be firstly seen in the case of the Pythagorean School, and remains vivid in Plato, Aristotle, not to speak of Hegel or Comte.

The idea that the sciences can be coordinated together in an all-encompassing metaphysics is then certainly not new. It has been forgotten with time, but was still present in the history of the higher education. Indeed, a new stage was opened with the founding of the University of Berlin in 1810, which was precisely formed after this idea. His founder, Wilhelm von Humboldt, had this unity in view when he conceived it, following the philosophy of Kant and of the German idealism (Schelling, Fichte, Hegel), that insisted on the intrinsic unity and systematicity of science as such.

If the idea of a ultimate unity of knowledge has not totally disappeared in the West, the idea that it must have a spiritual foundation of knowledge has been lost, as well as the idea that knowledge can positively transform the soul and open it to immaterial reality. This view is indeed present in Plato and Aristotle, and remained vivid in the Middle Ages, but became progressively lost in the Renaissance and the Classical Ages - only to be totally forgotten nowadays.

According to this metaphysical view, Wisdom provides the ultimate ground for the unity of the sciences, which derive not only their methods and their formal character from it, but also their content and meaning.

15. Wisdom as natural theology

In contradistinction with profane knowledge, Wisdom has indeed a spiritual element. As we have seen, Plato's sharply distinguished the forms from the phenomenal beings which reflected them, so that dialectics had to lead the mind from the latter to the former. In fact, there was considerable debate among philosophers – and there still is, in order to understand the relation between the two: Aristotle considered the forms as being present in matter; like Pythagoras who however reduced them to numbers, etc. The basic idea, however, remain the same: the practice of the sciences request immaterial entities, paradoxically needed to explain the fabric of material reality.

One can also go a step further and consider that the practice of the sciences is actually a spiritual act, with religious overtones, starting with Nature and ending with God. This is the way that classical 'natural theology' proceeds; it is already seen in Pythagoras and Plato's, and more visibly in Aristotle's metaphysics. To clearly understand what is at stake, it must be emphasized that the 'dialectical ascent to the first principles' helps the intellect to go beyond matter in order to reach its underlying spiritual

structure. And, according to a more spiritual perspective, the world itself can be conceived as a living entity, whose body is the veil of material things, whose soul is its structure and laws, and whose spirit is the intellect-God hiding beyond the appearances. The metaphysical process is precisely the intellectual activity according to which the mind reaches this intellect. According to some authors, like Hegel, this culminates in a speculative moment according to which the intellect recognizes the supreme intellect as being himself, or at least himself as being a part of the supreme intellect.

In this view, the true meaning of science is a spiritual activity; it is nothing else as a natural theology: it aims at discovering an underlying metaphysical order of reality which is ultimately founded on the Supreme Intellect whose name are manifold: the Monad of Pythagoras, Plato's Good Aristotle's Prime Mover, etc. In more recent time, Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, insofar they claim to conclude to the existence of a God of Nature from the order of the Universe, belonged to this tradition. But Newton's French disciples: Voltaire, Lagrange, etc. evolving in a country deeply advanced in secularization as a consequence of various sociological processes (the Wars of Religion, absolutism, Jansenism, etc.), will not understand the theological essence of the Newtonian physics and of the English Enlightenment, thus paving the way to the dominant secular worldview.

16. The two (or three) Wisdoms.

Thus, modern, secular Wisdom is nothing else as the traditional Wisdom, except that it no longer dares to cross the veil of the appearances to find the ultimate basis of reality. It only remains at the surface of things (or loudly claims to do so), without realizing the complex organic structure underlying its field of investigation.

Actually, the topic becomes even more complicated when we begin to oppose, as many philosophers did, like Pascal, the God of Nature and the God of the Revelation. Not even

to speak of the fact that there seems to be many revelations. The famous French philosopher Pascal famously opposed both of them, the "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob", and the God of Nature, the "God of the Philosophers." The first one, according to him, is a Person you learn to love with the heart, bringing redemption and salvation, on the basis of the Gospel (Pascal was a Christian). The second is a Spirit you learn to know through intellectual speculation, but which Pascal considers as an empty idol.

Are they the same or are they different? A possible answer would be that they are indeed the same, but seen either from the viewpoint of natural theology or from the viewpoint of revelation. Indeed, it is not possible to access God directly; God can be accessed only by some kind of mediation. For instance, in the abovementioned examples: Nature and the Scriptures; but they are actually nothing else as two kinds of nature: material nature and spiritual nature. The God of the Philosophers is known through Material Nature and the speculation of the intellect; the God of Revelation is known through Spiritual Nature and the inquiry into the Scriptures and their practical consequences.

Thus, there are two 'Wisdoms': the Wisdom of Material Nature (or, more exactly, the Wisdom of the Earth), and the Wisdom of Spiritual Nature, as being made manifest in revelation. In Judaism, the knowledge of nature is not obtained by the natural sciences, but by esoteric teachings concerning the "work of creation", just as the knowledge of the immaterial world is obtained by similar teachings concerning the "work of the merkabah." Islam has in high esteem the natural sciences, but does not precise the relation it can have with philosophy, except in the rational elaborations of Averroes, etc. Christianity is much more contrasted, and seems to stand with three options: the terrestrial wisdom (philosophy, the sciences) (1) is vain and empty: "has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?" (1 Co 1, 20). (2) could have led to the knowledge of

God but did not (1 Co 1, 21); (3) is valid as a natural theology (St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I, 2) (4) is the very basis on which the knowledge of the Scriptures can be realized (St Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*).

Thus there seems to be two different wisdoms: the terrestrial and the celestial wisdoms. In some biblical texts a third one is sometimes added; it is actually the opposite of wisdom: “Dame Folly” (*Proverbs 7 and 9*), a false, satanic knowledge, an ‘infernal wisdom’ leading to destruction; the New Testament calls it the “Depth of Satan” (Rev. 2:24).

18. Mahdaviat and education

As for modern higher education, the present state of affair remains deeply unsatisfactory. First, the true meaning of Wisdom has been lost: it is no longer an inner aptitude of the soul which helps it to perceive truth, but it is an external professional competence. It has become less spiritual and more intellectual, less internal and more external. The unity of the sciences; their metaphysical origin and function has likewise been lost. And technology, left to itself, has become transgressive, if not destructive.

The Mahdaviat, considered as a program for a world filled with peace and justice, must certainly revive the true sense of Wisdom: something transforming the individual and the society by the knowledge of the forms and the archetypes and the true structures of the universe. Modern scientific research must come second to that objective, and spiritual formation must precede intellectual formation. The sciences must as well understand their spiritual roots, which are the ultimate conditions of possibility for their unity and efficiency. Moreover, the hidden harmony between the celestial wisdom, on which spiritual considerations are based, and the terrestrial wisdom, from which modern sciences proceed, must be clearly investigated and promoted. Lastly, the technological applications must be

somehow checked by ethical considerations and a more precise assessment of their environmental consequences, and not ignore the danger of renewed occult temptations, a kind of spiritual materialism that could arise from a new spiritualization of the sciences.

IV. Wisdom: a spiritual predicament

§19. Sophiology

The Mahdi, as a just man, will be inspired by Justice and Wisdom. Those are not only traits of his character, but also spiritual powers bestowed upon him by God, perhaps on the basis, as we have seen in the beginning, of intellectual work. What could those spiritual powers be? We have seen they are two “Wisdoms”: the terrestrial Wisdom and the celestial Wisdom. It is to note that in many spiritual traditions those ‘Wisdoms’ take the shape of ‘women’, just like God is usually understood as a male being. Unto what extent are those images to be taken seriously in order to grasp the transcendent deity is a matter of debate. It seems that they refer primarily to the two ontological realms: the celestial nature and the terrestrial nature, each of them being regulated by their own set of laws and having their own distinctive features. Knowing them is then true Wisdom.

Indeed, terrestrial nature was venerated in Greece as a Goddess, as Pierre Hadot has convincingly shown (Pierre Hadot, *Le Voile d’Isis*, Gallimard, 2002). In any case, to begin with Greece, the Eleusinian mysteries presented two Goddesses: Demeter and her daughter Persephone. Plato opposed the celestial Aphrodite, who inspired philosophers, and the terrestrial Aphrodite, upon which common love is based (*Symposium*, 180e). Plotinus (*Enneads*, III, 5, [50]) identified those two Aphrodites with the upper and the lower soul of man, a move that had already been somehow accomplished by Philo of Alexandria, who identified the biblical Eve with the lower soul, under the yoke of carnal

desires.

Those conceptions can also be found in Judaism. Among God's spiritual powers (the *sefirot*), some are determined as 'feminine', namely 'Binah' (Spiritual Understanding) and 'Malkhout' (Terrestrial Kingship), who can clearly be identified with the 'Higher' and 'Lower' Wisdoms ('lower' means: closer to Earth, terrestrial). They are to be connected with the Shekinah, God's presence in the world. Indeed, Wisdom plays an important role in the Tanakh (Old Testament). Wisdom is understood as the helpmate of God, God's own Wisdom, the Torah (divine Law) whereby He created the world: "God made the earth by His power; He established the world by His wisdom and by His understanding and skill stretched out the heavens." (*Jeremiah* 10: 12) To the believer she becomes like a divine mother bestowing guidance and inspiration in the path towards God: "Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect you; love her, and she will watch over you. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding." (*Proverbs* 4:6-7). But she is more than that: she is associated with kingship, as being the very spiritual power who inspire kings and bestows justice to them. In Platonic term, divine Wisdom is responsible for the presence of the Form of justice in the king, whereby he is just, even if this king is unaware of the source of his justice: "By me kings reign and rulers issue decrees that are just." (*Proverbs* 8:15). Wisdom grants guidance to the kings. In the Bible, King Solomon epitomizes the notion of a divinely inspired kingship, who is based not only on justice and government, but on the knowledge of the structure of nature: "the whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart." (*1 Kings* 3:11-12). Indeed, in this perspective, the knowledge of the spiritual laws of nature offers the possibility of a just government.

In Christianity, the theme of Divine Wisdom does not

seem that much prevalent. In fact, the Church Fathers have usually equated it with Jesus-Christ, obfuscating the possibility of a feminine aspect of the deity. Moreover, a sharp opposition between the Terrestrial Wisdom and the Celestial Wisdom is put forward: God has struck the “Wisdom of the World”(Mt 1,20) with madness; by contrast, the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”(James 3:17).

