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**Toward an Islamic Model of  
Culture & Values Development:  
A Study of Sadr's Theory**

**By:  
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**Department of Culture & Values in Education**

**McGill University, Montreal  
January, 1999**

**A thesis submitted to the Faculty of  
Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of requirements  
of the degree of Doctor of philosophy**

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

## Foreword

This project is the outcome of an ad hoc research project utilizing an interdisciplinary method and relying on concepts from education, sociology and Islamic studies. In its socio-educational aspects I have received guidance from an advisory committee based in the Department of Culture and Values in Education, while as regards the Islamic aspect supervision was provided by a faculty member in the Institute of Islamic Studies.

Since this thesis contains many Arabic and Persian terms and expressions, I have employed the transliteration scheme for these two languages found in the ALA-LC *Romanization Tables: Transliteration Schemes for Non-Roman scripts* (1991), approved by the Library of Congress and the American Library Association. The two following tables represent this transliteration scheme for both the Arabic and Persian languages. For convenience sake, the names of Persian and Arabic authors who are frequently referred to are not fully transliterated, except when they are first mentioned. The complete transliterated form (Arabic or Persian) is presented in the bibliography.

Translations of the Qur'ānic verses in this dissertation are based on those of Yusuf Ali (*The Qur'ān*, 1995) and M.H. Shakir (*The Qur'ān*, 1991). Sometimes a combination of these two versions is provided. I have made some alterations wherever I have felt it to be more appropriate. These instances are mentioned in the footnotes. My Persian newspaper references are to electronic versions available on the internet,<sup>1</sup> for which fuller information may be found in the bibliography. My references to *al-Mġān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (the commentary on the Qur'ān written by S.M.H. Ṭabāṭabā'ī) and other major Islamic sources like *Biḥār al-Anwār*

*(Oceans of Lights)* are also available on the Noor software (CD) provided by the Computer Research Center for Islamic Sciences, Qum, Iran.

---

<sup>1</sup> These newspapers are available on the internet at: <http://www.neda.net> or [irna.com](http://www.irna.com).

# Arabic

Letters of the Alphabet	Romanization
ا	a - 'a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	ḍ
ط	t
ظ	ẓ
ع	<sup>c</sup> (ayn)
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
هـ	h
و	w
ي	y-I

## Vowels and Diphthongs (Arabic & Persian)

اَ	a	(آ) اَ	ā - Ā
اِ	i	(ای) یِ	ī - Ī
اُ	u	(او) وِ	ū - Ū

# Persian

Letters of the Alphabet	Romanization
ا - آ	a - 'a
ب	b
پ	p
ت	t
ث	s
ج	j
چ	ch
ح	h
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	z
ر	r
ز	z
ژ	zh
س	s
ش	sh
ص	s
ض	z
ط	t
ظ	z
ع	<sup>c</sup> (ayn)
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ک	k
گ	g
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	v
ه - ة	h
ی	y-i

(reproduced from ALA-LC Romanization Tables 1991, 4 & 145)

## **Abbreviations**

Throughout this project I have utilized certain abbreviations to represent particular terms or titles. The following are the ones most commonly encountered:

ALA-LC	American Library Association & Library of Congress
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
EDRS	ERIC <sup>2</sup> Document Reproduction Service
HDR	Human Development Report
HEA	Higher Education Advisory of the Islamic Republic of Iran
IKITR	Imām Khumainī Institution of Teaching & Research
IRPHE	Institute of Research and Planning for Higher Education
ISSJ	International Social Science Journal
Q.	The Holy Qur'ān
S.M.B. Sadr	Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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<sup>2</sup> ERIC represents Educational Resources Information Center: A bibliographic database sponsored by the US Department of Education is the premier source for education - related research, documents, and journal articles.

## **Acknowledgments**

It would have been impossible to complete this research project without the full support of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I owe a great debt to all those who founded and have striven to maintain the Islamic environment in Iran which facilitates and provides educational opportunities to students of any background. I am only one among the many other students who have been enabled to pursue their studies abroad in order to obtain greater knowledge and more up-to-date expertise. I hope that this national investment in human development, along with the greater domestic one, will provide sufficient and skilled human resources for the country, enabling her to cope with the challenges she must face in building an Islamic model of development and social change.

I would especially like to express my gratitude to my spiritual father and my life-long teacher Āyatullāh M. T. Miṣbāh Yazdī who has established a new trend in Islamic research at the ʿIlmiyah Seminary of Qum. I was fortunate enough to be chosen as one of those students directed to take up a new career in the service of Islam, in order to help it face the demanding conditions of modern life.

Special acknowledgment must go to the members of my advisory committee at McGill University, Dr. J. Lin, Dr. D. Smith, Dr. E. Ormsby and Dr. E. Wood, who spent much time reading through this thesis and discussing the issues. I thank them all for their valuable comments and criticisms. I would especially like to express my sincere thanks to the chair of my advisory committee, Dr. Lin, for her insightful and facilitating supervision.

Among the many others who assisted me in vital ways, I would like to thank Dr. R. Ghosh for her comments and critiques on the section about women, education and cultural development, which was developed from a paper submitted to her as a requirement for her course on the same topic.

I must also thank Dr. R. Hosaini, the higher education advisor to Iranian students in Canada, for his vital administrative and psychological support. He also provided me with valuable data and statistics regarding female higher education in Iran. I would also like to thank my friend Steve Millier who has read various drafts of this thesis and provided editorial corrections.

I also owe much to my beloved parents Mr. and Mrs. Shameli, and particularly to my late father, who passed away while I was engaged in this research. I thank them both for their unfailing patience and enthusiastic support. I pray for divine blessing for my father who was waiting to see the result of his life-long effort to educate his children.

My dear wife Mrs. Yousefi, and my children Razieh, Fatemeh and Ali endured years of pressure abroad while I was pursuing my higher education. Without their invaluable support I could never have written this dissertation. I dedicate this dissertation to my wife in appreciation for her sacrifice and compassion which created a motivating environment for me during my period of study at McGill.



## **Abstract**

**Author:** Abbas Ali Shameli

**Title:** Toward An Islamic Model of  
Culture & Values Development:  
A Study of Sadr's Theory

**Department:** Culture and Values in Education

**Degree:** Ph.D.

Development and social change have been the common challenge of both developed and developing nations. Various models are proposed by investigators of development and social change to meet these challenges. However, such models are inevitably associated with particular patterns of culture and values. It must therefore be recognized that development cannot be value-free and measured only in economic terms or based on European standards; rather development must be value-laden and correspond with a nation's history, culture and aspirations. At the same time, few development models have dealt with the dimension of culture and values.

Dissatisfied with Western models of development, Muslim thinkers have attempted to build an Islamic model which expresses Islamic values and aspirations. In this thesis I explore and design a model based on the writings of Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, whose thought seems particularly comprehensive and relevant to the modern world. My discussion begins with a synthesis and critique of a variety of Western models, both modern and post-modern, from an Islamic point of view. I then investigate and discuss Sadr's theory of culture and values development, focusing on the challenge of human inner conflict and his typology of human values formation.

Sadr's key concern is to shift the focus of development from a macro-social to the micro-individual level. An Islamic model of development, as Sadr sets out, is first and foremost one for human values development. For Sadr, culture and values development must precede any other kind of development for a Muslim society, where the practice of Islamic values is a way of life and a journey towards God. Values education then should be prophetic education which focuses on teaching people how to develop themselves and accordingly to reach God. Sadr also argues that economic development cannot be obtained without the establishment of social justice. The establishment of the latter should be based on culture and values development, which profoundly relates to the resolution of human inner values conflicts.

The project also evaluates different models in the light of the one proposed by Sadr, and discusses numerous challenges and dilemmas facing Islamic societies in the global environment and in the post-modern questioning of permanent values. Next, I will examine gender and development, an important issue not explicitly addressed by Sadr. In this chapter, I have indicated that sexual values development is of critical importance to the success of any development program, which in turn depends upon a sexuality education that teaches God-centered self-control.

I will close this dissertation with a chapter examining some of the educational challenges posed by culture and values development in Post-Revolutionary Iran.

## Résumé

**Auteur:** Abbas Ali Shameli

**Titre:** Vers un modèle islamique de développement de la culture et des valeurs: une étude de la théorie de Şadr (1935-80)

**Département:** Culture et Valeurs en Éducation - Faculté d'éducation

**Diplôme:** Doctorat

Le développement et les transformations sociales représentent des défis que les nations développées et celles en voie de développement partagent. Différents modèles sont proposés par les chercheurs qui s'intéressent au développement et aux transformations sociales pour trouver des solutions à ces défis. Inévitablement, de tels modèles sont associés à des modes particuliers de culture et de valeurs. Par conséquent, on doit reconnaître que le développement ne peut être exempt de toutes considérations de valeurs et seulement mesuré en termes économiques ou basé sur des standards Européens; le développement doit, au contraire, tenir compte des valeurs et correspondre à l'histoire, la culture, et les aspirations de la nation. Par contre, très peu de modèles de développement se sont attardés aux dimensions de la culture et des valeurs.

Insatisfait des modèles de développement occidentaux, les penseurs musulmans ont essayé de construire un modèle islamique qui soit en mesure de tenir compte des valeurs et aspirations islamiques. Dans cette thèse, j'explore et j'élabore un modèle basé sur les écrits de l'Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Şadr dont la pensée semble particulièrement complète et pertinente pour le monde moderne. Je commence avec une synthèse d'un certain nombre de modèles occidentaux, tant modernes que post-modernes, puis d'une critique à partir d'un point de vue islamique. Puis, j'examine et je discute la théorie du développement de la culture et des valeurs, en concentrant sur le déficit que posent les conflits humains intérieurs et sa typologie de la formation des valeurs humaines.

La préoccupation centrale de Sadr est de passer d'un développement centré sur le plan macro-social à celui centré sur le plan micro-individuel. Un modèle islamique de développement tel que le propose Sadr est, en premier lieu, le développement des valeurs humaines. Selon Sadr, le développement de la culture et des valeurs doivent précéder n'importe quel autre type de développement pour toutes sociétés musulmanes pour lesquelles la pratique des valeurs islamiques est un mode de vie et un voyage vers Dieu. L'éducation des valeurs doit, par conséquent, être une éducation prophétique centrée sur l'enseignement de la manière dont les gens peuvent se développer eux-mêmes et

être en mesure d'atteindre Dieu. Sadr soutient aussi que le développement économique ne peut être obtenu sans l'instauration d'une justice sociale. L'instauration d'une telle justice devrait être fondée sur le développement de la culture et des valeurs intimement liées à la résolution des conflits humains intérieurs.

Ce projet propose d'évaluer les différents modèles à la lumière de celui que propose Sadr et de discuter des nombreux défis et dilemmes dont les sociétés islamiques ont à faire face en égards à la situation globale et le questionnement post-moderne incessant des valeurs. Par la suite, je vais examiner les questions liées aux différences entre les sexes et au développement, une problématique importante que Sadr n'a pas abordée de façon explicite. Dans ce chapitre, j'ai indiqué que le développement des différentes valeurs entre les sexes est d'une importance capitale pour le succès de tout programme de développement, qui lui dépend d'une éducation des filles et garçons prônant une maîtrise de soi basée sur Dieu.

Je vais terminer cette thèse avec un chapitre qui explore quelques uns des défis posés à l'éducation par le développement des valeurs dans l'Iran post-révolutionnaire.

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## **Introduction**

### ***Research Questions***

The new world order has created, if not a clash, then at least a decisive interface and competition between the two poles of the world: developed and developing nations. Development is a criterion which categorizes all nations. Yet the term “development” is cloudy, and admits of several interpretations. The reason for this is that we still lack a clear and inclusive definition or indicator of the term development. There have been shifts<sup>1</sup> in understanding and interpreting the term development. Developed societies are challenged to move toward an undefined era of post-industrialization. Developing countries, on the other hand, are striving to pull themselves “upward” in terms of what are internationally or intellectually considered to be indicators of development. They strive to keep a balance at the international level. Muslims, among others, are susceptible to this dilemma, which is complicated by the challenge they face to preserve their Islamic identity.

Another challenge is the difficulty of integrating one’s distinctive or “cultivated” cultural identity into a global and universal culture. This dilemma is not unique to Muslim civilization. Western-European culture, which was originally composed of cultural contributions of Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian subcultures, has had to cope with the same challenge. A dialogue between what is specific to the individual and what could be universal and inclusive, rather than a destructive antagonism, is proposed as one way of avoiding cultural disappearance and identity crisis. This dialogue could lead to a principle of

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<sup>1</sup> The first section of the chapter on literature review surveys the issues faced in explaining the process of development and its indicators.



evolution and transformation of one's particular identity into a multiple identity (Morin 1989, 33-4).

An entrenched Islamic culture, along with the Islamic Revolution of 1979/1357s.,<sup>2</sup> have together contributed to reorienting Iran, and have revealed the country's need for a new, smooth-functioning model of development. This dramatic change has motivated many to look for an Islamic model of development in relation to education. Is it possible to be a Muslim and at the same time adjust oneself to the changing conditions of modern times? Islam as a religion includes stable and traditional norms and ideals. How can these norms function under changing conditions? For some people it is unclear whether modernity and advancement will contradict or correspond to any form of traditionalism, including religion (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 27).

How can a Muslim society cope with the rapid and vast social, political, cultural and economic changes occurring in the world? What can serve as an Islamic model for change, transition and development? What needs to be done in order to bring about a sustained development which both utilizes nature and yet preserves it for the benefit of humankind? How can we integrate human rights with one's responsibility as God's vicegerent on earth in relation to nature, to society and to one's self? What role can education play in facilitating this sustained development and creating a relevant culture of development? And more importantly: What characterizes an Islamic model of development and social change? Is there any model of Islamic culture of development? What are the elements of an Islamic culture and values development?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The dates given in this thesis will primarily be according to the Christian calendar. In some cases however the Islamic lunar date (*Hijri Qamari*) will be cited followed by the Christian year. In other cases, the Islamic solar year (*Hijri Shamsi*), observed mainly in Iran, will be given, designated by the abbreviation "s.", again followed by the Christian date. All three systems are commonly in the Iranian calendar.

