



*Research Paper*

## **Analysis and Critique of Foundations of "Education on Religion" approach versus "Religious Education" with emphasis on Mulla Sadra's Religious Education Model**

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Received: 2020-07-22

Accepted: 2021-02-05

### **Abstract**

**Aim:** The study aims at using the analytical, critical, and deductive method to analyze the philosophical foundations of the attitude based on the theories of Mulla Sadra. Accordingly, the study has analyzed the three basic foundations of the approach including excessive humanism, religious pluralism, and the unprovability of religious propositions, and was then analyzed based on the philosophical foundations of Mulla Sadra. The results obtained from this study revealed that the "teaching about religion" approach is distorted in terms of foundation, and can't be an appropriate model to meet the needs of a human being to spirituality. Also, it is unreasonable to prescribe that for the educational system of Iran

**Keywords:** *Religious education, Teaching about religion, Teaching religion, Mulla Sadra*

### **Introduction**

This study aims at identifying and analyzing the foundations of education on religion. For identification and analysis of the foundations of this approach, the thinking and philosophical streams shall be analyzed. The approach was created in 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the field of science and thinking in the west and is analyzed by Mulla Sadra's religious education model.

The foundations of "teaching about religion"

Excessive humanism: the "teaching about religion" approach can be extracted from excessive humanism. Among the pro-humanism people, the foundation and the ultimate goal of a human shall be searched in the people. In their opinion, God is only a symbol of man's superior self (Fromm, trans. Javid, 2008: 201).

Religious pluralism: in the theory of Hick, the nature of religion is changing human beings, and the religious teachings are the derivatives. Overemphasis on religious educations should not cause negligence of the nature of the religion. Hick shows functionalist reactions to religious educations so that religious educations are useful and honest until the time that it can be employed by the nature of religion (Hick, 2003).

Meaninglessness and unprovability of religious propositions: the issue of meaninglessness and unprovability of religious propositions in the framework of empiricist philosophies. Undoubtedly, such attitude toward religious propositions was begun from the time that the "Philosophers of the Vienna Circle" regarded empirical investigability as the criterion to prove the propositions (Macquarie, 2009).

### **The foundations of Mulla Sadra's religious education**

Divine humanism: Mulla Sadra regards the knowledge of self as a basis for many other fields of knowledge, and also believes that identification of self can guarantee the recognition of God (Mulla Sadra, 1360: 132). Mulla Sadra's humanism is opposed to considering human beings in place of God. According to Mulla Sadra, the freedom of human beings is dependent on belonging to the source and origin of the existence (the Almighty God).

Human's divine nature: all people are in a special existential relationship with the origin and source of perfections and goodness, and the relationship appears in special moments. Mulla Sadra believes that this kind of relationship between humans and God is originated from divine nature, which is placed like a human. In his view, material affiliations of humans and entrapment in the body are similar to bubbles, which prevent the actualization of the divine nature of human (Mulla Sadra, 2003: 428).

The natural movement and desire for ultimate perfection: Mulla Sadra believes that all living things, especially humans, are a level of divine blessings and desire for perfection. They need extended unit truth, which has covered whole existence. Hence, the desire for the total origin and ultimate

destination is one of the innovative theories of Mulla Sadra on the existing world and human, which is presented under the title of natural movement.

## **Methodology**

The methods used in this study include analytical, critical, and deduction methods. Each method is used due to the research questions and based on the function of each of them in different phases of the research.

## **The analysis of the " Religion about Education" approach based on Mulla Sadra's educational foundations**

The pluralism that is evident in the thinking field of Mulla Sadra, believes that religious education should look at all religions with respect. Religious educations should consider peaceful behavior, along with tolerance of followers of other divine religions as the heading of their teachings. Besides, this kind of pluralism believed by Mulla Sadra based on Islamic Thinking believes in rescuing the majority of people, even those with no way to religion (the ignorant).

The issue of meaningfulness and provability are two different categories, which are considered the same in positivist attitude, and this is wrong. Meaningfulness refers to the rational relationship between the subject and predicate of a proposition; although provability refers to the accuracy of sources of knowledge and their reality (Chalmers, trans. Zibakalam, 2018). With reliance on foundations such as originality of existence, the originality of existence, the skepticism of existence, the abstraction of the soul, and natural movement, Mulla Sadra believes that knowledge is a field of existence.

Another type of humanism is offered by Mulla Sadra by inspiration of Islamic thinking and the theory of natural movement. According to the theory, the dignity of humans is depended on the amount of similarity to the creator of the existence and understanding the divine caliph position of humans. Accordingly, humans should not destroy the spiritual dignity of other humans. According to Mulla Sadra, real freedom is that kind of freedom, which releases humans from the limitations of material life and opens the gate of perfection for human beings. Submission to the divine will is not only regarded as a disruptor of freedom in view of Sadra but also, he believes that falling in divine love is the highest degree of freedom.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The "Religion about Education " approach was established with reliance on the weak foundations, which used to encountering many criticisms in their origin. The approach can be performed neither in Iran nor in the educational systems of the majority of states not only in terms of foundations but also in terms of function.

The most underlying limitation in this study was the lack of relevant studies in this field and negligence of the challenge associated with education on religions for the religious education in Iran. It seems that the educational authorities in Iran pay no specific attention to this issue. The study recommends taking religious education with avoiding compulsion, tolerance, and improper indoctrination to educate peaceful living, respecting beliefs of other religions, paying attention to human dignity, training the thinking way, and providing conditions for spiritual line, and awakening the divine desire in the students.

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