However, there are dissenting voices, mentioned by Pope Benedict XVI (*Daughter of Zion*, pp.26-28), who wanted to distinguish Wisdom for standard Christology. Some theologians have thus identified the Divine Wisdom with the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus. In the Eastern Churches, a long standing tradition of “sophiology” exalts Divine Wisdom, starting with Constantine’s Saint Sophia Church in Constantinople. More recently, modern orthodox writers have highlighted the importance of this thema, heralding a “sophianic age” where the femine aspect of the deity will be fully revealed and will extend its beneficial influence to all mankind. (Serge Boulgakov, *La Sagesse de Dieu, L’Âge d’Homme*, 1983 ; *Le Combat pour l’âme du monde. Urgence de la sophiologie*, Berg, 1980). Those authors conceive her as divine, not in the sense that it is a divine person (*hypostasis*), but rather that it is God’s substance (*ousia*). They distinguish the created Sophia from the divine Sophia, and describe eschatology as the ultimate fusion of the two.

Now, what could be the role of Islam in this picture? A stern, patriarchal religion seems quite foreign to those speculations, if not downright opposed. In my sense, this would be a hasty conclusion. First, let us not forget that the conception of God as a Mother is not totally foreign to Islam. Every surah begins by invoking God’s Mercy, a feminine attribute. Mohammed (PBUH) pointed once this aspect in a hadit: “God's kindness towards His creatures is

more than a mother's towards her baby.”(‘Amili, Sayyed Muhammad b. Muhammad b. Hasan, Ithna ‘Ashariyyah fi al-Mawa‘iz al-‘Adadiyyah, (Qum: Hekmah Publication, without date.) quoted by Husayn Naghavi, Pearls of Wisdom: A Selection of hadiths from the Prophet Muhammad). Moreover, the Quran makes fourteen mentions to the holy Virgin Mary, twice more than the Bible – and, as we know, Virgin Mary is deeply associated with divine Wisdom. There is also an insistence of the divine essence, *al dhat*, which is a feminine name much like the divine ousia is feminine in Orthodox sophiology. It would be too long to list, both in Sufism and in Persian poetry, the indices that points to a sophianic message. As Henry Corbin wrote: “the answer is contained in the devoutness which took the form of Shi’ite Islam – Not only do the Holy Imams form a chain of helpful intermediary beings, but especially Fâtima, the Prophet’s daughter and Mother of the Holy Imams, assumes a role which makes her a recurrence of Sophia – not only for popular piety but also for the theosophical speculations of Shi’ism.”(Henry Corbin, *The Eternal Sophia*, p.22)

V. Conclusion

We have now revealed the ultimate spiritual foundation on which higher education must rest: a Wisdom inspired by God, both terrestrial and celestial, giving celestial inspiration and guidance not only to scholars, but also to just rulers who need to know the metaphysical structure of reality in order to implement justice, peace and prosperity on earth. In Islam, this just ruler is epitomized by the Mahdi, to the point that this Wisdom could somehow be described as *his* Wisdom, being part of *his* own substance. Would that mean that in the coming age he will be the only one to be just and wise? Of course not. As being part of one mankind, we have already this Wisdom at our disposal, as scholars, as scientists, as statesmen. But this state of affair will be far

clearer in the future, as Wisdom will be poured out from above with an intensity never seen hitherto. As if Mahdi's Wisdom would trickle down to the different areas of society, enabling each individual to judge by himself what is absolutely just and true, and to apply it in his own sphere of competence, in an generalized version of the principle of subsidiarity. The more qualified individuals will thus reign on whole nations, if not whole cities (not to speak of reigning over whole planets, as in some splinter American denominations). In the sciences, especially, this sophianic era will lead to an unprecedented renewal, as nature will no longer be a veil to, but rather a vehicle of the divine energies. The sciences will thus become inherently theological. As Nicolas Berdaiev once wrote:

“The sophiological theological efforts of Fr. S. Bulgakov signify a return to the sacred, the Divine cosmos, the restoration of the organic-mystical connection between God and the creaturely world.”(Nicolas Berdyaev, *Concerning Sophiology*, in Radu Costin Iacob, *Sophia, The Wisdom of God*, Ph Thesis, Leuven, 2011).

The Hope of Perfection through Divine Appearing and Transformation

Dr. Kurt Anders Richardson

Those who believe in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad, and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabians - whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right - surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve. (Qur'an2:62)

Our Lord! grant us what you promised unto us through your Messengers and disgrace us not on the Qiyamah, for you never break your promise. (Qur'an3:194)

The creation of the heavens and the earth, together with the various species of animals that are scattered across its surface, is one of the tokens and signs of God's power. He is capable of gathering them all together whenever He wishes and desires, and His power fully suffices to bring about resurrection (Qur'an42:29)

This paper is concerned with the ideal of perfection before God as the *telos* or goal of human existence¹. Early in human thought the concept of perfection was articulated: as completeness (nothing necessary is lacking); as supreme

1. *òSaðh`ifahal-k`amilah*. The perfect book of Imam Zaynul-A'abideen A'lilbnul Husayn As'sajjad. Tr. William C. Chittick. Qum, Iran: Ansariyan Publications, 2000.

(nothing could be better); as consummate (nothing purposed remains unfulfilled)¹. Thus, perfection is the sense of a thing or state of affairs that cannot be improved upon. For the human being living in light of revelation, perfection is both an aspiration for daily living and an ultimate hope which comes from the Creator². Contained within the reality of creation is the greater reality of final consummation. All that is not God was and is created by God, for God's ultimate purposes. All things were created by him and for him such by which he achieves the demonstration of glory and honor which he freely shares with creatures that receive this honor by doing his will and ultimately through adoration of God.³

There is no intelligent thought where the vision of perfection is not imposed upon the human mind⁴. The intelligibility of the universe in human cognition of the world involves many clarifying and progressively complex understandings of the created order. The human being does this with the innate capacities of the *imago Dei* ("image of God") which is the eternal pattern of human formation and ultimately relationship with God. Human cognition is the process of the mind by which experiences and perceptions of the world are translated into words, numbers and other symbols which capture something of the nature of the world in these abstractions of thought. Word, number and symbols in general facilitate expressions of truth about everyday things in the world and how they contribute to human flourishing. Indeed, words, numbers and symbols are used by the divine Spirit through prophets and scriptures to communicate what can only be known of God and God's

1. Cf., Aristotle, *Politics* I.2 and *Nicomachean Ethics* I, 7 & X, 7, Benjamin Jowett. *The Complete Works of Aristotle, The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
2. Ibn al-°Arabî. *Ins°anal-k°amil*; al-Quøth al-ghawth al-fard. Dimashq: M.M. al-Ghur°ab, 1981.
3. Jane Idleman Smith and Yvonne Haddad. *The Islamic Understanding of Death and Resurrection*. New York: Oxford University, 2002.
4. Kelly James Clark and Raymond J. VanArragon, eds. *Evidence and religiousbelief*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

relations with the world through revelation. Through these fundamental modes of cognition, revelation as God's knowledge communicated for human knowing becomes a reality to the human understanding. God's creation includes both time and space because only God is eternal and without limit. Although God's livingness is without beginning and uncreated, God creates all life and therefore donates life to things other than himself and the highest order of those beings: humans and angels which have the capacity for communion with God and the conscious fulfillment of God's purposes for them.

Whatever exists in the heavens and the earth belongs to God, and to Him is the return of all things. (Qur'an3:109)

He has knowledge of every kind of creation (Qur'an36:79)

Whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth belongs to God, and to Him do all affairs revert and return. (Qur'an42:53)

Although the state of death is not kept rather mysteriously by revelation, it is certain that human existence continues beyond the moment at which the body is deceased. The soul or self of each person has sustained existence through the will and power of God as all things await the resurrection of the dead to eternal life in the new creation in which God is fully manifested as the Lord of life and light. All of this is achieved by God through signs and portents announcing the appearing of the Savior of the world which include the defeat of God's enemies and the ultimate consummation of the world in the divine perfection of his glorious dispensation for all things. The bodily resurrection will take place on "The Last Day" (the Day of Standing Up, Day of Separation, Day of Reckoning, Day of Awakening, Day of Judgment, The Encompassing Day or The Hour). Although the benefits of that Day are divinely intended for all beings, they are enjoyed only by those who embraced the divine Mercy and demonstrated it in works of mercy and righteousness. God who is infinite in mercy withholds

nothing of his eternal goodness from those who genuinely call upon him in humility and gratitude. Through revelation, Allah addresses humanity with his call to them:

O soul who is at rest, return to thy Lord, well-pleased with Him, well-pleasing Him. So enter among My servants, and enter My garden. (Qur'an 89:27-30)

At a primal level in the human mind, words and numbers, including letters, function abstractly to help human beings think comprehensively about the world and its natural processes as created by God. The formulations: mathematical, logical, metaphysical, psychological and ultimately theological all achieve truth status through propositional reasoning. Although the world as created is dynamic and in constant flux, the symbolic reasoning of the human being in relation to God achieves very stable formulations by which the world and its relations are expressed. This stability of cognitive formulations, even while the body of knowledge is constantly being added to and refined in their formulations, suggest perfection beyond their human containment. This is especially true of the cognitive symbols themselves. Symbolic formulations are successful in so far as they provide predictable outcomes for future human experience of the world they describe¹. This measure of success in the use of symbols is a primary way that human beings can make higher order truth claims about the world.

The stability of primary symbols such as words and numbers and the success of symbolic formulations, continuing over centuries of human civilization, has had its origins in the human desire to solve problems of knowledge and existence. The power of symbols is also suggestive of a hope in eliminating errors and failure in knowledge and existence. As human beings learn and grow to maturity and enter the human world of symbolic reference, the

1. Michael V. Griffin. *Leibniz, God, and necessity*. Cambridge; Cambridge University, 2013.

confidence and commitment the is both inspired and required for human functioning includes the aspiration for a world where error and failure have been transcended. In much the way that symbolic abstraction is already a transcending of the processes of the world yet so vitally linked to them, since their use is tied to universal communication and understanding, it is really not surprising that human beings contemplate a perfect form of existence beyond the radically imperfection conditions of the present order.

Have you not perceived that you were first a drop of sperm? Was it you who created that drop of sperm in the form of a human child or was it Us ? We have decreed death for all Our creation. If We wished, We could destroy all of you and replace you with a new creation, or raise you up in a way of which you are now unaware. You are aware of the first creation; why do you pay no heed to the second creation? (Qur'an56:57-62)

So many experiences in cognitive functioning of the mind give rise to esteem for and realizable aspirations for perfection.