<sup>3</sup> I will explain how an Islamic culture of development necessitates a particular process of educational investment in culture and values development. I have nevertheless observed from the very beginning that these two major themes represent two interconnected aspects of my project. To me the Islamic culture of development stands for

Islamic modernists and Muslim social thinkers have long faced these questions. Yet the concept of an Islamic model for development and modernization may seem surprising to some. Perhaps one should not expect a world religion like Islam to provide a model of development. This doubt is partly due to Weberian and neo-Weberian understandings of the possible role of religion after the Reformation movement in the West. Max Weber and his followers linked modernization to Protestantism and Western institutions, race and culture. They dismissed Islam as devoid of any improving role in the society while at the same time viewing it as an element of dogmatism and backwardness (Ahmed, 1987). They viewed Islamic society as static, thus lacking any notion of development. Karl Marx, in fact, held similar views about the Third World on materialist grounds (O'Neil 1992).

However, the feasibility of an Islamic or a religious model of development and social change increases when we shift the focus to culture and values. When Samuel Huntington argues that the "clash of civilizations" is the characteristic feature of the twenty-first century, we realize that culture and values tensions surrounding these issues are increasingly a part of present-day human life (CIES<sup>4</sup> 1997, 6. see also Huntington 1996, 312-18).<sup>5</sup>

I assume therefore that development and social change do not occur in a vacuum. Culture and values patterns determine the goals, methods and major concerns of any process of development. The culture of development, I believe, explains the nature of values that are to be

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an ideological and values umbrella which encompasses various dimensions of a developmental model and distinguishes it from a non-Islamic model. It impacts on goals, priorities and methods of putting a model into practice and facilitates the function of a particular values and ideal system. Culture and values development, on the hand, represents a micro-individual and educational investment that must be made in citizens of a Muslim society in order to help them develop according to the requirements of a set pattern of an Islamic culture of development. Therefore, the former represents the core and the root of an Islamic model while the latter stands for educational results.

<sup>4</sup> CIES is an abbreviation for Comparative & International Education Society.

inculcated and the level of investment that each society must devote to culture and values development. Therefore the culture of development and cultural development are bilaterally interrelated. This conception was driven home for me at the 1998 annual conference of the CIES (Comparative & International Education Society) in Buffalo. The main subject of the conference was: "Bringing Culture Back In." The key message in all panels was a need for a serious reconsideration of culture and values. Participants engaged in dialogue over the role of education in bringing culture back into present-day life. I felt that I was witnessing an intellectual shift from understanding development at a macro-national level to a micro-individual one. Instead of over-emphasis on exploring the interrelationship between education and national development, people were discussing the relationship between education and individual, cultural and values development. Several panels were devoted to the discussion of cultural development and values education in different nations. This was indeed an attempt to find ways of preparing individuals for a global citizenship.

Throughout this study I have attempted to explore the characteristics of an Islamic model of cultural and values development. My assumption is that a determining parameter in this discussion is religion. Religious ideology and its set of values will influence the conclusion we arrive at in this discussion. The history of Western civilization since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shows us that religion has long been considered an obstacle to development and social change (Weber 1994 & Wallace 1994, 164). Is it therefore, possible to propose a religious model for development? The history of Islamic civilization, on the contrary, provides a different scenario. To Muslims, Islam is a way of life. Muslims have for

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<sup>5</sup> Huntington (1997) discusses the cultural, economical and political roots and outcomes of the clash of civilizations in the twelfth chapter (The Future of Civilizations) of his volume on this topic.

generations sought the answers to all of their questions in Islam. The same challenge has motivated Muslims of today to apply Islam in their daily lives. This challenge has become more crucial since some Muslim countries, such as post-revolutionary Iran, have attempted to put Islamic ideology into practice in running the country.

I assume that the challenge facing Islam and modernity conveys a values aspect. In other words, Muslim thinkers may argue that an Islamic culture of development is different from a non-Islamic culture, in that an Islamic culture is laden with a particular values system. Therefore it is vital to discover the nature of the Islamic culture of development. The next step is to find out the impact of education in establishing and sustaining this culture. The term education in this context refers to a broader meaning which includes both its formal and non-formal aspect. Although I have chosen to deal with these questions from an Islamic point of view, the scope is undoubtedly wider. All religions, or at least the major world religions, have faced this challenge. The extent to which this challenge may be deemed crucial depends on what social role a religion claims for itself. Islam, since it is viewed as a way of life by Muslims, makes a significant claim to inclusivity both in terms of private and public domains. Followers of other religions on the other hand often tend to see religion as an aspect of their private life only. The degree of challenge therefore depends on the level of claim.

It is essential, therefore, to clarify first the perception of religion in Western society during the pre-industrial era. In the context of the intellectual movements of the late eighteenth century, religion was everything emotional and traditional, and therefore anti-rational (Wallace 1994, 162). The writings of Max Weber (1864-1920), for example, describe the traditional customs and superstitions in primitive tribes as anti-rational. He wrote that none of the mass

religions of Asia provide the motives or orientations for a rationalized ethical patterning (Weber 1994, 199). A similar explanation is provided with respect to the role of religion by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). To these thinkers religion plays a primitive, illusory and impeding role in human life (see Polka 1994, Tilley 1991 for the Freudian explanation and Strain 1984, Grabb 1990 for the Marxian take on religion). In his explanation of the relationship between religion and science, Weber again observed that in the feudal era “the priesthood and strict adherence to ritual prescriptions serve as means of magical control over nature, especially as a defense against demons” (Wallace 1994, 81).

Secularism has been seen as a product of the conflict between science and Christian ideology. This idea is described well in the following statement by Sardar (1991, 61-2):

Contemporary Western secularism is a product of the conflict between science and Christianity that took place in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Secularism dethroned the ruling orthodoxy, the powerful institution of the Church, and gave rise to a vision of society that has captivated the Western mind for the last three hundred years. It was a vision of a society as rationally ordered. This vision produced extraordinary advances in science and technology; but as Stephen Toulmin argues, it has also perpetuated a hidden agenda: the delusion that human nature and society could be fitted into precise and manageable rational categories.<sup>6</sup>

Education then was secularized due to the efforts of social thinkers who proposed their new secular agenda as an instrument for educating the citizens of a secular society. Therefore, the trend of socio-educational thought among non-Muslims is characterized by secularity. Although there is a major difference between North America and Europe in terms of religiosity or secularity of values education (Halstead 1996, 9), the general trend is different from that which is found in an Islamic society. Even in the province of Quebec, where the educational boards were long divided based on Catholic and Protestant beliefs, the religious education in

public schools according to Law 107 passed by the Assemblée Nationale in 1988 was replaced with a choice of either moral or religious instruction (Cochrane 1992, 129). Moral education was seen as having nothing to do with the Christian faith, but as preparing students for a responsible and caring citizenship.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore clear that religious education is not a compulsory part of the basic curriculum in North American public schools. Nor is collective worship considered to be central to children's moral and spiritual development (Halstead 1996, 9).

The possibility of a religious model of development being adopted in the West is highly unlikely. This is perhaps because there is no such thing as a "Christian State." However religion or religious-like appeals to the values of a past tradition often function as a "protest" voice in such debates. The mentality among Muslim scholars, however, is different. They argue that Islam, as the seal of all Abrahamic religions, has the major claim (Nasr 1995, 439-40 & Sadr 1984, 95-8). My own argument in fact is essentially based on this supposition. My argument and its conclusions should therefore be seen in this context. At the theoretical level, Islam has to provide answers in giving direction to various aspects of human life. Muslim scholars claim that Islam is more than a marginalized religion; indeed, it is a way of life (Nasr 1995, 440 & Sadr 1984, 98). In practice, Muslim societies such as post-revolutionary Iran are meeting the challenge of translating Islam into practice in its various aspects. Therefore, at both the theoretical and practical levels Muslim scholars must provide Islamic alternatives.

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<sup>6</sup> Sardar refers to Toulmin 1990.

<sup>7</sup>See, for instance, *Secondary School Curriculum: Moral Instruction for Pupil Exempted from Religious Instruction*. Quebec: Direction générale des programmes, Direction de la formation générale. no date. See also *Information Document, Definition of the Domain: Moral Education, Elementary School*. (1994). Quebec: Direction du développement pédagogique en langue anglaise.

Elements which characterize the Islamic model of development and social change will form the components of an Islamic culture of development.

The Iranian Islamic Republic is one instance in which Islamic solutions to theoretical challenges have been implemented. The main question for the revolutionaries who brought it into being has been whether it is possible to have an Islamic modernity, or whether modern Islam is merely a society in which modernity and Islamic values come together. The motive behind their search is to avoid what they perceive as the destructive cultural consequences of Westernization. The serious problems and dilemmas experienced by even highly-developed Western countries have convinced Muslims to look for an alternative consistent with their Islamic ideals. They believe that despite all their technological advancements, Western countries have given up a great deal. Akbar Ahmed<sup>8</sup> states about the West:

[Western] civilization does not have the answer for the planet; indeed its arsenal of nuclear weapons, its greedy destruction of the environment, its insatiable devouring of the world's resources, its philosophy of consumerism at all costs, it is set to terminate life on earth in the near future unless it can change its ways fundamentally. (Ahmed 1992, 109)

Moreover the implementation of Western models of development in Muslim societies usually creates a feeling of psychological rejection. Muslim citizens associate these models with the painful experiences that they met with at the hands of Western colonizers. These experiences have created a psychological incoherence among Muslim societies when they meet

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<sup>8</sup> Akbar S. Ahmed is a contemporary Muslim anthropologist and a scholar of Islamic history. His writings incorporate a variety of subjects which illustrate an understanding of the Islamic interface with the challenges of modern and postmodern eras. He has also contributed to the production of a series of audio-visual video tapes entitled "Living Islam." Tomas Gerholm (1994) speaks in his chapter about Akbar Ahmed and Ziauddin Sardar as two Muslim intellectuals in the postmodern West who have concerns about the cultural challenges of the global millenium. For more detailed information see "Annual Dinner," *Asian Affairs*, London, vol., 26, 1995, pp. 246-53, Gerholm 1994, Schlesinger 1993, Bhutto 1996 and also Ahmed 1996.

a Western model. A development model will effectively function in an Islamic society when people view it as coherent with their ideology and their identity (Sadr 1982, 197-201).

If Muslims are to avoid following a Western model of development because of its contrast with Islamic culture and values, what is the Islamic alternative? With most Muslim nations still at the beginning of the development process, what models exist that will help them build a new one based on Islamic culture and values?

This project tries to address these questions through an explanation of Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr's (1935-80) model of socio-cultural change. In his attempts at establishing an entire Islamic system of thought, which incorporates feasible guidelines on various aspects of ever-changing human life, Ṣadr wrote extensively. His writings aim at providing the needed elements and pillars of that system. Sadr's seminars on socio-historical norms in the Qur'ān, which were offered during the last days of his life (Rufā'ī 1996, 134-8), constituted the elements of an Islamic approach to explaining the relationship between culture, values development, and social change. In this dissertation, I have attempted to describe Sadr's understanding of the correlation between values inculcation and social change. I have also explored the possible link between change at collective and individual levels. This will show a Qur'ānic understanding of the educational roots of social change, culture and values development.

### ***Sources of Data and Outline of Research***

Although several studies have investigated the functionality of the educational systems and institutions of post-revolutionary Iran as an example of an Islamic model through different



perspectives,<sup>9</sup> the Islamic theory of culture and values development, with its emphasis on the role of education from a general point of view, is an issue still untouched by scholars. The issue of Islam and development has recently received critical attention from Iranian government officials. Formal and informal education have always been regarded as the primary means for development, but the bilateral relationship between education and culture and values development deserves a more precise consideration. Education is undoubtedly influenced by social, cultural, political and economic development; nonetheless, it plays a significant role in facilitating an Islamic model of development. It is essential to note that in this dissertation I will look at development and social change from a cultural, ideological and values perspective.

Development can be approached through various avenues. Economic, socio-political, gender, and human aspects are just some examples of the possibilities. My goal is to concentrate on human development with an emphasis on cultural and values development. I will approach this interrelationship as elaborated in Sadr's model. Although Muslim thinkers have proposed a number of different versions of the Islamic developmental model,<sup>10</sup> many questions remain unanswered, and many answered questions need to be posed again. A critical profile of these challenges, nonetheless, offers some promise. It is my hope that the findings of this study will not only contribute to Islamic scholarship, but will also provide data that will allow government officials in Iran to become cognizant of the advantages and limitations of a possible Islamic model in culture and values development and social change.

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<sup>9</sup> Several Ph.D. dissertations have investigated the socio-educational context of post-revolutionary Iran. Fallahi (1995), Mojab (1991), Hossaini (1991), Fereshteh (1987), Rajaipur (1987) are few examples. Ahmed (1987) examines the interface of Islam and modernization from a broader perspective. He also explores the role of educational institutions in the post-colonial period in Muslim societies.

Among the many Shīʿī scholars that have touched on these topics, I have chosen Sadr since he is distinct in a number of respects. His writings, rather than representing a merely intellectual exercise, may be seen as a response to the emerging socio-cultural problems of Muslim societies which have resulted in identity crises. He usually explains the problematic political, cultural and social conditions of his time and tries to provide Islamic answers for these problems. Another characteristic of Sadr is his emphasis on the systematic approach. Never did he overemphasize one aspect of Islamic thought at the expense of neglecting others. His writings therefore incorporate various domains. The Islamic theory of economy, comparative philosophy, deductive logic, Islamic jurisprudence and its principles, philosophy of human history, thematic Qurʾān exegesis and politics are just some of the topics which are investigated by Sadr. Instead of following the traditional method of Islamic studies which usually takes a passive and defensive approach in countering non-Islamic cultural encroachments, Sadr attempted to be critical and inventive.<sup>11</sup>

An examination of his writings reveals that Sadr's methodology is usually original, comprehensive, comparative and systematic (Ushayqir 1993, 270-71). He attempts to create an intellectual atmosphere of self-confidence among Muslim scholars in looking at the richness of

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<sup>10</sup> Examples of these efforts are implemented in post-revolutionary national development plans. These plans implement views of the late leader Āyatullāh Khumainī and proposals of his disciples Āyatullāh Mutahharī, Āyatullāh Khāminah'ī, the present leader, and Āyatullāh Rafsanjānī, the former president.