The day on which the heavens and earth will be changed into other than the heaven and earth, and all will be brought before God, the One and All-Powerful (Qur'an14:48)

Thus We bring back to life the dead earth, and the coming back to life of the dead on the day of resurrection shall be similar (Qur'an50:11)

God brings you forth from the ground like the plants and He will then cause you to return to the earth. Then He will bring you forth once again from the earth (Qur'an71:17-18)

Although for centuries scientific and ethical reasoning hoped for a perfection based upon laws of nature and traditions of natural law, human beings had yet to appreciate the levels of complexity in the created order¹. God is

1. Celia Deane-Drummond and Peter Manley Scott, eds. Future perfect? God, medicine and human identity. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.

immensely greater than anything the human being can imagine and it should be no wonder that God's creation reflects this staggering complexity. Although laws are formulated in human terms by human beings, the complexity of the universe requires first accounting for its fundamental particles and constituents. Thus, whether we are thinking about the sub-atomic world or the world of DNA, human symbolic cognition is capable of entering those worlds and giving them meaningful expression for ever deepening knowledge and understanding. By the same token, the macro-world of human relations and the human psyche are far more complex than had traditionally been accounted for. This does not mean that revelation through the prophets and the scriptures was diminished in any way. On the contrary, it meant that the traditions of interpretation had to open up in order to appreciate how revelation continues to guide all the great decisions of human knowing and acting.

As we look at the human condition and the conditions of life in the world, we realize that fundamental particles and properties do not contain perfectibility within them. Indeed, the universe itself is a continuous combining of energy and information with the decay of these combinations resulting in the inevitable dissolution of present forms of things. The profound intuition of prophets is that human identity or the soul has been created to achieve an eternal destiny that is greater than the most stable symbol and as infallible as a tautology.

Here, perfection is seen by the prophets as resurrected immortality and a profoundly higher order of living. Although the resurrection of the dead to eternal life emerges slowly as in revelation and belief, the universal awareness of the belief led to a unanimous prophetic announcement of this destiny. Human suffering of all kinds results in so few with a capacity to carry on a life of faithfulness, so many lives are cut short, means that resurrection is the great

divine solution to the paucity of human faithfulness and the great numbers of those who live and die with little chance to achieve human fulfillment toward God and others. But the consummate destiny of human beings is rooted in their original creation by God.

You will return to Him just as He created you (Qur'an7:29)

God begins creation, then He renews it, and after that causes it to return to Him (Qur'an30:11)

It is Allah who sends forth the Winds so that they raise up the Clouds,

And We drive them to a Land that is dead,

And revive the earth therewith after its death:

Even so (will be) the Resurrection! (Qur'an35:9)

Say: He will give life to the bones Who created them for the first time; certainly He is aware of all His creation. (Qur'an36:79)

The Trumpet will (just) be sounded, when all that are in the heavens and on earth will swoon, except such as it will please Allah (to exempt). Then will a second one be sounded, when, behold, they will be standing and looking on! (Qur'an 39:68)

And listen for the Day when the Caller will call out from a place quite near.

The Day when they will hear a (mighty) Blast in Truth: That will be the Day of Resurrection. . . .

We know best what they say; And thou are not one to overawe them by force.

So admonish with the Qur'an such as fear My Warning! (Qur'an50:41-45)

In a profound passage, according to the voice of Allah:

Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones?

Nay, We are able to put together in perfect order, the very tip of his fingers.

Has not he, (the same), the power to give life to the dead? (Qur'an 75:3-4, 40)

And in another passage, the apostle declares:

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he

is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:1-4)

Drawing upon the scriptures and devout tafsir scholars and philosophers, these truths have been expounded upon in light of non-contingent divine action to bring about the transformative Appearing with its implications for human action and well-being. The study of this entire matter in revelation belongs to *Yawm al-Qiyāmah*, يوم القيامة “the Day of Resurrection”. This of course is also the *Yawm ad-Din*, يوم الدين “the Day of Judgment”, when perishable creation is annihilated only to be replaced by the imperishable, the immortal, granted to all believers who receive the Divine Mercy. The great scholars of the Quranic and Hadith materials are al-Ghazali, IbnKathir, IbnMajah, al-Bukhari, IbnTaymiyyah and IbnKhuzaymah. Central to their texts is the Sūrat al-Qiyāma: سورة القيامة of the Holy Qur’an. As with all the prophets, references abound to a coming “Day of Reckoning”, “the Last Day” and *al-sā’ah*, “the Hour”. Surrounding the event of resurrection is a final tribulation, the Mahdi and Isa’s Appearing, and war on Masih ad-Dajjal, and the two eternal destinations of the resurrected: *Jannah* and *Jahannam* paradise¹ and punishment². *Ghaybah* apocalyptic sources describing the last battle, Armageddon, and the beginning of the divine perfecting of creation in resurrection and is one of Islam’s seven *aqidah*. There are three great dispensations of which the third is inaugurated by the Appearing (of the Mahdi and Isa) which begins the end of days.

In a great passage from *Kimiya-yiSa’adat*, part of the greater work: *Ihya-ul-Aloom (Revival of Religious Sciences)* Al Ghazali writes:

In the fourth stage man altogether transcends the limits of

1. Cf., Qur’an 17:46, 23:88, 41:11, 65:12.

2. Cf., Qur’an 39:71; 15:43.

the animals and becomes capable, to some extent, of foreseeing and providing for the future. His movements at first may be compared to ordinary walking on land, then to traversing the sea in a ship, then, on the fourth plane, where he is conversant with realities, to walking on the sea, while beyond this plane there is a fifth, known to the prophets and saints, whose progress may be compared to flying through the air.

Thus man is capable of existing on several different planes, from the animal to the angelic, and precisely in this lies his danger, i.e., of falling to the very lowest. In the Koran it is written, 'We proposed the burden (i.e., responsibility or free-will) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they refused to undertake it. But man took it upon himself: Verily he is ignorant.' Neither animals nor, angels can change their appointed rank and place. But man may sink to the animal or soar to the angel, and this is the meaning of his undertaking that 'burden' of which the Koran speaks. The majority of men choose to remain in the two lower stages mentioned above, and the stationary are always hostile to the travellers or pilgrims, whom they far outnumber.

Many of the former class, having no fixed convictions about the future world, when mastered by their sensual appetites, deny it altogether. They say that hell is merely an invention of theologians to frighten people. And they regard theologians themselves with thinly veiled contempt. To argue with fools of this kind is of very little use. This much, however, may be said to such a man, with the possible result of making him pause and reflect: 'Do you really think that the hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets and saints who believed in the future life were all wrong, and you are right in denying it?'¹

The transition to the hope of perfection is actually a transformation into perfection that is utterly dependent upon the creative and redemptive action of the Source of all perfection, namely the One God. God motivates human beings through his mercy and love to pursue spiritual rewards from God alone². Perfection in divine terms means

1. Al Ghazzali. *The Alchemy of Happiness*. Tr. Claud Field. Cosimo, 2010, pp. 70-71.

2. John Cassian (AD 360- ca. 435). *Conferences*. Tr. ColmLuibheid. New York: Paulist Press, 1985.

that which is complete and whole, without lack and in complete harmony with the will of the Creator. The transformation of the natural order into a supernatural order is the sole work of God at the end times, through the Savior who mediates these blessings to the world. Nothing in the present or historical existence can compare with what is yet to be revealed¹. Indeed, no matter how rich the blessings of the present, they are poverty in light of the glory of the new creation. In the meantime, all believers are to live according to the love of God whose providence turns everything toward the realization of this perfection.

God promises the believers, both women and men, that He will cause them to enter a paradise where rivers flow beneath the trees, and have them dwell in splendid palaces. He will also bestow on them His pleasure and satisfaction, which is greater and loftier than material bounties. This spiritual reward is, in truth, the supreme achievement for the pure. (Qur'an9:72)

A day will come on which the earth will be transformed into other than itself. Qur'an14:48

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, (شکایت؛ گله) groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for

1. Brian Davies. Thomas Aquinas on God and evil. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:18-18)

Unless and until the One and only God reveals and empowers the Savior of the world this (تغییر، دگرگونی، transformation awaits its (اجرا) fulfilment. Resurrection, like creation, is entirely a work of God and nothing in human or creaturely action can bring it about¹. Just as resurrection is the moment of passage from the prior state of creation to its new, perfected state, the appearance of the Savior is the moment of perfect revelation that is achieved by God alone through this uniquely guided Servant.

The perfection of the End has been anticipated by every great manifestation of God's power to humanity through the prophets but ultimately through the Savior². Since this act of transformation is entirely a divine act what is done by believers is to live with the longing of the Savior's appearing.

Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated. (2 Maccabees 2:8)

From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:8)

In the present, the prophethood of all believers is the lofty goal but in the future, it is the co-reigning of believers together with the Savior that is the hallmark of the New Creation. Since the imperfect human can only perform imperfect acts and to set imperfect goals the special characteristic of believers is their trust in the promises of God. Nothing in human piety, ingenuity or strength could

1. Michael J. Christensen and Jeffery A. Wittung, eds. *Partakers of the divine nature: the history and development of deification in the Christian traditions*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007.

2. Gregory MacDonald, ed. "All shall be well": explorations in Universalism and Christian theology from Origen to Moltmann. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011.

even being to achieve the ultimate plan of God. Only the consummating acts of God through the Savior can accomplish this:

They will blow on the trumpet and everything in the heavens and the earth will be swallowed up by death, save only that which God wishes to preserve. Then another trumpet blast will be sounded and all creatures will suddenly rise up to behold the plain of resurrection (Qur'an39:68)

On the day that God raises up all men for the accounting to make them aware of the results of all the deeds He has recorded and they have forgotten; indeed God is a Witness to all creatures in the world (Qur'an58:6)

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling—if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. (2 Corinthians 5:1-9)

What we have seen in this paper the orientation toward the perfection of creation through resurrection. The (پیش بینی، انتظار) anticipation of perfection is rooted in the very ideas that human beings have about the order of creation. The divine calling to the human being in patient waiting for the perfecting of all things is the pursuit of holiness of life¹. Until the day, believers are counseled to achieve contentment and to maintain it in a very imperfect world².

1. Mark H. Mann. Perfecting grace: holiness, human being, and the sciences. New York: T & T Clark, 2006.

2. Muhammad Akhtar. Contentment of the heart.Tr. Yusuf Gundiwalla.Karachi :KutubKhanaMazhari, 1994.

Lifestyle and Ground-setting Training: Exploring the Muslim Culture and Identity

Mochammad Ali

Introduction

Nowadays, in the Western capitalist world, the religious culture is understood as the determinant of the national identity which is used to get the capital and to win it from the other in the era of liberal industry, so that why the Americans who were religiously converted into Islam were no longer called Americans, but Moslems or quasi-Americans. In this context, national identity marker is politically dealing with the religious identity in the paradigm of culture to win the social modal. In the discourse of global politic, the West and Americans are identical with Christianity; Middle East and Arabs are identical with Islam, and India is identical with Hindu. Therefore, the Western people identify themselves and others with the religious identity which they have followed via the role of cultural elements.

A lifestyle as the main signifier of religious cultural elements has a strategic power to justify the self identity. Lifestyle is the typical way of life of an individual or group in the paradigm of culture. The term was originally used by

Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler (1870-1937). Bernstein states that the term lifestyle was introduced in the 1950s as a derivative of that of style in modernist art.¹ A lifestyle typically reflects an individual's attitudes, values or world view. Therefore, a lifestyle is a means of forging a sense of self and to create cultural symbols that resonate with personal identity. Not all aspects of a lifestyle are voluntary. Surrounding social and technical systems can constrain the lifestyle choices available to the individual and the symbols he is able to project to others and the self.² Lifestyle may include views on politics, religion, health, intimacy, and more. All of these aspects play a role in shaping someone's lifestyle.

Postmodern scholars suggest that all people construct lifestyle as a cultural identity through an ongoing process that resembles the writing, reading and interpretation of a social text. From this view, people continually create and debate with each other about the meaning of all aspects of culture, such as words, performances and concepts. People in Muslim countries, for instance, have long debated over cultural issues such as what constitutes a family, what Muslim women's and men's roles in society should be, what kinds of Islamic lifestyle should be performed. Many anthropologists now study and write about these kinds of questions, even in their own societies.

The term lifestyle is, of course, a contested term with multiple meanings in various contexts and discourses. In the context of semiotics, lifestyle can be viewed as the sum of rule-governed, shared, learned and learnable, transmittable, symbolic activity used by a group in any given place and time. Lotman (1990) states that lifestyle as a manifestation of culture is the generator of structuredness and the

1 J.M. Bernstein (1991) Introduction, in Adorno (1991), p. 23; cf. Adorno (1991) *The Culture Industry - Selected essays on mass culture*

2 G. Spaargaren and B. van Vliet (2000) 'Lifestyle, Consumption and the Environment: The Ecological Modernisation of Domestic Consumption.' *Environmental Politics*. 9(1): 50-75.

nonhereditary memory of the community.¹ Meanings, values, significance circulate in second-order languages (symbols, values and images) that use both ordinary language (one's native language) and other sign-systems like visual images, mass media, and information technology. All these ways of transmitting shared and stored meanings involve a mediated content. To be in a culture means to be in preexisting but constantly changing sign-systems. This includes lifestyle and its relation with the Muslim culture and identity: values that come from advertising, the entertainment industry, the media, and icons of style and are targeted to the ordinary people in society. These values are distinguished, and at the same time, undistinguished from those espoused by more political, educational, or religious institutions.

Yet, in this context, the religious institutions have a role to create a discourse of the Islamic lifestyle as an identity marker via ground-setting training, and this mission is to build a society for preparing the owner of the future, for the appearance of the Islamic Messiah. Here, the ground-setting training on the Islamic lifestyle is a type of Islamic education that makes this Muslim society accept the requirements of the province and the role of the Messiah of Islam.

Muslim Lifestyle in the Light of Messianic Culture

Postmodern scholars suggest that all people construct lifestyle as a cultural identity through an ongoing process. In this context, the Muslims early constructed the lifestyle as a cultural identity through an ongoing process too, and they lead a lifestyle that is characterized by following God's

¹ Jurij M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, translated by Ann Shukman. London & New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1990, p. xiii. See also, Jurij M. Lotman; Uspenskij B.A.; Ivanov, V.V.; Toporov, V.N. and Pjatigorskij, A.M. (1975). "Theses on the Semiotic Study of Cultures (as Applied to Slavic Texts)" in Sebeok Thomas A. (ed.), *The Tell-Tale Sign: A Survey of Semiotics*. Lisse (Netherlands): Peter de Ridder, 1975, pp. 57-84.

commands in the Qur'an and the teachings of the prophet of Islam, doing good deeds for the benefit of the self, community and environment. The episteme of Islamic lifestyle as one of cultural identities, however, refers to the *textus receptus* and the aspects of Muslim lifestyle may be grouped under two wings. The first wing is adopting the five pillars of Islam. These five pillars are, in brief: (1) testimony that God is the One God and that Muhammad is God's Messenger, (2) praying, (3) paying specific compulsory charity, (4) fasting month of Ramadan, (5) performing *haji* by whom can afford it. The second wing is performing good deeds for sake of God and for gaining his mercy and satisfaction; among these deeds are: (1) keeping good relations with relatives, neighbours, friends, colleagues in work and all community people, (2) doing work with good quality and honesty, (3) respecting the old and be kind to the younger, (3) be humble to parents and kind to them, (4) helping the poor, the sick and all who needs help, (5) being honest and faithful, not gambling, not drinking alcohols, and not performing sex outside marriage and etc. These aspects of Islamic lifestyle, however, are the habits, attitudes, tastes, moral standards, economic level and etc., that together constitute the mode of living of an individual or group among the Muslims and this is a way of life or style of living that reflects the attitudes and values of a person or group. For performing the Muslim lifestyle in the first and the second wings, the religious institutions (*marja'iyah*) have a responsibility to lead the Muslim people through the guidance of Islamic law (*fiqh*) and the Islamic law itself is a manifestation of Islamic education in an ongoing process in the context of each own history and each own culture. In other words, religious institutions and the Islamic law are like a coin for manifesting the icon of Muslim lifestyle in the paradigm of Islamic education. Therefore, the Muslim lifestyle in the light of Islamic education is a way of living of individuals, families

(households), and societies, which they manifest in coping with their physical, psychological, social, and economic environments on a day-to-day basis through the Islamic law. Lifestyle in Islamic education is expressed in both work and leisure behaviour patterns in all activities, attitudes, interests, opinions, values, and allocation of income. It also reflects people's self image or self concept; the way they see themselves and believe they are seen by the others. Lifestyle is a composite of motivations, needs, and wants and is influenced by factors such as culture, family, reference groups, and social class.

Yet, these manifestations of Muslim lifestyle are based on proclaiming the belief on the existence of God and this idea has its relation with the ground setting for appearance of the expected one. On one hand, the believing is in fact ground setting for the expressing the Muslim lifestyle; and on other hand, the waiting is in fact ground setting for the appearance of the Mahdi (AS) and the mission of those who are waiting is to build an ideal society which is prepared for the appearance of the Mahdi (AS) as the Islamic Messiah. The ground setting training is a type of education that makes this type of society which fulfils the requirements of the province and the rule of the Holy Imam and its acceptance by individuals and society in general. The creating the Muslim lifestyle through the Islamic law and Islamic codes in the paradigm of ground setting education is no different from the Islamic education because its emphasis is placed on the role of Imam as in education. The principles emphasize the centrality of Imam and its centrality in matters of selection of the goals. Therefore, the ground setting training is a messianic manifesto to build an ideal society performing the global lifestyle in the domain of global ethics of Islam which is so-called messianic consciousness.

Messianic manifesto (Mahdism) as *ens realissimus* nowadays is, of course, a globally theological perspective to build up the new justice global order in the light of global ethics for expressing the global lifestyle for the coming era of happiness; it is further a spirit to fight against the tyranny of societal powers and cultural abuse. Obviously, the spirit

of Mahdism in Islam is to end the cultural riot and emptiness of humanness that is a messianic manifestation to end the collective violence in the world of capitalist globalization. The cultural riot is a cultural violence in the era of capitalist globalization through the *status quo* of quasi-religions, ideologies, and secretive languages. Mahdism which politically reflects the concept of 'expectation' is the secretive consciousness of culture within the global village to fight against the satanic cultural supremacy, injustice and the bad doers expansion among the righteous men. Therefore, the existence of the heavenly ancient writings that voices the messianic consciousness in the world is a significant document of a global village. This world which is a well-known cliché, however, is the house of the global society to embody the messianic consciousness for paving the ground of the coming of the global awaited savior; and the messianic culture is ground setting for the appearance of the Holy Imam through the ground setting education of those who are waiting is to build a society which is prepared for his coming. Thus, as a solution, we have to realize the use of messianic culture in the global societies to fight against the capitalist society through the role of media culture to inject the Muslim lifestyle globally. Therefore, the messianic culture indeed creates the future for performing the representation of religious symbols through the culture industry.

In the political studies, the concept of Mahdism, is the deepest spirit of Aryan/ Semitic religious political movement. As an Arabic term, Mahdism, has an equivalent with the messianism in the theological orientation of the West-Christianity. It also represents the political orientation of secular Western people to wait the golden era of capitalist globalization through a figure of messianic statesman. As the imitation of materialistic culture of the Latin Christianity which was historically derived from the Hellenic Christianity, the capitalist messianism of the West also

inherited the messianic mythology of Ancient Greek in the era of the renaissance. The Western capitalists adopted, adapted, and reformulated the Latin messianic idea in the paradigm of post-modernism, secularism, materialism, and then they used it to find the form of other messianic, that was, the capitalist global messianism to represent the matrix as the hegemonic cultural globalization. In the episteme of the West, one source of confusion is that the term 'messianic' has much wider range of meaning than Messiah. The term 'messianic' is usually applied to everything in the Bible when it refers to the hope of glorious future. This suggests that central feature of the coming golden era is the expectation of the global savior. But, that fact, is hotly debated, for in the minds of most scholars today, the oldest and most general expectation was for the coming era of happiness. Many scholars concerned to a messianic idea, only in much later times, according to this academic consensus, was the hope of the Messiah connected with this expectation.