<sup>11</sup> In one of his most revealing and inspiring lectures addressed to both students and teachers of the Seminary of Najaf, Sadr reemphasizes the necessity of being prompt and punctual regarding the problems of Muslim societies. He observes that Muslim thinkers should not generalize the principle of *istiṣhāb* (retaining previous certainties in the face of emerging uncertainty (for a more precise definition of this principle refer to Sadr 1989, 195-98 & 333-335 & 594-5). He contests that although the foundations of Islamic thought are ever-lasting, the circumstances of the Islamic societies are ever-changing. Muslim scholars then should distance themselves from the hidden agenda behind the above-mentioned principle. This agenda invites them to stick always to the past. Despite the effective functionality of this principle in Islamic jurisprudence, Islamicists should not generalize it to other domains. Muslim thinkers ought to provide feasible patterns of Islamic thought which fit with the changing conditions of the times. See Ushayqir 1993, 270 & Muṣṭafā 1996, 350-51.

Islamic thought (Shāmī 1996, 21-3). Explaining the reason for his spending such a considerable amount of time in authoring his volume entitled *al-Usus al-Manṭiqīyah li al-Istiqrā'* (*The Logical Foundations of the Deductive Approach*), Sadr states that this volume is indeed a starting-point in providing Islamic ideas in place of Western ones, proclaiming the end of the era of borrowing ideas from the West (ʿAlī Jaʿfar 1996, 486). Nevertheless, Sadr does not reject Western findings simply because they are Western. He distinguishes between those types of which are world-view-driven and those which are value-free. He tries to utilize the latter in improving his methodology in explaining Islamic thought (Amin 1996, 116).

Sadr was also critical of the findings of previous Muslim thinkers. He never tried to absolutize these findings merely because they had been developed by Muslims. An example of this approach is his critical review of the conventional method in Qurʾān exegesis. He warns Muslim scholars about the negative impact of confining themselves to this method and invites them to combine it with his new thematic method. This argument is reflected in his volume *al-Madrasah al-Qurʾānīyah* (*The Qurʾānic School of Thought*) (Sadr 1979, 16-9).

At the practical level Sadr also tries to avoid justifying the existing disturbing realities of Muslim societies. He aims at providing a theoretical model driven from the Islamic scriptures and from the applied examples of the prophetic age in Islam, when the Prophet Muḥammad established an workable model of an Islamic society (ʿAbdullāwī 1996, 48).

Despite having grown up in a traditional environment (the Seminary of Najaf) and despite being a *mujtahid* (jurisprudent) whose task it was to discover the rules relating to various aspects of Muslims' lives, Sadr developed into a critical theoretician. He argued that each set of Islamic rules depends on one specific hidden theory. To cope with the present

difficulties facing Muslims, Muslim thinkers need to reach that theoretical depth (Sadr 1979, 31-2). His theory set out in the compilation *al-Madrasah al-Qur'āniyah* (*The Qur'anic School of Thought*) is an example of using a thematic-systematic approach in understanding the Qur'ān in terms of socio-historical norms. In this volume Sadr attempts to explore the connection between reality and scripture. He proposes a dialogical method for understanding the Qur'ān. To him it is almost impossible to figure out the Qur'ān's orientation in each domain unless one can see the problems in real life, become aware of the human responses to these problems and refer to the scripture to discover the alternatives revealed there. In his dialogue with the Qur'ān and *sunnah* (tradition) Sadr combines three major elements. Reason (human knowledge), revelation (the content of the Qur'ān and the tradition) and the reality of human life should be connected if one aims to arrive at Islamic alternatives, Sadr maintains. Nonetheless, he warns his readers that a religious approach should always be *ta'abbudī* (submissive to the divinity) in nature. This means that Muslim scholars must begin with the problematic realities of their lives, then refer to scripture and finally return to reality to provide the sought-after answers. This emphasis also helps to maintain the separation between humanity and divinity (ʿAbdullāwī 1996, 49 & 51).

His work *Iqtisādunā* (*Our Economy*) contains his theory of Islamic economic thought which is explained by means of a comparison between the Islamic economical model with those of socialism and capitalism. Another of his writings, *al-Bank al-Lāribawī fī al-Islām* (*The Islamic Interest-free Banking System*) contains Sadr's ideas about consumerism and interest-bearing transactions. His study of deductive logic entitled *al-Usus al-Manṭiqīyah li al-Istiqrā'* (*The Logical Foundations of the Deductive Approach*) profiles the Muslim understanding of

the way in which human cognition is generated and develops. This work compares Sadr's explanation with the two schools of rationalism and empiricism (Rufāʿī 1996, 142). Finally, his *Al-Madrasah al-Islāmīyah (The Islamic School of Thought)* examines the socio-cultural problems of Muslim societies in the modern era.

In addition to his intellectual efforts, Sadr was a political activist. He was one of the founders of the Islamic-political party known as al-Daʿwah al-Islāmīyah (Islamic Propagation). This party was founded in 1957 in Iraq and began its official activities in 1959. The ultimate goal for the founders of this party was to establish an Islamic state not only within Iraq but throughout the Islamic world. To Sadr this socio-political exercise was in fact just one more component in hostile reaction against the secular and organized socio-political trends of his time (Hassan 1993, 292). He also was one of the contributors to a newly-founded socio-political journal entitled *al-Aḍwāʾ (The Lights)* (ʿAlī Jaʿfar 1996, 466-70). Sadr and his colleagues addressed the topic of secularism in its various aspects within the pages of this journal.

He also attempted to renew the curriculum of the Seminary of Najaf through his proposed textbooks and administrative changes. Sadr's contribution to the establishment of the Kullīyah Uṣūl al-Dīn (the Faculty of the Principles of Religion (Theology) of Baghdad in 1964 was also a part of his educational renewal effort. He authored and revised the textbooks on Qur'ānic exegesis, the principles of jurisprudence and Islamic economics that were to be taught in this faculty (ʿAlī Jaʿfar 1996, 474-75). While most of the above efforts were successful, his attempts at renewing the educational system in Najaf were not welcomed by all. They were in fact opposed by a group of traditionalists there (Hassan 1993, 292) who attacked the

innovations as being inconsistent with the existing environment. What all of these understandings show however is that Sadr's agenda was focused on one ultimate aim: to transform Muslim society on the basis of Islamic thought (ʿAlī Jaʿfar 1996, 505). Therefore his writings provide a possible model of the Islamic culture of development.

Interestingly enough, most of the titles of Sadr's early writings share a common feature in that they contain the Arabic possessive pronoun "nā (our)" e.g., *Falsafatunā* (*Our Philosophy*), *Iqtisādunā* (*Our Economy*), and the promised volume *Mujtamaʿunā* (*Our Society*). This implied that these disciplines could be both methodologically and substantially Islamicized, that these disciplines in particular and the humanities as a whole could be developed or renewed by Muslim thinkers through an Islamic method (Ṭayyār 1993, 232).

A difficulty faced by any scholar writing on Sadr is the fact that he was unable to elaborate or perfect his thought before he was cut down in the prime of his life. Sadr was executed by the Iraqi regime in Baghdad in Wednesday, April 5, 1980 (Husaini 1996, 101), and therefore never completed many of the projects he had envisioned. Due to his concern about the dual impact of capitalism and socialism, Sadr's writings reflect the intellectual atmosphere of the '60s and '70s in Muslim societies.<sup>12</sup> To explore his theory of culture and values development one has to consult the related parts of his surviving writings. More importantly, since my major reference for these concepts is his volume *al-Madrasah al-Qur'ānīyah* (*The Qur'ānic School of Thought*), which contains several lectures on his new

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<sup>12</sup> A review of Sadr's work *Iqtisādunā* (*Our Economy*) reveals that the author's concern about the interface of Islam and socialism was considerable. Almost a third of this volume is devoted to the discussion of socialist theory. His discussion about capitalism, on the other hand, constitutes only one twelfth of the book. This could partly be due to the dominance of Marxist thought in the late 1950s and 60s in Iraq and in other Muslim societies (Allāwī 1992, 4-6).

approach to the Qur'ān consisting in explaining socio-historical norms, the findings of this study can at best give only an incomplete picture of Sadr's ideas. The reason for this is that Sadr did not have the chance to elaborate or review these lectures in response to subsequent critiques. Much of his promise remained untapped, while we are faced to rely on transcripts of his final lectures in Najaf. I have nonetheless consulted other writings of this thinker and the writings of other scholars who wrote about him in the hope of arriving at a single, coherent socio-cultural model as he hypothesized it.

The major part of the data in this study was collected from Sadr's writings, and from Western and Islamic scholarship on his thought. The majority of these references are written in Arabic. I have also consulted the numbers of an Arabic journal, *al-Fikr al-Jadeed*<sup>13</sup> (*The Modern Thought*), which is published from London by the Dār al-Islam Foundation. Each issue of this journal includes articles about Sadr's ideas. The sixth number of this journal, which was published in July 1993, contains several articles about Sadr. A. R. Ḥassan provides an article in Arabic<sup>14</sup> in this issue which reviews all English and non-Arabic writings on Sadr's thought up to the date of the issue. As he observes, Sadr's writings have received more consideration in Germany and France (Hassan 1993, 287). Chibli Mallat,<sup>15</sup> T. M. Aziz,<sup>16</sup> and Joyce N. Wiley are

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<sup>13</sup> This transliteration represents what appears on the front-page of the journal. It is not consistent with my own system of romanization.

<sup>14</sup> See A.R. Ḥassan. (1993). "Al-Imām al-Shahīd M. B. al-Ṣadr: Murāja'at limā Kutiba 'anhu bi al-Lughah al-Inkilizīyah (I.S.M.B. Sadr: A Review of the English Literature about Sadr," *al-Fikr al-Jadeed*, 2, no. 6, 286-329.

<sup>15</sup> In addition to what Hassan recounts from Mallat on Sadr, I have seen a new article from this scholar in which he compares Sadr's Qur'ānic reading with that of John Wansbrough. Mallat highlights the critical approach of these two scholars in understanding the Qur'ān. For Mallat, Sadr explains the plastic properties of the Qur'ān while Wansbrough exploits them. Both voices, nonetheless, have dealt only incompletely with the subject. See Mallat 1994, 173. Sadr's Qur'ānic hermeneutics is briefly touched on from an Islamic point of view in another study by A.A. Nayed in his article which appeared in 1992. The author highlights the major themes of Sadr's thematic approach. See Anayed 1992, 443-49.

among those who have written the most in English on Sadr and his legacy. An English translation of Sadr's volume *Iqtisādunā (Our Economy)* was provided by I.K.H. Howard in the pages of the *al-Serat (The Path)* journal between the years 1981-5<sup>17</sup>. A critical review of the volume *Iqtisādunā (Our Economy)* is provided by A. Allāwī<sup>18</sup> in the journal *al-Fikr al-Jadeed* number 4, 1992. Shams C. Inati has not only translated Sadr's *Falsafatunā (Our Philosophy)* into English but he also added an introduction and some explanatory notes. Some of Sadr's treatises were also translated into English by the Tawheed Institute in London, probably in 1981 (Hassan 1993, 321-22). I have also consulted a comprehensive Arabic volume, *M.B. al-Ṣadr: Dirāsah fī Ḥayātih wa Fikrih (M.B. Sadr: Researches on His life and His Thought)*. This volume appeared in 1996, published by Dār al-Islām Foundation in London and includes several articles about Sadr's ideas. A. Rabi'ī's bibliographical index to this volume provides information about all those who have written on any aspect of Sadr's ideas up to 1996 (Rabi'ī 1996, 697-717).

Daily newspapers and the official reports of the post-revolutionary Iranian government are also consulted for other, complementary chapters. An overriding problem in this study is that scholars have only just begun to examine Sadr's theories. Nor have his theories been translated into practice in any specific context. Indeed, the ultimate reliability of an Islamic

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<sup>16</sup> Among Aziz's articles on Sadr, I have found, "The meaning of History: A Study of the Views of Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr," most helpful in this dissertation. In this article Aziz analyzes Sadr's hermeneutic understanding of socio-historical norms as revealed in the Qur'ān. He tries to collect data from Sadr's various writings and then compares them with the Western approach. The major theme in comparison is the explanation of the orientation of human history. Plato, Hegel, Marx, Augustine represent the Western angle, while Ibn Khaldūn and Sadr represent the Islamic view. See Aziz 1992, 117-140.

<sup>17</sup> Quoting C. Mallat, A.A. Hassan maintains that even up to the present time the best translation of *Iqtisādunā (Our Economy)* is provided by the German scholar, A. Riech. This translation covers the second part of the book. See *Unsere Wirtschaft, Eine Gekurzte Kommerntierte des Buches Iqtisaduna*. A Riech tr., Berlin, 1984. See also Hassan 1993, 321.



model will only become evident once it has been implemented and can, as such, be observed and evaluated.

The last two chapters of this study deal with the theoretical and practical aspects of socio-cultural reforms in post-revolutionary Iran. Chapter six discusses women's issues with a focus on socio-educational development. It touches on these issues since they are at the center of the debate in the wider discussion of culture and values both in the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds. Sadr's model unfortunately does not cover these issues in any detail. One can, nonetheless, theorize a possible implementation of the ideas put forward in Sadr's model on gender issues. Despite many improvements in the case of women status in post-revolutionary Iran, there remains a big gap between Islamic standards and what is being experienced by Iranian women. Chapter seven provides an overview of the challenges and dilemmas facing the country in the field of socio-cultural development. A holistic perspective has been utilized in examining issues in this section. Culture, values and educational problems are addressed through a macro-national perspective, so that rather than particular difficulties, fundamental issues are discussed.

### **Research Method**

Descriptive, analytical and qualitative methods will be utilized in this project. I will describe the characteristics of a possible Islamic model of development and social change while at the same time analyzing the functionality and strength of such a model in comparison to other existing theories. My research proposes a comparison between Islamic and Western models of development. I will study critically the interrelationship between education, socio-

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<sup>18</sup> See A.A. 'Allawi. (1992). "Sayyid Baqir Sadr's *Iqtisādunā*. A Quarter of a Century Later" *al-Fikr al-Jadeed*,

cultural and values development. It is of particular importance to me that I determine how education, particularly values education, can help Muslim developers implement Islamic models of culture and values development within Muslim societies. Parts of the thesis will therefore be devoted to the analysis of the role which education plays in culture and values development in the Islamic context. I will approach this project from a theoretical and philosophical perspective as well as offer comparative reviews of various theories. Sadr's writings and the writings of certain other Shi'ī thinkers, most of which are written in either Arabic or Persian, will be the primary sources for my data.