Islamic Lifestyle, Technology and Media Culture

Islam and technology are like a couple; Islam is the spirit and technology is the tool, and in this context, Islamic lifestyle has a power in the light of the technology to promote and to expose the messianic culture. However, technology and diversity have greatly changed the lives of people in society. Technology has positive and negative effects on our daily lives. However, the positivity and negativity of technology depends on how much we use it and how much we are exposed to it. In other words, our lifestyle controls our use of technology, while technology influences our lifestyles. To begin, technology has changed the fields of agriculture, manufacturing, warfare, transportation, information, medicine, communication etc., among others. Technology has also made it easier for other

factors to affect our lifestyles, such as the media. All in all, technology has made our lives much easier therefore we no longer are required to live vigorous lifestyles that, in the past, contributed to the decline in our health. On the other hand, technology has complicated many lives and has many negative effects. Technology has the power to deliver media to us that can change our values and views on the world, which in return will change our lifestyles. Also, technology has negative effects on the environment such as pollution. Because of technology such as the computer and the television, Americans have a much more sedentary lifestyle which leads to health complications and issues.

Meanwhile, in cultural studies, media culture has a link with technology; and it refers to the current Western capitalist society that emerged and developed from the 20th century, under the influence of mass media. The term alludes to the overall impact and intellectual guidance exerted by the media (primarily TV, but also the press, radio and cinema), not only on public opinion but also on tastes and values. The alternative term mass culture conveys the idea that such culture emerges spontaneously from the masses themselves, like popular art did before the 20th century. The expression media culture, on the other and, conveys the idea that such culture is the product of the mass media. Another alternative term for media culture is image culture.¹ Media culture is often considered as a system centered on the manipulation of the mass of society. Corporate media are used primarily to represent and reproduce dominant ideologies. Prominent in the development of this perspective has been the work of Theodor Adorno since the 1940s. Media culture is associated with consumerism, and in this sense called alternatively consumer culture.

¹ A Giddens (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 35.

In Islamic point of view, the ground setting training/education for the appearance of the Mahdi of Islam, media culture is not considered as a system centered on the manipulation of society and to represent or reproduce dominant ideologies but it is indeed considered as a system centered on the enlightenment of society and to represent the messianic consciousness of the people on most general expectation which was for the coming era of happiness through the acceptance of global ethics of Islam to affect our lifestyles. This is a key element to create the Muslim lifestyle in the light of messianic culture whereas people always dream of better things with no social problems; and according to religious teachings when the savior as a manifestation of the messianic consciousness emerges the world will become full of all these better concepts. Furthermore, this messianic consciousness becomes an encouragement and motivation of Muslims to build society upholding justice, peace, and quality of life in unity and togetherness as well as overthrowing tyranny. The motivation, of course, must be an established spirit in waiting the presence of Imam Mahdi (AS).

Ground Setting Training

However, lifestyle as an identity marker can be transformed and presented in four pillars for ground setting training, and the religious institutions also play a crucial role to the efforts: (1) manifesting the messianic consciousness in Islamic education, (2) transferring the Islamic ideology and Islamic civilization in education, (3) integrating religious and general sciences, (4) training on the messianic culture via technology and media culture.

1. Manifesting the Messianic Consciousness in Islamic Education

Messianic consciousness as a mind-set of messianic culture is power, becoming the house of being of our

humanity. Even, the messianic consciousness itself is the real manifesto of our heavenly consciousness to believe the Absolute Being. This messianic consciousness in the viewpoint of Abrahamic faiths is surely a significant portion to represent a common ground of our belief in the scriptures. To create a new understanding of the Semitic scriptures on that consciousness is to make possible a new effect of that scriptures on us as the Abrahamic ancient writings. And to make possible a new effect is in turn to provide the conditions for rereading the Semitic culture that the writings reflected. To expose and question that complex of ideas about Mahdism as the episteme of messianic consciousness which exist in our society and are confirmed in the ancient writings is to make the system of power embodied in the sacred writings open not only to discussion even to change. Such questioning and exposure can, of course, be carried on only by a consciousness radically different from the one that informs that sacred literatures. Such a closed system can not be opened up from within but only from without. It must be entered into from a point of view which questions its values and assumptions and which has its investment in making available to consciousness precisely that which the divine literatures wish to keep hidden. Here, both textual criticism and historical criticism will provide that point and embody that messianic consciousness as '*ens realissimus*'. The messianic consciousness is a real consciousness as such in the *Reshit Da'at Sefat 'Eber* proclaiming about the appearance of the Messiah *par excellence* in the Jewish religious creed.¹

I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace be unto him, was true, and that he was the leader of the prophets, both of those preceded and of those that followed him.

I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah,

and though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming.

2. Transferring the Islamic Ideology and Islamic Civilization in Education

Ideology belongs also to one cultural aspect, because it is a product of the human creativity. It is a system of thought that becomes a principle providing the direction and the aim for the life of a society or a nation. Based on Biblical perspective and social activities, the West stands on apartheid and colonial ideologies. These ideologies can be traced its sources back from the Torah and Bible; and these ideas are theologically used to marginalize other races; so that why they think that the white race was the clever, chosen by God, whereas the black race was the lazy race, cursed by God.¹ The social violence either direct or indirect violence can be triggered out by an ideology. During the time of apartheid in the South-Africa, an ideology that had been developed at that time had claimed that the white race was superior, even, civilized race, whereas the black race was inferior, even uncivilized race. The episteme of Western ideology in the era of capitalist globalization to the Eastern civilization, especially Islam and Moslems, was exposed clearly by Edward Said, an Arab Christian in his book *Orientalism* (1978). In this book, the image of Orient and Islamic world have politically been constructed and reconstructed negatively by the West-Christianity through two colonial strategies; (i) the mission movement, the Westernized *volkscholen*, (ii) the political image to enrich the capital of the West. I think, in the era of post-colonialism, these colonial strategies become the seeds of violence among the Eastern men to understand the West and the Orientalism. Based on the apartheid ideology and colonial orientation, the West have been doing the acts of persecuting, beating, forcing and sending the East into many

¹ The Bible, Genesis 9:25-27

forms of 'slaveries' such as an economic slavery which was politically justified and legitimated by a such ideology. So, an ideology can become an instrument of justifying the act of violence or of legitimating the act of violence. During the era of capitalist global world, there was very dangerous ideology; and the facts have proved that this ideology have produced many acts of violence. It is the national ideology; namely militarism. The militarism contains a national ideology which followers glorify their clan, tribes, and nation. This own military group is paid to do violence for reaching the political purpose. Both examples can be taken out from the social riots in Iraq and Palestine. Based on democratic-capitalistic ideology, USA conquered Iraq in the name of democracy. Meanwhile, based on the Zionism, Israel imperialized Palestine to fight against terrorists. To minimize the ignorance of Western episteme about the East and Islam, Muslim intellectuals transferred the Islamic ideology to the West and promoted the Islamic civilization to them, even; they developed and enriched the Occidental Studies, such as the research of Hassan Hanafi about the roots of Western knowledge in *Occidentalism* (2001). They already created the dialogue among civilizations to marginalize the prejudice as an effect of clash of civilizations between the Western and Eastern, especially between the Hellenic Christianity and Islam, in the era of capitalist global world. The clash of civilizations is a cultural tragedy to represent an identity of politic as a superior cultural identity marker.¹ In this context, both have a common purposes to fight the matrix which represents the Western cultural hegemony in a paradigm of politic, because the matrix is a cultural process through the universalization of particularism, or to universalize the

¹ For further information about the theory of clash of civilizations, see Samuel P. Huntington (1996), *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*. New York: Simon and Schuster; and to criticize this theory, see Kaveh Afrasiabi, 'From Clash of Civilizations to Civilizational Parallelism', *Telos*, 1998.

capitalist cultural symbols through the process of globalization without the space to the other. One of the forms of capitalist industry is, of course, *Mc Donald*, etc. Nowadays, the matrix as a reference refers to the domination of Western secularization. In the mind-set of the West, both cultural politic and religion have exclusive characters; and they must be separated from each domain. I think, this matrix in the world of hegemonic globalization will not stop and end in era of capitalism because the spirit of matrix formula itself is to minimize the role of religion (theology) in the context of private space, and to maximize the cultural capitalism in the context of all aspects of the life to other cultures, step by step, through both exploited and westernized global cultural strategies; and these strategies politically can be applied by the Western capitalist states in the form of hegemonic global government.

3. Integrating Religious and General Sciences

Islamic institutions or religious institution have to develop the integrated sciences in the spirit of Islam. It is not to limit in the paradigm of Islamic sciences like *fiqh* (Islamic law), *kalam* (Islamic theology), *ulum al-Qur'an* and *ulum al-Hadits* etc., but also to develop in general sciences like medicine, pharmacy, architecture, politic, economy, etc. These integrated sciences will become an outstanding Islamic education in the paradigm of ground setting training. Obviously, this model will be a center of academic/intellectual excellence to develop and integrate the aspect of Islam, science, humanity, and Islamic values. The integrated education, however, is expected to strengthen the role of Islam institutions.

4. Training on the Messianic Culture via Technology and Media Culture.

The Western people identify themselves and others with the religious identity which they have followed via the role

of cultural elements and they represent themselves via the high technology and capitalist media culture. These cultural elements are used by the West to stigmatize Islam as the other, as an inferior civilization. To represent the Muslim culture towards the modernity and self-identity, the Muslims have to develop the high technology in peace and humanity, to educate the people in justice and brotherhood in the light of messianic consciousness: Also, the Muslims have to create the media culture in the spirit of Islam without rejecting the values of humanity and exploitation. In this context, the Muslim reinterpret the Western media culture in the paradigm of messianic culture via mass media for preparing the ground setting education to change their capitalist values in the global episteme. This messianic culture, however, is a humanistic view on the world, which in return will change the capitalist lifestyles in the light of Islam.

Conclusion

Lifestyle is a complexity of episteme, values, attitudes, performance and other cultural elements. The Muslim lifestyle represents the complexity of all elements in the paradigm of the ground setting for preparing the appearance of the Messiah of Islam, the 12th Holy Imam (AS). The one who realizes the messianic consciousness he will perform the messianic manifesto via the sign-systems like visual images, mass media, and information technology in the light of ground setting which is so-called the messianic culture. Therefore, in the ground setting training as a type of Islamic education, the Muslim lifestyle has four pillars to perform an Islamic identity marker: (1) manifesting the messianic consciousness in Islamic education, (2) transferring the Islamic ideology and Islamic civilization in education, (3) integrating religious and general sciences, (4) training on the messianic culture via technology and media culture.

Economics analysis of Teachers' Performance in Mahdism

**Perspective: An Empirical Estimation of Divine Capital
Model 2012.**

Syed Ali Abidi

ABSTRACT

A Hadith is well known in all Islamic schools of thought that in the era of Imam Mahdi Aft. Earth shall open all its treasures. This will not happen in an explosive manner. But all systems will work in a manner that a conducive environment shall be established for multidimensional development. In this context, it is evident that the teacher shall play the key role in developing manpower suitable for such developments. Using the Divine Capital Model (2012), this study investigates how teachers' productivity can be enhanced through increasing their spirituality, religiosity and ethical attributes. The Divine Capital Model claimed that worker's efficiency can be enhanced through increasing Divine Capital in the same way as by paying them efficiency wage. The analysis estimates empirical model by using primary data of Divine Economics Survey 2012 collected under multistage purposive convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire comprised of variety of

sections including economic, social, professional, religious and ethical dimensions of teachers. The Ethical dimensions were derived from famous supplication, "Mukaarim-ul-Akhlaq" and Values of Ashura. A sample of one hundred post graduate teachers was collected from Aazad Jammu & Kashmir University Muzaffarabad and from different colleges located within and outside Muzaffarabad city. Simple ordinary least square estimation technique was used to analyze the impact of ethical attributes on performance of the teacher. The overall evidence substantiates that ethics have strong impact on teachers' performance, a fact that has been neglected by conventional economics. An obvious implication of the study is to invest for high morals (Mukaarim-ul-Akhalq) of teachers. Doing this shall set the ground for the appearance of Imam Al-Mahdi a.s. The paper presents a number of policy suggestions as well as programs level interventions and training modules that can help in reforming the on-going destiny less education system prevailing in most of the Muslim countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation and Overview

Ethical theories have been very important in many of the famous economic theories. Bradley (1980) discussed the economic ideas of Henry George (1980) and their ethical implications. As he writes, "Religion is seen as inseparable from life, and basic for economics. Religion has also influence the importance of universal values (ethics) as it plays various roles in virtue ethics, deontological and teleological or consequentialist moral theories. Consequentialist theories are based on the idea that right actions are the actions that lead to a result that has universal value. Some utilitarian's, Jeremy Bentham for example, have argued that pleasure and pain are the only things that are of universal intrinsic value; that is, that pleasure and

pain are the only things that are valued for themselves, and other things are of value only because they produce pleasure or pain. Because utilitarians are consequentialists, this means that utilitarians who hold pleasure and pain to be the only things of universal value then argue that actions are right when they maximize pleasure and minimize pain, when everyone is considered equally” (Wikipedia, July 16, 2012; universal value). Hamdani (2002) wrote that religious orientation plays important role in shaping human perceptions about economic and non-economic activities.

From these and other sources, it becomes evident that a relationship exists among ethical, religious, spiritual and performance indicators. Keeping in view this potential relationship, recently a new model has been presented known as *Divine Capital Model* by Hamdani 2012. A later version is its mathematical extension by Hamdani and Meraj (2012), towards total factor productivity (TFP) analysis. These two works have paved the way for studying economics in the context of ethical and religious attributes, termed as *divine capital* in these studies.

The study Abidi 2013, “Impact of Divine Capital on Teachers’ Performance”, is an attempt to analyze the impact of divine capital on teachers’ efficiency and performance. The study has utilized an emerging framework of Divine economics introduced by Hamdani in various writings. This present study follows the framework of Divine economics using Ethics as one of the components of divine capital. It also includes literature from books on Hadiths by Prophet SAAW and His descendants especially covering *Dua-e-Mukarrim-ul-Akhlaq*¹ (pray for raising the ethics) which was educated by Hazrat Ali Zain-ul-Abedeem [39-95 H]².

1. This is one of the famous supplication (Dua) educated by Imam Ali Zain-ul-Abedeem and is available in Book Mufati-al-Jaanani, (1996, p;1162-1169).

2. Imam Ali bin Hussain known as Zain-ul-Abedeem (49-95 hijri) is grandchild of Imam Ali Ibn-e-Abi Talib and descendent of the Holy family of the Prophet SAAW according to one school of thought, he is 4th Imam and known for his piety, worship, truthfulness, patience and dignity even when in prison of cruel rulers.

Moreover, it covers divine revelations (Quranic Verses) on ethics, religiosity and spirituality to clear the concept of Divine capital and to deeply understand Divine economic framework, which provides analytical basis to study economics with faith pattern of any religion or sect hence also enables economic analysis in Mahdism perspective.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to extend literature on the following:

1. To outline a framework for analysis of teachers' performance in Mahdism doctrine.
2. To extend Divine Capital Model (2012) for studying the impact of ethical and Mahdavi attributes on teachers' performance.
3. To emphasize the role of ethical attributes in light of Madiviyat.
4. To put forward recommendations for improving teachers' performance in Madhism perspective.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter presents the review of existing literature on science of ethics and economics. Studies related to religion which have any direct or indirect linkage with performance of teacher are also included. Similarly some work related to spirituality which is relevant because of ethical importance is also highlighted. Latest works relating to economic performance of individual agents and some of the models relevant to the present work area are also critically evaluated. Teachers' Performance and Mahdiviyat are briefly explored.

Performance in Economic Literature

Performance has great importance in Mahdism perspective. It is narrated in numerous ahadeeth that he will appear when 313 Momin or 10000 Ansaar will be available

in the world. Who are these? One answer in present context is that these are people of high performance. They have higher knowledge and skills for worldly affairs and they also have higher knowledge and spiritual excellence. The relationship between performance and Mahdism as explained here leads us to promote our understanding about considering these topics together. In the paragraphs below, we shall discuss performance and its different aspects as viewed by various economists and other scholars. Then we shall relate it with Mahdism doctrine.

Performance of people has never been studied in economics with a view to Mahdavi revolution or its pre and post appearance era. However, performance of workers in general has been widely discussed in economic literature, although teachers' performance has not yet gained that much importance in economics as of general workers.

According to Scott (1983), efficiency and effectiveness are actually measures of performance just as productivity is equally a measure of performance. Hakala (2008) in his article, "16 ways of measuring employee performance" suggests different ways to measure employee performance which are as follows:

TABLE 1: WAYS TO MEASURE EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE

Quantity	Personal Appearance/Grooming
Quality	Manager Appraisal
Timeliness	Self-Appraisal
Absenteeism	Peer Appraisal
Creativity	Team Appraisal
Adherence to Policy	360-Degree or "Full-Circle" Appraisal
Gossip and other personal habits	MBO (Management by Objectives)
Cost-Effectiveness	Assessment Center

Source: Hakala (2008), "16 ways of Measuring Employees Performance"

It is not always necessary to attach words like Mahdism or Wilaya to show the relevance of different aspects of life and attributes. The Table above and the review of literature

below elaborate how performance is related to other variables. If we carefully look at those other attributes, we can easily understand the most of these attributes are in fact the attributes of Ansaraan of Imam (Ajj.) the society and organization in the era of Imam (Ajj.). In article Human Capital and Performance, according to Stiles and Kulvisaechana, important variable that can influence workers performance is Human Capital of a worker as it usually includes training, skills, behavior and knowledge. There is a lot of evidence that make obvious a positive relation between the development of human capital and organizational performance. The emphasis on human capital in organizations reflects the view that market value depends less on tangible resources, but rather on intangible ones, particularly human resources. The study asserts that organization must provide an encouraging environment in which knowledge can be created, shared and applied and through capacity building of their workers so that the worker can perform well by efficiently using his skills which can later boost up the economic activity. They say that organization has to pull up the skills and capabilities of its employees by encouraging and educating their workers. Human capital itself generally referred to as Intellectual Capital, whereas, these three are the key components of intellectual capital. For Nahapiet & Ghoshal (1998), intellectual capital refers to the 'knowledge and knowing capability of a social collectivity, such as an organization, intellectual community, or professional practice' (1998:245). In one study, Gratton & Ghoshal (2003) argue that intellectual capital is part of human capital, that is, human capital subsumes intellectual capital, and also includes within it social capital and emotional capital. Nahapiet et al., (1998) said that social capital can increase the efficiency of an action, and promotes co-operative behavior. The principal role of organizational capital is to link the resources of the organization together into process

that creates value for customers and sustainable competitive advantage for the firm (Dess & Picken 1999). Itami (1987) wrote that the human capital in a real sense is an 'invisible asset'. Human capital is generally consist of the individual's capabilities, knowledge, skills and experience of the company's employees and managers, as well as the capacity to increase knowledge, skills, and experience through individual learning (Dess & Picken,1999).

Schwartz (1987) has carried out empirical research to investigate whether there are universal values, self-respect, Hedonism, creativity; freedom; independence; curiosity, inner harmony, Benevolence and others (discussed below). Schwartz defined has 'values' as "conceptions of the desirable that influence the way people select action and evaluate events". He hypothesized that universal values would relate to three different types of human need: biological needs, social co-ordination needs, and needs related to the welfare and survival of groups. Benjamin Friedman (2004) demonstrates, as societies grow richer their views of what is ethical change as well.

Schwartz's (1987) results from a series of studies that included surveys of more than 25,000 people in 44 countries with a wide range of different cultural types suggest that there are fifty-six specific universal values and ten types of universal value. Schwartz's ten types of universal value are: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security. Below is each of the value types, with the specific related values alongside:

1. **Power:** Authority; Leadership; Dominance.
2. **Achievement:** Success; Capability; Ambition; Influence; Intelligence; Self-respect.
3. **Hedonism:** Pleasure; Enjoying life.
4. **Stimulation:** Daring activities; Varied life; Exciting life.
5. **Self-direction:** Creativity; Freedom; Independence; Curiosity; Choosing your own goals.

6. Universalism: Broadmindedness; Wisdom; Social justice; Equality; a world at peace; a world of beauty; unity with nature; protecting the environment; inner harmony.

7. Benevolence: Helpfulness; Honesty; Forgiveness; Loyalty; Responsibility; Friendship.

8. Tradition: Accepting one's portion in life; Humility; Devoutness; Respect for tradition; Moderation.

9. Conformity: Self-discipline; Obedience.

10. Security: Cleanliness; Family security; National security; Stability of social order; Reciprocation of favors; Health; Sense of belonging. Schwartz also tested an eleventh possible universal value, 'spirituality', or 'the goal of finding meaning in life', but found that it does not seem to be recognized in all cultures.