The work entitled *Al-Madrasah al-Qur'ānīyah (The Qur'ānic School of Thought)*, which includes Sadr's lectures on socio-historical norms as revealed in the Qur'ān, will serve as the main reference for my elaboration of Sadr's model. I have also consulted works on social, cultural and educational theory for both methodological and substantial guidance in discussing the questions raised by Sadr. In addition to the above-mentioned literature review on the topic of Sadr, a brief biography which reflects his intellectual career is provided in the third chapter at the beginning of the section on preliminary elements of his model of socio-cultural development.

### ***Situating the Researcher: Construction of a Vantage Point***

I am aware that it is impossible for research to be entirely neutral: the investigator is inevitably "present" by virtue of his or her particular perspective. This position is constructed, at least in part, by the educational and cultural experience of the researcher. For this reason, it is important here to briefly trace and profile the cultural and educational process and landmarks which have impacted upon and shaped my vantage point.

I have been fortunate enough to experience the richness of two cultural traditions; first Islam and then North America. I was born in Iran, and carried out my elementary, secondary, and undergraduate studies there. In 1992, I moved to Canada in order to pursue my education at the graduate level. The path to that point, and since, will be outlined here.

I remember that it was the encouragement and support of my late father that motivated me to choose Islamic studies as my field of interest. This decision led me to apply to the center of Islamic studies in Qum known as the Ḥawzah-i ʿIlmiyah (Knowledge Center) in 1976. My generation was one of the first to encounter the curricular and administrative changes in this center. New institutions were being established at the time to meet the increasing expectations of young volunteers who were looking for a modern institution in which to pursue their studies in Islam.

The cultural and ideological requirements of those days arising from modernization and cultural interface between Islam and the West forced officials in the Ḥawzah to consider fundamental changes to curriculum and teaching methods. Students were expected to be trained in such a way that they could acquire competency in the new religious and ideological discourse. This need was felt more urgently when Iran experienced the Islamic Revolution of 1979. The vital and leading influence of Imām Khomeinī in this revolution determined that the Shiʿī clergy would play a decisive role in Iran's future.

The Islamic nature of this revolution rendered the task of reinvestigating Islam even more crucial. Islamicists had to find an alternative system to the previous regime if they wanted to run the country Islamically. The demands of the new Islamic state made Qum the main center of debate over possible solutions to the new challenges. Educators there had to provide

or plan new programs to enable the younger generation to meet the country's needs under the Islamic state.

Like other students of my own age I was looking for a modern institute of Islamic studies. In the end I realized that the Dar Rāh-i Ḥaqq (Towards the Truth) Institute in Qum answered my expectations. The educational section of this institution was supervised by a board of important clergymen based in Qum. The most influential figure on this board for me both personally and intellectually was Āyatullāh Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī. He was among those who had been working for educational change in the Ḥawzah years before the Islamic revolution. His meetings with the late leader, Imām Khomeinī, in this regard, motivated him to develop new programs to enable younger students to meet the ideological challenges of the time.

The proposed program by Misbah combined philosophy, Qurānic studies and ideological discussion with the study of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *uṣūl* (the principles of jurisprudence) which were the major concerns of the Ḥawzah. The subsequent Iranian cultural revolution of 1981 toward Islamicization created new challenges for both students and teachers in the Ḥawzah. Special topics and new courses were added to the curriculum of the Dar Rāh-i Ḥaqq Institute and other newly-established institutions. Students in these institutions were allowed to register for introductory and complementary courses on humanities, social sciences and Islamic studies. The older generation and the graduates of the Dar Rāh-i Ḥaqq Institute were involved with challenges of the cultural revolution. The Islamicization of the humanities and social sciences demanded that intellectuals from both the Ḥawzah and universities collaborate on this project.

A new office called the *Daftar-i Hamkāri-yi Ḥawzah va Dānishgāh* (Office of Co-operation between the Ḥawzah and Universities) was established in 1982 to facilitate the collaboration of experts from the two institutions. The Ḥawzah was responsible for Islamic issues while the universities provided scientific advice on the Islamicization of the humanities and social sciences. The focus of Islamicization was on all branches of knowledge which were value-laden and included culture and values implications. One of the results of the continuous meetings of intellectuals from both the Ḥawzah and universities was the establishment of new branches of study and research at the former institution so as to enable students to undertake the task of Islamicization. Students from the Ḥawzah, in addition to obtaining their Islamic credentials, had to be expert in one branch of the humanities or social sciences. Islamicization required those involved to be equipped with Islamic knowledge on the one hand and modern knowledge on the other.

I was one among several students from the Ḥawzah who were given a chance to pursue new programs in which both Islamic studies and modern sciences were provided simultaneously. The *Bāqir al-ʿUlūm* Foundation and the *Imām Khumainī* Institute of Research and Teaching were established to educate students for the task of Islamicization. I for my part decided to study psychology, which demanded that I undertake a challenging course of study in both institutions. Years of study in psychology and Islamic studies provided me with the qualifications I needed to join the psychology section in the Office of Co-operation between Ḥawzah and University. The challenges that we faced in our work convinced my colleagues and me that a further step had to be taken in order to become more effective participants in the task of that office. We felt a need to continue our studies abroad where we would be exposed to

the most recent research and up-to-date methods in our disciplines. This led me to the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill, where I obtained a master's degree in 1995. From there I applied to the Department of Culture and Values in Education in order to pursue a doctoral degree. My inquiries into the program convinced me that it would be a place where I could compare my knowledge of Islamic culture and values with those of the Western world.

Having been closely involved in the cultural revolution in Iran, I was also looking for various approaches to the study of culture and values in education at McGill. The mutual relations between education and development were the focus of one course in particular which I took in the department of Culture and Values in Education. I wanted to study the interdependence of education and development from both an Islamic and a Western perspective. Months of research made me realize that Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr's ideas might serve as an appropriate framework for my inquiry on relation of education, development and social change. The later writings of this thinker in fact deal with this issue in particular.

Years of study and research in Canada nevertheless created dilemmas in my mind. My studies on postmodernism taught me that neutrality in culture and values studies is impossible. People process their knowledge in the light of an inner subjective construction which is inevitably value-laden. Truth and knowledge are laden with the values system of the knower. I have come to realize that studying the relationship between education and development from either an Islamic or a Western approach will ultimately lead to two types of results, each equipped with a particular coherent and compatible values system. The challenge became even greater when I began to plan a comparative research. Furthermore, neither Muslim thinkers nor the Western scholars present uniform, clearly defined perspectives. Schools of thought,

theories, models, approaches and methods proliferate in each of them. Postmodernism above all creates a new dilemma in that it forces each individual to realize that no one has the final answer.

Despite the infinite possibilities of choice, one has to accept limit if he/she hopes to make any progress. To me Sadr's ideas on the Islamic culture of development and social change were the most promising avenue in provision of a development model. The comparative nature of my study demanded that in dealing with Western concepts I should take a synthetic approach. I sought to determine where the points of interface between Islam and the West lay. Multiculturalism and globalization after all demand that all cultures, particularly those with a long history, try to avoid conflict and instead engage in dialogue. Individuals are looking for a more clearly defined identity while at the same time they wish to recognize "others." The idea of multiple identities has called single identities into question. The co-existence of human beings, while at the same time preserving their own culture and values, depends on keeping cultural dialogue alive.

To sum up, I come to this research project not only influenced by my Islamic cultural background but also by the impact of my years of study in North America. This cultural conjunction is what allows me to undertake comparative research in terms of education, development and social change.

## Chapter 1.

### Literature Review

#### ***1.1. Shifts in the Concept of Development***

An organized analytical discussion of development depends essentially on our definition of the term “development” and its criteria. To assert that a society is developed or developing basically depends on our definition of and our assumed criteria for the concept. Theories and schools of social thought have provided numerous indicators. Recent thinking on the issue considers development as a multidimensional phenomenon (Fagerlind & Saha 1995, 29-31). This multi-faceted concept is a result of the inadequacy of various one-sided perspectives. Economic indicators such as Gross National Product (GNP) showing the total efficiency of production exclusive of deductions in a society, or Gross Domestic Product (GDP), have been the most common measures of development for several decades. Based on these criteria, the level of development in each society is measured in quantitative terms by the quality of life enjoyed by the general population. However, the economic indicators, if they are accurate, reflect only one aspect of development (Fagerlind & Saha 1995, 29-30).

Quality of life is itself another proposed yardstick indicating the level of development. When the members of a society are sufficiently provided with the basic material and psycho-social needs, it is deemed to be developed. This means that they enjoy not only the fundamental needs like food, water, energy and shelter, but that they are also educated, secure, in close communication, conscientized, and affectively and emotionally well treated. The idea of basic needs first emerged in the Declaration of Cocoyoc in 1974 following a symposium



sponsored by the United Nations Environmental Program and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Saha & Fagerlind 1995, 29-30). The notion of the satisfaction of basic human needs is compatible with economic development and refers to the quality of distribution of the main resources among members of a given society. It nonetheless goes one step further and calls attention to the psychological needs of human beings.

A third measure of development takes into consideration the distribution of authority and power. Advocates of this concept insist on the significance of political development. They observe that a society is developed depending on the degree to which it enjoys a balanced level of social and political contribution from all individuals. As well as emphasizing economic development and a just distribution of the collective resources, true development is, according to this point of view, largely based on the extent of people's participation in the decision-making process. If the distribution of power is not polarized, the society will benefit from greater integration and cohesion. Whatever might be the components of the term development, the key issue for the educators is the role and the extent of this role that education plays in development. It is asserted that education is an interrelating element among all aspects of development (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 30-31). People in all societies must be educated to see the quality of the various dimensions of their lives. They must also be informed as to how they can obtain a better quality of life through mutual participation. Educators may also provoke people to think and behave in the interest of creating a globally integrated human nation (H.D.R. 1991, 10).

Another conceptualization emerged when development engineers proposed a shift of emphasis from the economy to human beings. Developmentalists have realized that people, not

the economy, are at the core of development plans (H.D.R. 1995, 290). They believe that the term development should be replaced with “Human Development”. Instead of natural resources, nations should invest in people as the real wealth (H.D.R. 1995, 285). The concept of human development was first developed in 1991 and enhanced by further notions of the quality of human life year after year until it was set down in writing in 1995 in the form of the Human Development Report<sup>1</sup> (H.D.R. 1995, 23). According to this model, the extent of people’s choice in making development more participatory is a real indicator of the level of development. Sufficient income, access to education, good health and enjoyment of a safe and healthy environment are regarded as prerequisites (H.D.R. 1991, 1).

People should enjoy an “enabling” environment which allows them to experience long, healthy and creative lives. In this approach, human development is seen as a key element and the end of economic development. A realistic model of human development, for advocates of this view, should include people from all over the world, and should foster their realization of a mutual commitment. A lack of political commitment rather than a shortage of natural resources is, again, regarded as the hidden factor behind human neglect in development models. To secure the future of human development, a political base for human participation must be set in motion (H.D.R. 1991, 10-11). Early strategical steps in this view involve the fostering of a democratic environment in which weaker groups are empowered and where more credits are channeled to the poor. People are developed when they not only feel free but experience an active involvement in decision-making. The ultimate aim in this model is to put people at the center and implement a model of “development of the people, by the people, for the people”

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<sup>1</sup> Human Development Report (H.D.R.), is a serial document by the United Nations which reports achievements, obstacles, the trend, and goals in human development through a global perspective.

(H.D.R. 1991, 13). This model is known as the “Human Development Index, H.D.I.,” and has replaced the GNP or other merely economic models as a yardstick of development (H.D.R. 1993, 10).

I argue however that this concept of development still falls short as a comprehensive measure, for it invites people to apply their acquired capabilities to production rather than to values development (H.D.R. 1995, 11). Therefore, the ultimate aim again shifts from people to economic productivity. However, it does add certain points to the previous concepts. It brings gender back into development, it focuses on enlarging human choices rather than providing material goods and services, and eventually it advocates sustainability (H.D.R. 1995, 11-12).

Culture and values development, environmental sustainability, qualitative methods and data are nevertheless critical matters on which the H.D.I. approach remains silent (H.D.R. 1995, 120-21). The human development approach is erected on four essential pillars—productivity, equity, sustainability and improvement of human choice. Although this approach falls short of declaring economic growth to be the end of development, it clearly regards it as a necessary element. It also suggests that while sustained improvement in human well-being is not possible without a qualitative level of economic growth, it is nevertheless wrong to conclude that high economic growth rates will automatically translate into a high level of human development (H.D.R. 1995, 290). This model also proposes that human development will not automatically lead to economic growth. The linking element in this interrelationship is the effective policy choices of individual countries (H.D.R. 1995, 122-23). International and domestic attempts should make it a policy to invest more in education, health and vocational skills. States must be more equitable in distributing income and assets, and must take care to

structure adequately its social expenditures. Last but not least, people, particularly those from marginalized sectors, must be politically, socially and economically empowered (H.D.R. 1995, 123).

The human development approach contains certain principles respecting education. Primary education is considered to be a basic human right which should be provided freely. Public secondary education is likewise a prerequisite of modern life, and one which can offer the majority of the population a higher level of knowledge and conscientization. Therefore, it is not unrealistic to demand free education at this level although it does not appear to be deemed a human right. Tertiary education is in a different category in the present circumstances. Since it is expensive and involves only a small proportion of the population, generally from upper income groups, it is appropriate that it should carry user charges. However, this policy should be combined with a system of loans and scholarships for needy but capable students (H.D.R. 1991, 7-8).

Development theorists often conceive development as “improvement of the quality of human life.” This concept faces a general critique. As long as people have varying attitudes towards the definition of the quality of life based on their culture and values, the proposed indicators are relative. Considerably more people in a supposedly “more-developed” industrialized society suffer from higher levels of air pollution, urban overcrowding, crime, traffic and psychological stress than do people in purportedly “less developed” countries (Murray 1992, 5).