11. Spirituality: It is a value about which Schwartz was not clear whether is a universal value or not.

Teacher performance has been analyzed in various ways, for example, in terms of teacher's qualification and teachers' competence (Akinwumiju, 1995). According to Adeyemi (2007), teacher performance could also be examined in terms of teacher's status, teachers' teaching experience and teacher's dedication to duty. Another said; teacher competence is a function of teacher qualifications (Aghenta, 2000). This was also supported by Mullen (1993); he argued that the prime predictor for pupils' learning is the level of a teacher's subject matter competence and further illustrated that along with teacher qualification subject matter competence is also necessary for better learning of pupils. Teachers' integrity seems to be another variable of teacher quality and performance in the education system. Academic integrity has been defined as the dignity which an individual exhibits in the pursuit of academic knowledge (Beehr, 1996; McCabe, 2001). Others have Glasner (2002) and Obi (2004) described it as the prestige of oneself in his or her educational activities. As such, how a teacher conducts himself or herself effectively in a educational

system is a function of his or her integrity (Chandon 2000; Uyo, 2004).

John Clark (2004) in his article, “The Ethics of Teaching and the Teaching of Ethics” wrote that teachers’ work covers many things: ethics is one of them. According to him ethics is a set of principles and rules which serve disciplinary purposes. So far teachers are engaged in one of the most ethically demanding jobs, educating the young people; thus it is that teachers’ responsibility to ensure ethics in their own work and behavior to make sure that their work and behavior reveals the most excellent ethical example to those whom they are morally teaching. Clark (2004) also mentioned that what a beginning teacher needs to know about ethics and the ethics of teaching he says over a four week period he cover the following:

1. Social ideals, institutional values and the ethical teacher: codes of ethics and ethical theories.
2. Understanding teacher-student relationships: respect for persons, impartiality, inequality, trust, privacy, confidentiality, cooperation and competition.
3. Tensions in teacher-student relationships: rights, student freedom and autonomy and teacher authority, discipline and punishment.
4. Pedagogical issues: equality and grouping students, intellectual liberty and curriculum censorship, fairness and assessment, evaluation and appraisal of students.

Performance in Religious’ Perspective

Since all religions give stress on better performance of the followers in both life contexts, the concept of performance has been directly or indirectly addressed in religions’ literature. In Islam, there is an extremely high importance attached to ‘performance’. In Shiite faith, an additional emphasis is laid down on ‘human excellence’ [Kamaal-e-Insaan]. The elements contained in the Divine Capital Model such as religiosity, spirituality and morality are well

mentioned in all religious and spiritual texts which are essential requirements of *Kamaal-e-Insaan*. This is so because it is likely that the more the person is religious; his performance will be better because of divinely ordained acts or qualities of the faithful person or *Momin*.

The Holy Quran says,

“Whoever does right, whether male or female, and is a believer, we will make him live a good life, and we will award them their reward for the best of what they used to do” (Quran, 16:97).

In light of above verse, we can say an individual who has done right, God will bless him with reward, if an individual is teacher and he enters in class without preparing a lecture than definitely he will be more likely to be punished by God any time in any way. However, such punishment may be notable within this world or in after world. This teaching can be effective for the teacher's motivation for better performance.

The verses given below show what is desired by God by sending Prophet (SAAW & his Progeny). The teaching is said to be prophetic profession hence a teacher has the same responsibilities.

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٢:١٢٩)

"O our Sustainer! Raise up from the midst of our off spring an apostle from among themselves, who shall convey unto them Thy messages, and impart unto them revelation as well as wisdom, and cause them to grow in purity: for, verily, Thou alone art almighty, truly wise!"¹ (2:129).

١. لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ (٣:١٦٤)

“Indeed, God bestowed a favor upon the believers when he raised up in their midst an apostle from among themselves, to convey His messages unto them, and to cause them to grow in purity, and to impart unto them the divine writ as well as wisdom - whereas before that they were indeed, most obviously, lost in error” 3:164

The Holy Prophet (PBUH & His Progeny) said,

“If a person is able to know about the high value of ethics (Hussn-e-Khulq), then he would also know that he is dependent of ethics” Zadi (2009, pp 293, Pillars of Humanity).

The above hadiths indicates that ethics are so highly valuable that the individual success in life is dependent on ethics. In our case the individual is a teacher who is considered to be a role model by his students therefore, ethics become even more valuable for a teacher and as per hadiths the performance of the teacher can be considered as much more dependent on teachers’ ethics.

How ethics affect teachers’ performance can be judge from this saying of the Fourth Caliph Imam Ali (ES),

“Hussn-e-Aklaaq means three things;

1. To avoid illegitimate (Haraam)
2. To always search for lawful/allowed (Hallal)
3. Generously spending on family” Zadi (2009, pp 296).

Since to avoid illegitimate and search for lawful are the attributes of the ethics under this hadiths, therefore any teacher who is more ethical in this sense must be more hardworking and must not be work shirking.

A successful teacher will be the one who possesses a set of values which are bases of success, another hadiths from the same source tells us that,

“If we do not aspire for paradise or fear for hell or possibility of reward and punishment, even then it was necessary for us to adopt best ethics because these guide us towards success” Zadi (2009, pp 297).

Under conventional economics framework human struggle revolves around maximization of utility, production, revenue, profit etc the word ‘*Rizq*’ in Arabic, represents all these things and such other things which are off value to human being under given time and situation. The conventional economics however ignores that maximization of production or profits or material benefits

does not necessarily guarantee the provision of satisfaction in human life whereas the Divine economics indicates that material and non material factors can increase the satisfaction. Zadi (2009) in his book *Pillars of Humanity* writes that Imam Ali (ES) said, “Sustenance can be enhanced through *Hussn-e-Akhlaaq*”.¹

Teachers' role in Mahdivi Education

Teacher is basically a preacher, a guide [haadi], who leads others to the right path, who forwards knowledge, who refines the behavior of a person. As teaching is a prophetic profession so a teacher must possess the qualities which are revealed by Divine religions and are particularly emphasized as essential qualities of *Ansaraan*. When a teacher knows the attributes which have been preached by Holy prophet and his progeny and apply practically to his self and upon his students then there is chance that a society is formed which is more pious.

It is clear from verse² of Quran that the Holy Book is the only book in world which explains each and every matter of life, the way of living life and warns people of what they are doing whether right or wrong. The Holy Quran is only the only book where a person finds way of hidden treasures of earth and sky.

Imam Ali Raza a.s said,

“If a person wants to meet Imam (Mahdi) he should be reading fifty verses of Holy Quran with understanding in day and night”

The above saying of Imam Ali Raza a.s is self explanatory that one should read Quran with understanding as Quran is universal book for all and explains each and every aspect of life. It is the Quran which preaches over

1. Another hadiths from same source mentions, “Treasures of sustenance can be found in extent of ethics” Zadi (2009, pp 300).

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

2. “And we have sent down to you the Book explaining all things” Quran, Nahl, Ayah 89

Ethics. It is the Quran which teach the behavior for living the life of success.

When a teacher study Quran with understanding it means he has developed interest in Quran and when he teach a class he is more likely to explain and teach the course in Quranic perspective which will more likely to bring change in the behavior and attitude of his pupil.

Ethics plays an important role in shaping human behavior and attitude. If a teacher possesses and practice high ethical attributes than his pupil are more likely to groom in a more ethical manner. Moral values are diverse here we take few of them to explain the role of ethics under Madhiviyat perspective.

Piety

Piety is the first leader which gradually takes the person near to Allah Almighty. Unfortunately the present society teacher education has lack this core Islamic value which cause a serious disturb in the society. The upset in our society is due to lack of piety. No lectures are there in class rooms of a secular education school of Muslim society only western education circular is being studied. Although Islamiyat and a part from Islamic history is included which is not much enough. In the present era if a teacher in a system of secular education not pious than how his pupil can understand piety and practice piety as this generation may see the revival of Imam Mahdi (Ajj.) than the system of education prevailing lack the value of piety which will cause its pupils' religiosity, spirituality and morality at lower level. A teacher when follows *SUNA* of Prophet SAAW then must consider the saying of Messenger of Allah

“Have *TAQWA* (Fear) of Allah [Be pious] wherever you may be, and follow up a bad deed with a good deed which will wipe it out, and behave well towards the people”. (at-Tirmidhee)

When the generation grows pious it will more likely to bring well being in the society as 'religious orientations plays an important role in shaping human perception and behavior' [Hamdani 2002]. Although we all love being humble, if there is one group of people who should be well known for their piety besides religious scholars – that's Madressa teachers. The bare minimum requirement of every Madressa teacher is that they ensure we fulfill all our obligations (*Wajibaat*) and refrain from intentionally committing any sins. Why? Because the young children look up to us, and if we only practice the areas of Islam that we teach and are careless towards other then students will perceive this behavior as acceptable and won't take long to emulate it. As Imam Ali (peace be upon him) said,

"Verily, the heart of a youngster is like an empty plot of land – it accepts whatever is planted therein." (Tuhaf al-Uqul)

In the present era before the reappearance of Holy Imam, the core moral value is not much higher. In the Kingdom of Holy Imam as there is just and peace there is also piety [fear of God]. Haq, Zahul said, only pious people will be able to recognize Imam Mahdi (Ajj.), this is indicative of the fact that his leadership will be based on *Taqwa*.

Truthfulness

Truthfulness is a matter of such supreme consequence in Islam that in addition to speaking the truth always a Muslim is exhorted also to keep company only with those that are truthful. The Quran states:

“O ye who believe! Fear God and be only with those who are true (in words and deed).”(IX: 119)

The above teaching of Quran teaches for the right words and deeds and warns that fear God. The verse is another path to attain the next maximum level of spirituality and morality which should be higher in a teacher who teaches knowledge and advice for the right path.

Says the Prophet:

“He who wishes to love God and His Apostle, or wishes God and His Apostle to love him, must take care to speak nothing but the truth whenever he speaks”.

Justice

Justice is an integral part of Islamic ethics. We must practice it in all spheres of life. The Quran states:

"God commands justice and doing of good" (XVI : 19)

There is no doubt that Imam Mahdi (Ajj.) will reappear to restore justice and equality throughout the earth

Nrrated by Abu Sa'id al Khudris:

I heard the prophet declare from the pulpit: ‘The Mahdi... will fill the earth with justice and equity, as it is filled with tyranny and injustice’. [Bihar al-Anwat Vol.51, p74]. Justice is a universal value that is distinguished between the government of Imam (Ajj.) and other forms of government. This value cannot be promoted without a very effective role of teacher.