I observe that a more inclusive definition of the term “development”, or more precisely “human development”, essentially has culture and values implications. It depends on what we

regard as valuable or what we culturally assume to be progress from a less to a more desirable situation. I assume that this discussion depends essentially on one's understanding of the terms "value" and "culture".

These terms though have been controversial and confusing from the beginning. They convey, in this project, for example, certain Islamic ideological and values connotations in development and social change. The present application of the word "culture" in its social, intellectual and artistic contexts is associated with a metaphor originating from its terminological meaning. The cultivation of the soil<sup>2</sup> is replaced with the cultivation of the mind. By the late nineteenth century the word had come to mean: "the whole way of life, material, intellectual, and spiritual, of a given society" (Williams 1976, vols., 1-2, 273). The complexity became more challenging when new dimensions emerged. Scholars had to explore whether they were searching for "a whole complex culture (way of life)" (E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1871) or numerous "small cultures."

The distinction between "high culture" and "mass-culture or mid-culture" was another facet of the discussion in the early twentieth century. A seemingly synonymous word, "civilization," entered the realm of intellectual conversation. Alfred Weber and R. M. MacIver (1931)<sup>3</sup> proposed that while the concept of culture stands for the realm of values and meanings, the word of "civilization is used for that of material organization. Weber viewed civilization as the product of science and technology and as a universal phenomenon related to nature. Culture, on the contrary, represented human interpretation, expressed as philosophical,

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<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, *American Heritage Dictionary*. Cultivation of the soil, a growth or colony of microorganisms and the raising of animals or growing of plants are some of the original meanings of the term "culture."

<sup>3</sup> The above-mentioned definitions of "culture" and "civilization" are quoted from R. Williams 1976, 274-75.

religious, and artistic meanings and values which vitally changed the purposes of life and society. MacIver suggested a similar distinction by relating culture to ends (meanings and values) and civilization to means (through technological order) of human life (Williams 1976, vols., 1-2, 275).

The definition of the term “value” also implied similar confusing ups and downs. In its original economic realm it meant “the worth of a thing.” Yet the economic value encompasses natural value, value of exchange and consuming value (Misbah 1989, 45). German philosophers, especially, Rudolf Hermann Lotze, Albrecht Ritschl, and Nietzsche, began to utilize this term in a much broader sense. Two philosophical applications emerged despite the conflicting standpoints of philosophers. In a narrower sense the term “value” referred to something as “good,” “desirable,” or “worthwhile.” A wider meaning represented, in addition, all kinds of rightness, obligation, virtue, beauty, truth, and holiness. On a rating zero line, positive values were situated on the plus side and negative values on the minus side.

The advocates of the broader sense had also to clarify the domain of values discussion. R. B. Perry (1954) and P. W. Taylor (1961) listed eight of these: morality, the arts, science, religion, economics, politics, law, and custom or etiquette (Frankena, 1976, vol. 7-8, 229). Misbah Yazdi (1989, 46-52) observes that value in its moral sense stands for the desirability of a behavior which is consciously selected and is reasonably worthwhile in meeting a human goal.

The Islamic culture of development, which includes the Islamic belief system and moral values, plays, in my view, the role of an end or goal (in MacIver’s term)<sup>4</sup> of development

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<sup>4</sup> See Williams 1976, vols., 1-2, 275.

plans. Based on this theory an Islamic model of cultural development will be constructed to help Muslim citizens develop a particular set of individual and social characteristics. This can only be accomplished through education, intellectual training and the inculcation of practical virtues. To cite one example, I have to allude to the impact of Islamic humanology and the Islamic social values system as components of the Islamic culture of development.

Humanology (known in Persian language as: *insān shināsi*) is the term I propose as signifying an ideological and philosophical explanation of human beings and the various facets of their lives. I have borrowed this term from some modern Shīʿī thinkers like Sadr, Misbah Yazdi and Mutahhari.<sup>5</sup>

Islamic humanology, therefore, refers to a particular body of information which comprises an aspect of the Islamic world-view and stands for philosophical and religious explanations about the origin of humankind, its potential and its ontological mission and destiny on this planet. Discussions about human creation and the divine goal of humankind's being, their divine mission and vicegerency on earth, their typical characteristics and the scope of their lives are only a few examples of issues which are dealt with in Islamic humanology. The analysis of human free-will, conscious behavior, responsibility for this behavior in this world and in the hereafter, human innate tendencies are other examples of this discussion. Elements of this Islamic humanology will influence the developmental policies and distinguish them from a materialistic and secular model. Some aspects of this difference are provided in Sadr's model.

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 21-40; Sadr 1982, 135-6 & 1991, 17-23 and Mutahhari 1990a, 8-9; 25-6 7 & 1990b, 58-61. I have to maintain that in this section I have used two articles from Misbah Yazdi about the impact of the Islamic world-view and Islamic values system on social behavior. Although these two articles

The proposal of the term "Islamic humanology" is indeed a necessary result of a limitation in utilizing other alternatives. Humanology, as an aspect of the Islamic world-view, is different from anthropology which is terminologically defined as a discipline which investigates the biological origin, beginnings, culture (customs and beliefs), and socio-cultural development of human beings.<sup>6</sup> It is also excluded from the humanities which incorporate philosophy, literature, and the fine arts as disciplines distinguished from the natural and physical sciences. Humanology is again different, in my definition, from disciplines which are included in social sciences. The reason is that social sciences usually stand for those branches which study (human social behavior) society or the relationship between individual and society (see lexicographical references, e. g., *American Heritage Dictionary*).

Despite the possible partial overlap, Islamic humanology deals essentially with providing an Islamic picture of human beings starting from fundamental questions through a holistic perspective. The following discussion is a typical example of the impact of the Islamic world-view and the Islamic values system in conceptualizing an Islamic model of development. To elaborate upon this aspect I have essentially relied on two related articles from Misbah Yazdi appeared in 1996.

The Islamic world-view may consist of several elements: The first of these is that the universe in its entirety is a purposeful and systematic system which is governed by God's norms. Losing a challenge to the divine ontological and legal norms will only be futile. Goals,

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address the concept and the scope of the Islamic management, they include aspects of the Islamic culture of development. Full bibliographical data for these articles is provided in the bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, *American Heritage Dictionary*.



policies, procedures and even detailed decisions should be set up in adherence with these norms.

The second is that the universe in general, and earth in particular, are created in a way that helps human beings develop themselves and acquire perfection. There is no difference, in this regard, between man and woman, black and white, Western and eastern, old and young, or modernist and traditional. National and international programs and policies should benefit all individuals except those who behave oppressively. Oppressors must be treated in a way that they abandon their oppressive patterns of behavior and submit to a just pattern. Environmental and natural resources belong to all generations and must be consumed fairly. Future generations must have the opportunity to share these resources.

The third view is that human beings are created free and equipped with free-will that allows them to choose their own path of perfection in the light of wisdom (knowledge) and religion (prophetic education). Utilization of oppressive methods or depriving others not only runs counter to the divine norms but also frustrates human motives, capacities and creativity. Human freedom must be protected except when it contradicts divine norms.

Finally, the fourth is that the real value and dignity of a man or woman is due to his/her divine soul and the flourishing of characteristics which help differentiate a human being from an animal. Priority is always given to spiritual values which derive from the perfection of the soul. This, of course does not mean that Muslim society always assigns priority to the spiritual even when that society suffers from a lack of economic development and well-being. Emphasis on the importance of the spiritual aspect assumes that the provision of first level needs and well-being is a precondition for a higher level of perfection. The ultimate goal is to help the

society reach a level of nearness (*qurb*) to God (Misbah 1996, 15-6). This is possible only when each individual is able to resolve the inner conflict to the benefit of his/her spiritual characteristics.

Nearness to God is indeed a result of having Godly characteristics. Humanity is due to the perfection of the soul. The provision of the first level needs such as money, health, accommodation, social and personal security are a means of giving an opportunity to perfect the soul. When the Qur'ān promises the global victory of the believers and the disappearance of all kinds of fear and oppression, it adds that this is only in order to provide an environment for believers to worship God and follow God's rules (Q. 24:55). This verse implies that whenever a society suffers from oppression, fear and hunger, there is no opportunity for spiritual development. Social justice, well-being and access to wealth and power are the requirement of cultural and spiritual development (Misbah 1996, 20).

This ultimate goal directs other values and objectives and distinguishes an Islamic culture of development from a non-Islamic one. Educating citizens to be pious and followers of God's rules is the central goal in the Islamic moral system. The value of piety is the one absolute value which forms other values. The reason for this is that piety<sup>7</sup> functions as an internal element that prevents people from oppressing others or becoming delinquent. The inculcation of this element will help Muslim society economize its investments in intelligence agencies and other institutions which provide inspection and external social control of human behavior (Misbah 1996, 16).

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<sup>7</sup> I have explained this term and its implications in proper chapters of this project. See, for instance, chapters four and six, below.

Economic development and acquiring the highest level of interest is pursued only when it does not contradict the ultimate goal of piety and nearness to God. Working to one's fullest capacity and achieving the highest possible level of productivity is a value only when it does not intervene in human spiritual and values development. In Islam all macro-policies and smaller goals must lead Muslims to worship God and build a God-centered individual's character. This emphasis demands of policy-makers that they provide plans and programs which not only exploit human capabilities but create enough opportunity for individuals to develop themselves spiritually. People must have enough time to be conscientized, to think about themselves, to see their spiritual deficiencies and to develop themselves morally. If the employment of full capacity results in exhaustion and mitigates against self-development, it is of no value in Islamic terms. Islam wants people to be more than machines (Misbah 1996, 20-1).

Another explicit distinction between an Islamic and a non-Islamic culture of development comes from the impact of the Islamic values system. In addition to an analytical discussion of the roots and origin of Islamic values, the division of these values, the method through which they are constructed and their impact on Muslims' behavior, there are various aspects that should be dealt with in a values discussion. I will touch briefly upon those aspects that bring clarity to my discussion. To the best of my knowledge, Misbah Yazdi is one of those Shīʿī scholars who have investigated values discussion. I like to present his approach since I view it as more comprehensive.

Using a psychological analysis, Misbah Yazdi observes that Islamic social values are indeed a by-product of the integration of both cognitive and affectional aspects. Values are the

bridge between our world-view of the universe, the position of human beings within it, their relations with one another and the resulting set of tendencies such as viewing all of humanity as one big family. Values form and direct our conscious and chosen behavior. We behave according to the values scales that we have constructed based on our world-view and the resulting tendencies.

There are in fact three principles that provide the cognitive foundations of Islamic social values. The first of these is the belief in the equality of all human beings as God's servants. Human beings, according to this belief, are manifestations of God's compassion. Innate love of God as the Creator entails love and compassion for other human beings. A believer, therefore, feels an innate compassion towards others. This monotheistic insight creates a compassionate tendency towards all creatures.

The second principle is the belief that all human beings originate from one set of parents, Adam and Eve. People are all, even though they have descended through many lines over the centuries, brothers and sisters. This insight creates a feeling of viewing other human beings as members of the same family. The third principle is called in Islam "faith-related brotherhood" (*barādarī-yi 'īmānī*). This principle is distinguished from the two above-mentioned as being uniquely Islamic. Other religions may perpetuate the other two insights. Islam, in addition, creates a spiritual relationship between all Muslims. In addition to being the creatures of one God and offspring of one mother and father, the Qur'ān reveals that believers are all brothers (Q. 49:10).

A set of Islamic social values emerges from these three insights and their relating tendencies. The root of these values is a mutual feeling of love and compassion between all

human beings. The extent and the strength of this mutual love is due to the extent of our attention to and consciousness of these three principles. Naturally if we neglect or begin to forget these connections with others, we feel strange. If we make these principles part of our consciousness and behave accordingly, we feel close to others in society. A social value then is to love human beings and sacrifice ourselves for them since they are related to one beloved God.

In Islam two major social values govern the social interrelationships as the result of those insights: social justice (*ʿadl*) and doing good/showing compassion (*iḥsān*). Social justice ensures that the result of each individual effort reflects the person him/herself. In a social and cooperative context the outcomes must be distributed in accordance with the quality and quantity of one's efforts. However, there are contexts within which some people cannot contribute because they are handicapped or are incapable.

The principle of *iḥsān* must function here as well. Here social justice does not work. The principle of social justice is applied to those capable people who do not contribute because they do not want to do so. They prefer to live on the cost of others' contribution. Despite the prior insistence on the principle of justice, Islam invites believers to act according to *iḥsān* (compassion) with respect to those who through no fault of their own are handicapped or incapable. The elderly, who at one time actively participated in society must be helped once they find themselves handicapped. Society as a whole and not the state is responsible for such people. The Qur'ān (16:90) insists on the application of both justice and doing good interrelatedly. Social behavior must be value-laden and based on these two principles: social justice and doing good (Misbah 1996, 18-9).

These aspects are determinants in what I have referred to in this study as the “culture of development.” I argue that development does not occur in a vacuum. It is surrounded by culture and values elements. If we provide a clear picture of human beings, their potentialities, and what we regard as being of quality or of value, the discussion will be more comprehensive. This will also affect our decision as to the changes that must be made to educational policies and institutions or to how we utilize them in development.

Therefore, I assume that a central discussion in cultural development or the Islamic<sup>8</sup> culture of development is to provide a clear profile of humanology and the methods of culture and values development in individuals. The whole issue of humanology, particularly from an Islamic point of view, deserves independent consideration. Misbah Yazdi and Mutahhari have provided independent volumes examining this issue from a Qur’ānic point of view. My understanding is that Islam also puts human beings at the center in its model of development. Political, economic, environmental and other aspects are of course necessary dimensions. Nonetheless, these dimensions all revolve around two types of human relationships - on the one hand with nature and on the other society. Yet a comprehensive model requires the addition of other aspects.

I believe that improvement is not restricted to human relationships with nature and society. Although we need to provide a democratic and enabling environment that expands human capabilities, it must also ensure the full use of these capabilities (H.D.R. 1995, 290). A comprehensive development, I assume, requires two more pillars. In addition to the

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<sup>8</sup> By Islamic I mean the Shi‘ī Islamic understanding which is again further narrowed down by my elaboration on Sadr’s model. The proposed elements and the roots of the above-mentioned Islamic model are explained in Chapters 3 & 4.

improvement of our relationships with nature and other individuals in society, we need a model to direct our behavior in our relationships with God and with ourselves. The latter two, as I will explain, are the roots of the form of human behavior in respect to nature and other individuals.

The Islamic perspective provides a four-part model which includes strategies which integrate and modify human relationships with God, one's self, nature and society. The Islamic model of human development, therefore, is a sort of development of the people by the people for God. The reason is that this model directs all attempts to arrive at an absolute ideal, God. A believer, as I will explain it, regards his/her life-span on this planet as a mission. Therefore he/she needs to figure out the essence of this mission and the consequences he/she meets. Moreover, it is crucial to know what sort of culture and values influence us in our relationships with nature and society.

Social development, from an Islamic point of view, begins with individuals. Individuals need to be developed with regard to the four types of relationships mentioned above. The neglect of any aspect will result in incomplete or semi-complete models. An independent study must investigate this aspect comprehensively. I have touched briefly on this issue above and I will discuss the culture and values foundations of social change as explained by M. B. Sadr. The following chapter reviews the theoretical foundations of socio-educational change from a comparative perspective, and takes into consideration both Western and Islamic approaches. The Islamic approach consists largely of a summary of Sadr's theory since it is in my view quite viable as an Islamic theory. I tend to explore to what extent Sadr's model proves to be inclusive in terms of the above-mentioned elements. This will, I hope, characterize an Islamic culture of development as opposed to a non-Islamic ones.

## ***1.2. Islam and the Dilemma of Stability vs. Change***

Human beings are the only species that enjoys a changing social and individual life (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 35). We may find other species that can live in a social context. This context is, nonetheless, instinctively fixed and pre-determined. We never divide animals' social lives into pre-modern, modern and postmodern periods. This is due to the fact that change is a characteristic of human life. Human beings, in fact, choose to alter their lives consciously. They are not satisfied with one specific type of life-style. The complexity of daily life urges them to change and modify their ways of living. An important question for many Muslim and non-Muslim scholars is how Islam, a religion fifteen centuries old, could have attracted the loyalty of so many nations and kept it during the years? The question has become more challenging in recent centuries, during which humankind has witnessed unbelievable ups and downs. This issue will be more complicated if we take into consideration the claim that Islam is a way of life. Islam, as Muslims believe, is the seal of the religions with a claim to inclusivity.

More critical questions may be faced by those who believe in the functionality of Islam until the end of history and the last man (Mutahhari 1993; Sadr 1982b, 69-70). The juxtaposition of keeping an Islamic identity and having an effective encounter with the ever-changing aspects of life remains challenging. For example, one might ask whether it is possible that Islam, with its fixed and limited system of rules and instructions, can meet the needs of the modern and complex life not only of its adherents but of all human beings? It is hard to think of a system which is flexible enough to be compatible with the various circumstances of different ages and various generations. Needless to say, these are not questions of recent date. Almost since the death of the Prophet Muhammad for Sunni Muslims,



and among Shi'ites, after the *ghaybat-i kubrā* (major occultation) in the tenth century of the Christian era of the twelfth Imam (Mahdi/peace be upon him), these questions have engaged the minds and hearts of Muslim scholars (Sadr 1989, 43-4).<sup>9</sup> How is it possible to maintain a belief and behavioral system functioning in various conditions and in both individual and collective life? What first comes to mind is that to believe in an ancient religion contradicts any change and development. As social life operates within cycles of changing times and places, the related norms must change, too.

Different hypotheses and responses have been provided for these questions (Sadr 1989, 1982a & 1982b; Mutahhari 1991; Soroush 1994; IKITR 1998). Soroush (1994) alludes to some of these reflections. To resolve the complexity of how one can combine stability and change in an Islamic reformist model both Shi'i and Sunni thinkers have provided different proposals. Mutahhari (1993) first divides the whole system of Islamic rules into the key stable and changing principles and then proposes the *ijtihād* mechanism as a bridge linking the two.

The term *ijtihād* is terminologically defined as: "*badhl al-wus'il liqāyān bi 'amalimmā*" (using one's entire capacity in accomplishing any task) (Sadr 1989 30). To me the term in a Shi'i understanding refers to an expertise which characterizes the holders as jurists (*fuqahā'* or *mujtahids*). They attempt to discover the Islamic rules or the Islamic behavioral orientations corresponding to the emerging problems in Islamic society. In other words, they try to provide endorsing references from Islam to guarantee the religiosity of every behavior or practical orientation (Sadr 1989, 13-4 & 34). These legal standards are included in the main

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<sup>9</sup> It is worth noting that, except in dialogical intersections such as the argument in *ijtihād*, I have approached various dimensions of culture and values discussion in this dissertation from a Shi'i point of view. This stems from my primary concern to elaborate on Sadr's theory. An inclusive Islamic perspective therefore would

Islamic sources (the Qur'ān, the prophetic and Imams' traditions, reasoning (utilization of human reason) and the consensus of Muslim jurists).

Although the term *ijtihād* technically applies to the skillful attempts in jurisprudence, it could be extended to include other attempts at finding Islamic answers for practical problems in Muslims' lives by referring to Islamic sources. Therefore, *ijtihād* could be an expertise fulfilled in all aspects of Islamic knowledge rather than in jurisprudence alone. I observe that this meaning is applicable to jurisprudence itself when it is divided into different disciplines which deal with the Islamization of human behavior in both the personal and collective domains. The reason for the former technical application is perhaps that jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is the most extensive area in Islamic thought. The experts in jurisprudence try to discover God's rules in various aspects of Muslim lives.

Some scholars argue that Islamic rules are laws revealed to organize human life inclusively (Sadr 1978, vol. 1, 65). This extended meaning is not restricted to jurisprudence as presently known among the experts of this discipline. Sadr observes that all events in human life which relate in some way to human behavior deserve a specific divine rule (Sadr 1978, vol. 2, 17). Therefore, the scope of jurisprudence includes the entire human life. This observation, of course, is related to those dimensions of human behavior that lead to the quality of life that is divinely expected.

Mutahhari also states that *ijtihād* is defined as an empowering element in the Islamic law system. It prevents this system from being static or contradictory. Through *ijtihād* a Muslim scholar attempts to trace new emerging problems back to the permanent core

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necessitate the consideration of other non-Shi'i perspectives.

principles. This type of *ijtihād* is synonymous with *tafaqquh* (deep understanding of the Islamic references). As the term *tafaqquh* implies, a Muslim scholar should go deep to the core and nucleus of religion. If someone touches the core and feels the spirit of Islam, he/she will be able to construct the upper structure of Islamic laws. Jurisprudents try to have access to the depth and hidden streams of religion. This process requires an inclusive knowledge of the roots and philosophical foundations of the Islamic rules and demands of daily life (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 232-45). These roots and foundations are the criteria to set these rules as religious obligations. Experts in various areas are consulted to provide a true picture of life demands. This consultation helps Muslim jurisprudents to discover the true and functioning Islamic rules accordingly.

Due to the exclusive application of the present meaning of *ijtihād*, which is essentially applied to *fiqh* (the domain of Islamic behavioral rulings), Soroush contends that this resolution, if it functions, is not inclusive (1994, 496). In his view this approach will perhaps impact only on the purely legal problems of *fiqh*. Yet the effectiveness of other dimensions of Islamic knowledge remains problematic. Another resolution focuses on the distinction between Islamic thought and Islamic civilization. Islamic thought includes permanent beliefs and standards while Islamic civilization is the applied form of Islamic thought in varying circumstances. Change is the major characteristic of the latter and stability the attribute of the former, which may be applied in various forms in different situations due to different variables. Ali Shariʿatī is regarded as one of the representatives of this group (Soroush 1994, 497).

A third group has attempted to differentiate Islam from Muslims. To them, the major reason for Islamic backwardness is the false actions of Muslims. To regain their prosperity

Muslims should be socio-politically conscientized or awakened. Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Asadābadī (or al-Afghānī: 1838-97) is deemed as one of the chief proponents of this idea (Soroush 1994, 498). Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905), a disciple of Sayyid Jamāl proposed another way. To him Islamic revivalism relies on two simultaneous acts of inclusion and exclusion. He maintains that to apply Islam Muslim thinkers must be able to distinguish the original Islamic elements from the additional non-Islamic elements. Then they must exclude the non-Islamic elements and include forgotten elements. These strange and essential forgotten elements are nonetheless never clearly explained (Soroush 1994, 498-500).

Soroush himself provides another epistemological distinction. To him the only effective solution to the challenge of stability and change in Islam is to distinguish Islam (*dīn*) from knowledge of Islam (*maʿrifat-i dīn*). Islam as a revealed religion is stable but the method of understanding it changes inclusively (Soroush 1994, 501-03). His theory, known as the theoretical extension and contraction of religious knowledge is the most challenging theory to appear in recent decades. For reasons of scope, I must limit myself here to only a brief survey of what developments there have been on this issue in recent decades.

My discussion here reflects a Shīʿī point of view. An extended Shīʿī response, however, requires a multidimensional approach which falls out of the domain of this study. Therefore, my involvement here is no more than an introductory discussion for understanding an Islamic model of development and social change. Islamic legal, ideological and moral systems are possible dimensions in which the issue of change and stability has been raised (IKITR 1998, 129-30). The extent and mechanisms of flexibility in the Islamic legal system have been discussed by Muslim jurists (*fuqahā*) (Sadr 1982a & 1982b; Mutahhari 1991, vols. 1 &

2; IKITR 1998, 131-34). Stability and change in various elements of Islamic ideology has been of major concern to Muslim theologians and Muslim philosophers. A similar discussion has involved Muslim thinkers in examining the survival of Islamic moral values parallel to ever-changing socio-cultural contexts (IKITR 1998, 129-35 & 1988). An in-depth discussion of each of these aspects deserves an independent study. My concern here is mainly to provide an introductory and holistic approach, focusing on the legal aspects. I shall discuss later in this chapter the procedure of change in the Islamic legal system as it is the more problematic domain.

It is crucial to note, however, that modernity, as a phenomenon opposed to traditionalism, is not always a goal sought by Muslim scholars. Newness and antiquity per se are neither refutable nor acceptable (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 202). The question is which core Islamic values should be maintained. An Islamic model of development, as I will explain in my chapter on Sadr's model, is associated with a particular cultural pattern and a given moral system which characterize this model as a God-centered model. Viewing the human life-span as an ontological mission, submission to God's rules and behaving in accordance with the Islamic moral system in relation to society, nature and oneself, as well as seeing life on this planet as an introduction to an ever-lasting life in the hereafter, are just some of the possible guidelines (Sadr 1982a). If a modern way of life can preserve this cultural pattern in an easier and more secure way, it is accepted. If it replaces these values with new and incompatible values, it is marginalized. It is also crucial to note that Islamicity is sought when a feasible procedure can not only keep the Islamic values but prove to be effective. Therefore, a further

task is to establish an Islamic system which is both Islamically value-laden and also competitive with other alternatives.

Here again I assume that what has made Islam a feasible religion is its flexibility through the practice of *ijtihād*. This practice is employed by Muslim scholars in order to establish new structures to maintain a permanent core. It falls beyond my task in this dissertation to provide a detailed discussion about *ijtihād* as it emerged, and was developed and reformulated in Islamic thought. Sadr examines this issue in a historical approach to show the intellectual tensions around this subject. Almost half of his work *al-Maʿālīm al-Jadīdah* (*New Milestones*) is devoted to this aspect (see Sadr 1989, 28-100).

*Ijtihād*, as Sadr points out, was based on the fundamental idea that human life in its entirety must be formed in accordance to the divine rules. To guarantee the divinity of rules an infallible mediator provides and protects these rules. The difficulty begins when this infallible mediator dies. Sunni and Shīʿī scholars have followed two different lines in this debate. The shared point, nevertheless, between these two schools of thought is that the gate of *ijtihād* opens whenever Muslim society suffers from the lack of an infallible reference. The availability of this reference ended, according to Sunni Muslims, when the Prophet Muhammad died. For Shīʿī Muslims this turning point came with the first or the second occultation of the twelfth Imām (Sadr 1989, 60-1).

In addition to the above-mentioned dichotomy, Sunni and Shīʿī scholars differ in explaining and applying *ijtihād*. In the Sunni school of thought *ijtihād* functions as a complementary reference when the *Sharīʿah* (religion) falls short of providing needed rules. The origin of this debate is the question whether the Qurʾān and the Sunnah are inclusive in

providing rules corresponding to all emerging subjects or not. The Ḥanafī school of thought hypothesizes that the answer is no. This point of view leads to a type of Ḥanafī rationalism (*qiyās*/deduction) which elevates individual opinion to the level of the revelation in providing Islamic rules. Abū Ḥanīfah Nuʿmān b. Thābit (d. 150/767) believed that in cases where he could not find any reference in the Qurʾān or in the prophetic tradition for the Islamic rules, he would rely on his own opinion (Sadr 1989, 30 & 41; Mutahhari 1993, 131-2).

This rationalism was strongly debated by non-Ḥanafī Sunni schools. Three other schools (Mālikī, Ḥanbalī and Shāfiʿī) were established with varying attitudes towards *ijtihād*. The Zāhirī school of Dāwūd b. ʿAlī Khalaf al-Iṣbahānī (in the middle of the 3rd century of the Islamic era) in jurisprudence, and the ʿAshʿarī school of thought both in theology and ethics in later centuries, are examples of the opposition to Ḥanafī rationalism. This tension led eventually to a confusing diversity of opinions and methodologies in dealing with *ijtihād* and Islamic rules. It was in the seventh century of the Islamic era that a Mamlūk sultān, Baybars al-Malik al-Zāhir, intervened and announced that the gate of *ijtihād* was closed.<sup>10</sup> Since then Sunni scholars have had to follow one of the four founders of the above-mentioned schools of thought (Mutahhari 1991, 100-1).