3. Methodology and Data

Abidi 2013 used Divine capital Model 2012 which is a part of newly emerging sub-discipline called Divine Economics. The framework of Divine Economics was elaborated in working papers and a series of papers in scientific journals or presented at international forums including Harvard University USA, PIDE and a number of universities in Pakistan. A number of scientific papers based on Divine Economic theory have been presented to Doctrine of Mahdism Conference Tehran during 2005 and 2012. Based on these studies, many surveys were conducted including Divine Economics Survey Series starting from year 2000 to 2013. As already mentioned, the present study is the empirical extension of Divine Capital Model 2012 using Divine Economics Survey 2013.

The Divine Capital Model

As mentioned in the beginning that the present study extends the Divine Capital Model 2012 to design a framework that may analyze teachers' productivity enhancement through increasing their spirituality, religiosity and ethical attributes which has great relevance and importance for pre and post period of Imam Mahdi's appearance. The DC Model claimed that worker's efficiency can be enhanced through increasing Divine Capital in the same way as by paying them efficiency wage. Here we start with a model from the conventional growth literature, the labor augmented production function with Cob-Douglas specification. Later we shall see how it can be transformed for incorporation of Mahdavi attributes contained in DC Model 2012. The section below heavily draws from the earlier study by Abidi [2013]:

$$Y = K^{\alpha}(AL)^{\beta} \quad (1)$$

Where,

Y = Units of output

K = Units of capital

L= Units of Labor

A= Effectiveness of a worker (measured by skills, training and knowledge).

K is assumed to be fixed. There are different categories of capital like physical capital; which includes all available resources for teaching in class or for the purpose of research or self study at job desk are same in nature; however quantity differs, for each teacher. For simplicity, for example, institute building, photocopy machine, free printing and others.

The Divine Capital Model (2012) hypothesizes that Total Factor Productivity (TFP) is also affected by the divine attributes (i.e. ethics, spirituality, and religiosity) of workforce. The attributes originating from ethics, spirituality and religiosity, termed as *Divine Capital* in Hamdani (2012), make the workers systematically different

from their counterparts hence it is quite likely to systematically affect the worker's output and economic growth. Hence, in this essence the augmented production function is presented as;

$$Y = K^{\alpha}(ADL)^{\beta} \quad (2)$$

Where 'D' denotes divine capital.

The main focus of this study is to analyze the impact of ethics on worker's performance. So we use ethics as a component or proxy to Divine Capital. In the famous book of prayers "*Mufati-ul-Janan*", a pray has been included which highlights the importance of ethics. This prayer is named as *Dua-e-Mukaarim-ul-Akhlaaq* (pray for raising the ethics). A number of ethical values mentioned in this *Dua* are elaborated in the book, the Values of Ashura (*Aqdar-e-Ashura*), which can be broadly classified as *universal values* [values that are independent of religion, sect, race, culture and other aspects of humans but are in-built in human].

Keeping in view these ethical values and their importance for human conduct and performance, the above equation 2 can be written as follows;

$$Y = K^{\alpha}(AEL)^{\beta} \quad (3)$$

Where 'E' denotes ethical attributes such as Commitment, Cooperation, Courage, Patience, Responsibility, Self integrity and Trust. A is training, skills, knowledge and now AE are collectively A*. A* is also effectiveness of labor (Knowledge + Skills + Training + Divine capital (E)).

Ethical Attributes in Mahdsim Perspective

The empirical result of the study Abidi 2012 shows that Ethical attributes affects performance of a worker in one way or other. The one who is more committed to his work is more likely become the part of the work force in era of Imam Mahdi (Ajj.). Because Imam shall prefer people for his team who are more committed to their responsibilities, are best experts of their fields and are more noble in character. They have more patience which brings

contentment in the society. As Allah says in Quran *In Allah a Ma as sbeeren*, our Holy Imams have taught how to stay patient in hard times. A teacher should address his class in pure Islamic perspective. For this he has to show patience so that in presence of hard time, a student is able to be patient. If he is equipped with this quality, he can use his brain in planning for the best and fighting against any *Dajjal* of the time.

Empirical Model

At present, only a negligible empirical work on Mahdism is available. The section below is presented as a humble contribution in the form of research for ground-settings before the reappearance of Imam Mahdi (Ajj.).

The following baseline model is estimated using primary data in Abidi (2013).

Teacher performance (TP) is the function of Income (I), Demographic variables i.e. age, gender, marital status and others, Education (Edu), Health (H), Experience (Exp), Class size (CS) and Ethical values (E).

$$TP = f(I, Demo, Edu, E, Exp, CS, H)$$

$$TP_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 I_i + \beta_2 Demo_i + \beta_3 Edu_i + \beta_4 E_i + \beta_5 Exp_i + \beta_6 CS_i + \beta_7 H_i + \varepsilon_i$$

In the formation of the model as we know we are required with mainly economic variables, demographic and other variables and variable of interest. In our model Income is introduced as economic variable. Age, composition, marital status and health entered with expected positive signs as demographic variables. Education and experience with expected positive sign enter in model as human capital variable. Class size is other variable. Ethics with expected positive sign enter in the model as Divine capital variable. As the variables included in the study are in continuous form so the study used simple linear regression technique "Ordinary Least Square (OLS)" for estimating our model.¹

1. The method of OLS is attributed to Carl Friedrich Gauss, a German mathematician. Under

Bloom's Taxonomy and the Mahdism Doctrine

Efficiency of teacher can be measured by a number of attributes and characteristics which should prevail in good teachers. A famous theory in education known as Bloom's Taxonomy named after Benjamin Bloom (1948) can be used to develop an index. Bloom developed classifications of intellectual behavior and learning in order to identify and measure learning. The taxonomy is surprisingly relevant in perspective of Mahdism as it provides parameters and technique to measure who is a good teacher. Since, among teachers, only those will be included in the Imam's team who are the best in profession and piety. Hence Bloom taxonomy parameters for measuring knowledge, skills and behaviors can be used to rank teachers for their closeness to Imam a.j. in addition to their faith in Imam and will to support him.

Questionnaire

As already mentioned that D.E Survey - 2012 close ended questionnaire was adopted in the form of printed Performa having 29 questions. This questionnaire was divided into different Sections (A-H). Section F and section H were the key sections of this questionnaire. Section A of the questionnaire comprises of general information about the interview. Section B includes demographic information. Section C covers level of education of respondent, his general and religious education in year and technical education which includes teacher training workshops in weeks. Section D is about Work Life of respondent. Section E and F cover health and efficiency index that was developed by using education domain i.e. knowledge, skills and behavior. Since Divine model also claims that there is also another domain i.e. Reinforcement, a fourth component

certain assumptions the method of least square has some very attractive statistical properties that have made it one of the most powerful and popular method of regression analysis [Gujarati, Basic Econometrics (2003)].

of Divine Capital. Section G was about time allocation pattern where we computed time allocation of work, family, religious and leisure time of teacher. The conventional economists tried a variety of models to estimate the relationship between wages and time allocated to market labor supply but found that results mostly not close to the real world situation [Deaton (1980)] whereas, divine economics claims that this is because of not including different variables of religion which affect on a time allocation of a worker for job time, leisure time, family time and religious time [Hamdani (2012)].

The Mahdism Doctrine is covered in Section H i.e. Divine capital index i.e. ethical values index which was based on the values identified from the famous supplication known as *Dua-e-Mukarim-ul-Akhlaaq* and *Values of Ashura*. Furthermore, the religious resources like Mufati-al-Jaanan, (1996, pp; 1162-1169) was also used for finding the values.

4. Empirical Findings and Discussion

We have tested different models using OLS estimation technique which are given in table 4.3 below

Table 2: Empirical Findings Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Age	0.443 (0.047)*	0.431 (0.048)*	0.406 (.059)*	0.431 (0.047)*
Class size	0.022 (0.846)	-----	-----	-----
Ethical values index	0.321 (0.005)*	-----	.305 (0.005)*	-----
Interactive GE, Ethics	-----	0.329 (0.003)*	-----	-----
Log Income	-----	-----	-.168 (.190)	-----
Monthly Income	-0.290 (0.048)*	-0.271 (0.39)*	-----	-.315 (0.017)*
Religious education	0.167 (0.319)	0.181 (0.103)**	.211 (0.058)*	-----
Sex	-0.153 (0.176)	-0.145 (0.180)*	-----	-----
Teaching experience	-0.557 (0.007)*	0.550 (0.006)*	-.545 (0.007)*	-.540 (0.007)*
Technical education	0.057 (0.629)	-----	-----	-----

Variables	Model_1	Model_2	Model_3	Model_4
Interactive GE, RE, Ethics	-----	-----	-----	.332 (0.003)*
R ²	0.25	0.25	0.21	0.20
Adjusted R ²	0.15	0.19	0.16	0.17
S.E	11.50	11.29	11.40	11.44

Note: *, **, *** shows significance level at 1%, 5% and 10% respectively. Source: Abidi (2013)

Empirical Evidence on Teacher Performance and Mahdism

Proposition: “Other things held constant, individual or teacher having more ethical attributes, shall perform more effectively or efficiently as compared to those whose ethical index is low”.

The above Table shows that in both models 3 and 4, the ethical values significantly affect the teachers’ performance. Ethics have an interactive effect also. This is evident from the sign and significance of the variables GE, and Ethics and GE, RE and Ethics.

On this basis, a **New Proposition** is put forward here:

“Other things held constant, individual or teacher having faith in early appearance of the awaited Savior, shall display ethical behavior in a systematically different manner”

This proposition can be tested using the methodology and data type used in the present paper.

Concluding remarks

The paper concludes that the Divine Capital as single determinant or an interactive factor with general and religious education positively affects teacher’s performance. From this conclusion, it is justifiably inferred that the individual or teacher having faith in early appearance of the awaited Savior, shall perform even better because this faith serves as deep motivation force. The conclusions based on the empirical evidence suggest that ethics which are neglected in conventional economics have positive and significant effect on teachers’ performance. This implies that improving teacher performance through conventional method is essential but not sufficient for a comprehensive

and holistic improvement in teachers' performance. It requires ethical education of teacher. Therefore, it is recommended that sufficient resources should be allocated for ethical education, training and motivation of teachers which will assist in ground setting for early appearance.

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