The Shīʿī scholars who believed in the inclusiveness of *Sharīʿah* and utilized *ijtihād* as a tool for quarrying desperately needed new rules were also anti-Ḥanafī. Shīʿī jurisprudents followed their imāms in opposing the Ḥanafī meaning of *ijtihād* which resulted in the breakdown of the divinity of the Islamic rules (Sadr 1989, 251-2). They nonetheless tried to

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<sup>10</sup> Although Mutahhari, like other Muslim thinkers, views the above-mentioned trend of ups and downs in *ijtihād* as a commonly accepted vantage point, there are scholars (Hallaq, 1984) who argue that even among Sunni Muslims the gate of *ijtihād* was never closed.

avoid dogmatism which emerged among the *Zāhirīs*. Among *Shīʿī* thinkers *ijtihād* was reviewed and reformulated from being an independent reference to a tool of exploration (for a detailed discussion see Sadr 1989, 29-61, Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 101-4). Probably al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (Najm al-Dīn Jaʿfar b. Ḥasan d. 676/1277) is the one who utilized the term *ijtihād* in the most optimistic way among *Shīʿī* scholars. Since then *Shīʿī* scholars have followed his lead (Sadr 1989, 80-1).

I have to maintain that a divisive tension also emerged among the *Shīʿī* scholars in the eleventh century of the Islamic era. Mīrzā Muḥammad Amīn Astarābādī (d.1023/1614) founded his *akhbārī* school as a reaction against those '*uṣūlī*' scholars who reformulated *ijtihād* and utilized it in jurisprudence. The *akhbārī* scholars discredited *ijtihād* and insisted on the necessity of submission to the apparent aspect of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah (Sadr 1989, 82-7). This tension was resolved or rather the *uṣūlīs* came to dominate their rivals when M. B. al-Bihbahānī (d. 1206/1791) demonstrated the necessity of *ijtihād* and its coherence with the fundamentals of Islam (Sadr 1989, 49-50 & 90). In this study, I have utilized the recent *Shīʿī* understanding of *ijtihād* as a mechanism which bridges the gap between change and stability.

Any form of change or development in an Islamic context is therefore due to the functionality and effective role of *ijtihād*. Mutahhari defines this term as referring to the exploration of numerous unpredictable details from key outlines. This definition is in fact derived from a *Shīʿī* saying in which the imām maintains: '*ʿalaynā ilqā' al-'uṣūl wa ʿalaykum al-tafrīʿ*'<sup>11</sup> (we have to provide the principles but you are the one who must try to explore the

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<sup>11</sup> See Mutahhari 1993, 133. He quotes from the end of the *Sarāʾir* of Ibn Idrīs, p. 478. This tradition is also narrated from imām al-Riḍā (A.S.) in al-Ḥurr al-ʿĀmilī's *Wasā'il al-Shīʿah*, vol. 27, bāb (section) 6, p. 62, *rawāyah* (saying): 33202. I quote from the electronic Noor software.



details). Since it is impossible for any religion to provide a full and comprehensive collection of all rules that human beings require in managing their life, certain limited outlines are presented. Human life is too complex and multi-faceted. Therefore, the provision is focused on the limited but extendible principles. Mutahhari adds that this procedure resembles what we observe in teaching math. Math educators teach students the key rules, students nonetheless answer countless new questions under the light of key formulas (1993, 131-34).

Among Shīʿī Muslims this practice is an open door in order to explore answers for emerging dilemmas. Islamic laws, as I will show, are based on some fundamental elements which link these laws to a quality (positive or negative/improving or damaging) in human life. These elements are, indeed, the philosophy of the system of Islamic law (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 246). Experts in Islamic law attempt to discover these elements and protect them in the face of varying circumstances.

Human life is ever-changing. The emergence of scientific and technological inventions make human life more complicated. The complexity of the social and private aspects of human lives poses a challenge to culture and values. What must be Islam's response concerning these complexities if it is going to be an effective way of life? Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the success of the Iranian Revolution, there has arisen a belief that a new era of Islamic power is dawning. This idea has led some Islamicists to look upon Islam as a contestatory ideology with a global potentiality (Halliday 1994, 91).

The emergence of this idea, of course, is not new and can be traced back to the flourishing of Islam in the seventh century of the Christian era. Islam had a strong presence in Spain for more than six centuries, followed by the expansion of the Ottoman empire in the

sixteenth century into much of the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa, a situation which lasted until 1889. The same Islamic force expanded in the south-east with the establishment of the Mogul empire in northern India, resulting in a confrontation between Muslims and Hindus (Halliday, 92). Colonialism and neocolonialism radically changed this picture. The various undeveloped or developing Muslim nations are the legacy of that vital civilization. However, the new Islamic revivalism seeks to solve the problems within Muslim societies rather than to threaten non-Muslim societies. Muslims are seeking to discover a model which feasibly combines development with Islamic values.

### ***1.3. Islamic Revivalism in Recent Centuries***

It was shortly after the French conquered Egypt at the turn of the eighteenth century that Muslims first encountered the Western powers. The encounter at this time was different from previous interfaces. The Muslim leadership realized their backwardness not only on the military but also on the socio-cultural level. Scientific findings and achievements in the West were so decisive that they persuaded Muslims to admit that they had something to learn from the former. The new findings created a top-down and overwhelming contact between the West and the colonized Muslim nations. This superiority lasted for nearly two centuries, during which period Muslim societies found themselves under the domination of non-Muslim states. The depressing impact of these two centuries of colonial period motivated Muslims to seek answers to the multidimensional challenges that had been thrust upon them. New types of questions and even self-critiques emerged among Muslim thinkers as a response to Western challenges. They asked themselves questions such as: What is the secret of Western superiority? Why have we been defeated? What is wrong with us? How can the community of

Islam regain its leadership role and status? These questions were indeed the fruits of a depressing situation which had divided the world into dominators and the dominated. This process of self-questioning and self-criticizing led Muslim scholars to play a major role. The independence of Muslim societies was one of the consequences of this struggle (Bagader 1994, 115-16).

In spite of having obtained their independence, Muslim nations have, over the last century or so, experienced the most depressing frustrations. Parallel to the expansion of Western colonialism, the Islamic world has lost its political, economic and military strengths. Both imperialism and communism, like the two blades of a pair of scissors, to use Mutahhari's image,<sup>12</sup> have shredded Islamic identity. This struggle has included the Islamic world in Africa, Asia, the Balkans, Middle Asia, the Middle East and the Far East. The cultural and values consequences of this collapse have been identity crisis, self-alienation, and loss of self-esteem. Doubts and suspicions about their identity have led Muslims to experience a fluctuating cultural identity (Ḥaddād ʿĀdil 1997).

Reviewing the situation faced by the Muslim world in recent centuries, Sadr hypothesizes three periods. The first period began with Western colonialism, which resulted in the political dominance of the West. The second period was a consequence of the political hegemony which reflected the economic dominance of Western, developed countries. The irresponsible exploitation of the raw materials of the colonized Muslim countries and the provision of Western models of development among their people are some of the results of this period. The third period (the present one) is the period of Muslims' struggle to regain their

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<sup>12</sup> See Mutahhari 1989, 124.

balance. Following their political independence, Muslim countries have attempted to win economic freedom and development. Development in these countries however required a model, and the only available ones were Western.

Sadr's goal in most of his writings is to motivate Muslim scholars to think of a possible Islamic model of development. He observes that Muslims' dependence in the first and the second periods was inevitable. They were dominated by the invaders with no room for maneuver. The third period, which is the period of choosing a development model, is a conscious choice. To Sadr, Western models are based on a Western world-view of the universe, society, wealth and power. An Islamic alternative should rely on an Islamic world-view.

He concludes that the unsuccessful experiences of development plans in Muslim societies even after political independence may have been due to two main reasons. The frustrating and painful experience of these societies at the hands of Western colonizers and the incoherence of Western models with the Islamic cultural pattern are Sadr's explanation. A functioning development model is in need of a coherent cultural pattern associated with economic plans. This cultural pattern invites Muslim citizens to have an effective and willing participation. This participation happens when citizens are culturally and morally developed from within. Yet Sadr did not restrict his comments to only at a critical level. He attempted to provide the theoretical foundation of a possible Islamic model. Sadr's volumes entitled *Falsafatunā* (Our Philosophy), *Iqtisādunā* (Our Economy), *al-Bank al-Lāribawī* (Interest free Banking System) and *al-'Usus al-Manṭiqīyah li al-Istiqrā'* (The Logical Foundation of Induction) are a few examples (Amīn 1996,121-5).

Muslims are presently faced with a new challenge. Their concern is not to regain leadership. They are attempting to discover a feasible Islamic model which is comparable or competitive with non-Islamic models both in theory and practice. The new world is moving towards a type of co-existence and mutual understanding of all cultures. Muslims must attempt to find a sustainable position in the third space.

#### ***1.4. Islam and Modernity (Coherence or Contrast)***

Muslims have looked at modernization as a legacy of European colonialism advocated by Western-oriented elites who fostered the twin processes of Westernization<sup>13</sup> and secularization. Political and military failures, the disease of “westoxification,” cultural dependence and the loss of Islamic identity: all of these are regarded by many Muslims as inevitable consequences of following Western models of development and blind imitation of the West.

The most dramatic manifestation in the last two decades of a resurgent Islam has been the Islamic revolution in Iran. For many in both the West and the Muslim world, the unthinkable became a reality when the powerful, and so-called modernizing and Western-oriented regime of the Shāh came crashing down. According to Esposito (1992), the heart of

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<sup>13</sup> The term “West” and its different cognates and compounds are looked upon negatively in this project. It is urgent, however, to maintain that Islamic scholarly debate never opposes the West merely from a geographical perspective. There is no reason to confront West as a piece of land or oppose Western understandings simply because they are proposed by a certain generation of human beings. This negation contradicts, as I have previously mentioned, an Islamic standard of loving all human beings as creatures of one God. Western science and technology, and findings in the humanities and social sciences are undoubtedly welcomed by all scholars. The negation goes back to the values and cultural aspects of Western models and theories. Materialism, secularism, the neglect of spiritual values of human life and the excessive emphasis on human freedom to the extent that people forget that they are the servants of God and have been placed on this earth to accomplish a divine mission, are aspects that contradict an Islamic perspective.

Islamic revivalism is a psychological feeling of self-alienation and marginalization of Islamic identity that has forced the Muslim world into a state of decline.

A return to Islam in both personal and public lives is one solution that can restore Islamic identity, values and power. Since Islam is viewed by Muslims as a comprehensive way of life, the revitalization of Muslim societies requires the re-implementation of this religion in its entirety. What is unacceptable for Muslims is not modernization as such but Westernization and secularization. Science and technology are welcomed, but the pace, direction and extent of the changes must be subordinated to Islamic beliefs and values.

Esposito furthermore argues that Islamic resurgence in its present form is becoming a mainstream party, moving from the periphery of political life to its center. In the nineties, a new generation of modern, educated but Islamically committed Muslims rose to prominence. The function of this movement is to follow broad-based socio-religious norms that have a transnational application (Esposito 1992). In his discussion of Islam and political development, Michael Hudson attempts to answer the question whether or not Islam is an impediment to the growth of modernity among Muslims (Hudson 1980).

In formulating my own answer to Hudson's question, I would like to begin by citing a Qur'ānic verse in which the concept of development is referred to as one of humankind's duties on earth. It is revealed in Qur'ān 11:61 that "He (God) brought you into being from the earth and wanted you to develop it." The term "develop" in this verse has an important implication. To use natural resources, we have usually to go through a process of manipulation of these resources. We need to develop them. As Misbah Yazdi argues, instead of a direct exploitation

of natural resources, God wanted humankind to cultivate the earth (natural resources) and apply his knowledge and technology to develop it (Misbah 1974, 7).

Development, in this verse, comes out of a mutual relationship between human being and nature. Direct exploitation of the earth is a primitive approach. This verse motivates not only Muslims but all human beings to develop the earth and improve their relationship with it in order that there should be a better quality access to natural resources. If we are going to develop the earth in order to meet our needs, we have to be equipped. Science and technology are the very prerequisites of development. Verse 11:61, therefore, is nothing less than a call for greater knowledge and technological know-how. If we do not know how to develop the earth, we will suffer poverty and backwardness. If, on the contrary, we utilize our technology excessively and without any control, we will damage our natural resources.

Excessive access to natural resources leads usually to a state of dominating wealth and power. Excessive exploitation of the earth will make things more difficult for the coming generations who are to use the same resources. A value-free and inclusive access to nature and natural resources will increase the possibility of social dysfunction among the citizens of a society. We are therefore greatly in need of both knowledge and values to bring about a sustainable development.

Bearing this Qur'ānic message in mind, the question arises: Where is the imagined contrast between Islam and development if it is not accompanied by a specific anti-Islamic values system? Any answer to the assumed divergence between Islam and modernity must follow Marshall Hodgson's interesting distinction between the terms "Islamic" and "Islamicate" in Islamic historiography. His classification can help us understand the roots of

this presupposed contrast. *Islamic*, as he observes, stands for an unmanipulated revealed religion while *Islamicate* is the civilization that has emerged and developed among Muslims during Islamic history (Hodgson 1974, 56-7). The claimed contrast, I assume, is between the Islamicate aspect of Muslim civilization and modernity. Ahmed, like Hodgson, differentiates between these two realities, noting: "These are Muslim lapses, a sign of social decay, not Islamic features" (Ahmed 1992, 117).

In his explanation of Ahmed's critiques of Western societies, Tomas Gerholm indicates that the reason why Ahmed does not come to the same conclusion in the case of Western civilization, saying, for example: "these are Capitalist (or Socialist or Modernist) lapses, signs of social decay, not expressions of Western ideals" could be of course, that Christianity plays a much smaller role in Western civilization than Islam does in Muslim civilization (Gerholm 1994, 200). Christianity, at least in its present meaning, is not conceived as a religion which touches Christians' social lives. Most aspects of life in the West are managed and regulated on a secular basis.

Unlike the assumption which views modernization as a threat to religious tradition as the former fosters a process of secularization, the reality in many Muslim countries is otherwise. Trying to explain the normative differences between Islamic and Western forms of development, Michael Hudson notes that while the politically developed Islamic society is God-centered, Western societies are human-centered (Hudson 1980). The former manages individual and collective life based on God's rules while the latter follows secularism. A secular perspective always assigns priority to human rights while a God-centered one joins



human rights to one's duties towards God. This juxtaposition puts religion at the center of human life to translate divine laws into realities of life.

To generate a Muslim world that is honored and respected in the new world order, some modernists argue that Muslims should adopt Western institutions, practices and models. However, fears of the disappearance of Islamic identity and its assimilation into Western culture are some of the psychological dynamics that have caused other Muslims to reject this approach. More importantly, there is an assumption that since modern European science had itself developed on the basis of classical Islamic learning transmitted to Europe through centers of learning in Muslim Spain and Renaissance Italy, Muslims could regain this science without damaging their Islamic integrity (Commins 1995, 118).

Pure modernity, dogmatic traditionalism and Islamic modernity are the three main responses which come to mind when a religion like Islam interfaces with social change and development.<sup>14</sup> An alternative is to think of Islam as an ever changing, multifaceted system which adjusts itself to changing life. This assumption must consider Islam to be a human-made system which inevitably changes in tandem with changing conditions. Adherents of this hypothesis may think of religion as an aspect of human life. Hence religion must change due to the fact that it belongs to a changing whole. The second way is to hold that Islam is a fixed system that is inflexible and unchanging. This pure traditionalism opposes anything new as anti-Islamic.

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<sup>14</sup> Mutahhari investigates the historical roots of these three alternatives when he discusses the interface of Islam and the changing conditions of human life in the history of Islamic thought (1991, vol. 1, 69-70). He traces the roots of these attitudes back to the emergence of various schools of thought in both Shīʿī and Sunni Islam (See Mutahhari, 1991, vol. 1, 67-153). A brief report on this discussion is provided above in this chapter where I reviewed the development of *ijtihād*.

The third alternative is to take a middle course. According to this assumption, Islam is neither totally fixed nor entirely flexible. To elaborate on this alternative, I will provide here a general picture of what I mean by Islam. I have conceived of Islam as a system which includes three main subsystems: an Islamic world-view (a set of beliefs centered around God and metaphysical aspects), Islamic rules (the domain of *fiqh*) and Islamic morality (values system).<sup>15</sup> The entire field that is constructed by these subsystems can be divided into two major areas. These latter may be referred to as ontological and behavioral areas (Misbah 1996, 7, 13). The belief system belongs to the ontological field and practical standards direct behavior. I have briefly touched on some aspects of Islamic ideology and values system at the outset of this chapter. I will again discuss some other dimensions in the following sections.

#### **1.4.1. Ideological and Values Domain**

The part of the Islamic world-view which deals with the explanation of the universe, human creation, the goal and the scope of human life and the results of a belief in the unity of God, prophecy and the Day of Resurrection may be said to form its ontological aspect. The behavioral realm, on the other hand, consists of values and behavioral standards (positive and negative values/musts and must-nots) which stipulate the duties of believers before God. Those values and behavioral standards which form or influence human free and conscious behavior and which entail a human quality of life in this world and in the hereafter constitute the behavioral area (IKITR 1998, 117-8).

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<sup>15</sup> To show the interrelatedness of these three aspects, Misbah Yazdi (1996, 13) provides an interesting example. To him, Islam resembles a grown tree with established roots, the main body and major branches and plenty of leaves on smaller branches. According to this scheme the world-view is the root, values system the main body and the major branches and legal system the leaves and numerous tiny branches.

Stability and change are two major topics which have often raised hot debates in the realms of Islamic ideology and Islamic morality. Muslim scholars have been faced with questions such as whether there are absolute moral values or merely changing and relative ones. Are moral values subjective or objective or somewhere in between? Another debate has involved developing a criterion based on which one could distinguish between moral and non-moral values (customs). Are moral values essentially religious or non-religious? (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1 & Misbah 1989).

New questions will be raised in any cultural interface between Islam and the West. What could be the solution for values diversity and values complexity in a multicultural and pluralist society? (Haydon 1995, 56) Are values public or private? This latter question is rooted in a deeper debate that seeks an answer as to whether human beings share commonalities in some aspects or no. A post-modern approach which rejects any truth outside the text and then discredits any true interpretation of it creates another challenge (Warnock 1996, 46-7).

Another discussion is the scope of values or moral values in particular. Are values confined to civil or societal values? (Warnock 1996, 49) Or are they essentially related to individual development and spiritual balance which will result in social well-being? (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 349-51 & vol. 2, 41-2; 243-7). While the former approach sees values as a means to prevent the breakdown of society, the latter insists on individual fulfillment which entails social improvement.

Aside from the method or methods (theological, philosophical, mystical or scientific) that one might use to explain and analyze the roots of Islamic ideology and Islamic moral values, the elements in these two subsystems are considered to be fixed and unchangeable.

Islamic ideology includes belief in such key elements as the unity of God, prophethood and the Day of Resurrection (IKITR 1998, 129-30). Islamic morality includes the values system and moral standards centered around the two core elements of faith in God and piety. These two elements differentiate Islamic moral values system from a secular one. A detailed discussion of these aspects however deserves independent study and would take me away from the topic of this dissertation.

#### **1.4.2. The Domain of Islamic Law**

Islamic law in its various aspects can be divided into two parts: the core and the periphery. The first part is related to the essence and spirit of Islamic law and it must be maintained under any conditions. The second part includes peripheral aspects which refer to the structure, application and apparent aspect of the law. This part changes due to new demands and conditions. Islamic law, in touching on various aspects of human life is therefore comprised of a stable and constant essence and a changing structure. *Ijtihād* is a process through which changing circumstances are referred to the stable sources which are located at the core. As blood runs through the vessels of the human body, *ijtihad* runs through and gives life to the Islamic legal system (Mutahhari 1980, 100).

Mutahhari argues that what makes Islam an ever-lasting and stable religion is the fact that it always deals with the essence, meaning and goal of human life. The form, structure, method and shape of life is left up to human beings (Mutahhari 1980, 100). Therefore, administrative and managerial aspects may change due to changing circumstances, but the essence is stable (Mutahhari 1980, 102-04). Expertise in Islamic law consists in an ability to bypass the structure and reach the core. In this case a Muslim scholar can find compatible

structures for the permanent core (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 1, 234, 245). An example of a changing rule with regard to its structural and administrative aspects may be seen in the Qur'ānic injunction regarding the necessity of being well-prepared for possible threats to Muslim society. The Qur'ān (8:60) reveals:

And prepare against them (fighting disbelievers) to the outmost of your power including steeds of war to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know...

The key message in this verse is that Muslims should be alert to the dangers posed by their enemies. The circumstances in Islamic society at the time of Prophet (when this verse was revealed) and in later generations have always determined how this is done. Simple weapons and horses (as this verse indicates) were used in early Islam in guarding the frontier. Muslims are therefore obliged to accept the core message but should prepare themselves in accordance to the changing conditions of every age. In modern times a dogmatic understanding of this message is futile.

Therefore, Muslim scholars interpret this verse in conformity with what the situation demands. Running the institution of *wilāyat-i faqīh* (the religious supreme leadership in a Muslim society) in a way that guarantees the Islamicity of all aspects of life, the management of male-female relationships at social, educational and political levels through patterns which preserve the modesty of both sexes, the provision of an Islamic banking system which avoids the application of the forbidden interest while remaining feasible in the present competitive world of finance, are a few other examples that require functioning structures. Thus Muslim scholars should be aware of both changing conditions and the essential spirit of each Islamic rule.

To show the compatibility of Islamic law with changing circumstances, Muhammad Bāqir Sadr proposed another solution. He maintained that Muslim experts in Islamic law have to develop this domain on two different levels. Horizontally they have to pay attention to newly emerging problems in human life and find corresponding answers depending on the Islamic sources. Dimensions of human life are both qualitatively and quantitatively ever-changing. Answers provided by the Muslim thinkers of one generation cannot cover the problems faced by every succeeding generation. Therefore the scope of Islamic law is gradually expanding. The more important task nevertheless remains untouched. The necessity of providing detailed Islamic laws for emerging problems should not compromise this more fundamental task. Muslim experts in Islamic law need to develop theoretical models by investigating each group of Islamic regulations. Shoulds and should-nots are only immediate answers to human problems.

The more crucial task is to discover the theoretical standards which characterize the Islamic approach to each single problem. This task is all the more vital given that Islamic society lacks an infallible prophet and imams. To make his proposal more understandable, Sadr provides an example. He argues that natives and those inside a particular culture and language do not need to be taught about the standards and regulations of using that language. They live with this language and learn to use it properly without having to pass any language course or memorize any rules of grammar. An outsider or a foreigner who wants to learn a language and use it correctly needs to be taught through a systematic method. He/she needs to learn the standards and rules for the correct use of that language.

The same procedure applies to those who are absent from their native environment or must deal with foreign terms, expressions and words in their language. They need to regulate and formulate their language to be able to protect it against elements of other languages which may become mixed with their own. This procedure is also applicable in the interface of cultures and religions. Muslims of today, who are so remote in time from the Prophet Muhammad and the succeeding imams, suffer from not having immediate and divinely guaranteed answers for emerging problems. This situation is more crucial when they interact with other cultures and ideologies. Muslims need to establish patterns which define their Islamic identity. This is the reason why Muslim experts of Islamic law have to create theoretical patterns at a deeper, vertical level beyond providing specific rules (Sadr 1978, 30-2).

In a more recent explanation of the flexibility of Islamic rules in the face of changing conditions, Mutahhari maintains that the ever-lasting character of Islam is due to the specificity and the nature of Islamic rules. Islam is a revealed religion designed to direct human life to be God-like. Therefore, it conveys both divinity and humanity. Its humanity goes back to the fact that it is a religion dealing with realities (*maṣlaḥah*/goodness and *mafsadah*/badness) in human life (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 2, 27). Its divinity refers to the fact that it is revealed by God. Islam is not a man-made religion. Islamic rules (commands and prohibitions), he argues, always derive from fundamental elements which preserve or prevent positive and negative realities in human life, respectively. Nor are Islamic rules merely some abstract impositions without connection to any reality. Commands protect the positive aspects (goodness and well-being) and prohibitions prevent the negative aspects (corruption) of human life. These realities can be

discovered through human effort. One of the chief tasks of Muslim scholars and experts in Islamic law is to try to discover them behind the laws. To protect those realities, however, Muslim scholars may need to propose changes to forms and structures (Mutahhari 1991, vol., 2, 27-32).

The major concern is to protect those realities as the core of Islamic rules. The core realities are not easily accessible even to Islamicists.<sup>16</sup> It is in fact a risky task to try to discover the core elements behind Islamic rules. These core elements link human life, on the one hand, to the divinity and, on the other hand, to the realities of his/her life. While they supply human well-being in this world, they also guarantee human life in the hereafter. The ultimate goal beyond these core elements is to support human beings in this world and in the hereafter. Human life, according to this point of view, must lead to human perfection and closeness to God. Human life must reflect God's attributes. This is perhaps the sense of what is meant by becoming near to God as the final aim of applying Islamic rules. The lack of a comprehensive understanding of these hidden elements or an inability to see the possible contradictions between them can create confusion for Islamicists (Sadr 1994, 289). This is perhaps one of the reasons for their not being able to provide immediate solutions in ever-changing circumstances.

To retain those core elements and to help Muslims keep close to God and provide a feasible way of life is not an easy task. Just as the human personality is multifaceted, these core realities are also multiple. Moreover, they sometimes compromise one another. Muslim experts should decide which of them deserve priority. The most difficult part in this process is to

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<sup>16</sup> The theory or philosophy of the purposes of Islamic rules (*naẓariyah al-maqāṣid fī al-aḥkām al-sharʿiyyah*) was first developed by Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Mūsā al-Shāḥibī (d. 1388) in the second volume of his *al-Muwafiqā fī*



discover these elements inclusively and evenly. A precise evaluation of the core elements can facilitate the reformulation of the structure of laws. To renew the structure of an Islamic rule, Muslim scholars must be assured that they have not only included all core realities, but that they have also dissolved all possible tensions between these realities in problematic circumstances.

Mutahhari maintains that although Muslim scholars do not have easy access to the foundations of Islamic rules, they are encouraged to discover them. This encouragement is a bridge linking humanity to the divine. To unveil the roots of Islamic rules, Muslim scholars must use their reason and the scientific knowledge of their time (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 2, 27-28). Therefore, human reason and up-dated knowledge play an important role in facilitating the compatibility of the Islamic law with actual circumstances.

In his explanation of the more problematic areas in the Islamic legal system Mutahhari divides (1991, vol. 2, 41-46) it into four realms. He observes that Islamic laws from one point of view deal with four types of human behavior. Some are set up to improve the human relationship with God. Rules which determine human worship of and rituals before God are subject to the least changes, if not none at all. Prophets throughout history have called upon humankind to worship God without any blasphemy. This ideology and its related aspects remain unchanged. Those of the second type shed light on the relationship with the self and constitute individual moral standards. These rules help human beings to acquire a better understanding of their potentialities and give them the ability to actualize them more comprehensively.

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*Uṣūl al-Sharīʿah*. Shāṭibī was a Muslim scholar of the eighth century of the Islamic era. He investigated the role

Human beings need to control their instinctive desires and natural impulses. Such rules lead human beings to internalize and establish individual moral standards and to establish qualified personalities. The Qur'ān, whose verses contains many of these rules, provides reliable standards centered upon the core elements of faith in Allah and piety. Laws of the third type consist of rules that modify human relationships with nature and natural resources. They direct human beings to maintain a just relationship with the earth and environment in a protecting and sustaining way. The rules of this domain also are not exposed to major fluctuation.

The last but not the least are those rules which direct human beings within their social relationships with other people. The most challenging part is this area which creates the most obscure complexities (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 2, 41-42). Social interaction is ever-changing, along with advancements in science and technology. New values, rights and duties emerge in modern societies along with emerging inventions. Muslim scholars face the most difficult task in this realm. Even the problems and complexities which emerge regarding human relations (usage and maintenance) with the environment and natural resources are caused by human relations. Jurisprudents have to discover feasible but thoroughly Islamic laws. They are asked to provide new social rules that meet new problems. These rules should not only handle the daily problems but must convey a spirit compatible with Islamic culture and values.

Beyond this adjusting mechanism, the authority of a supreme Muslim leader who is, indeed, a pious expert in Islam, can resolve the remaining ambiguities and cloudy areas (Mutahhari 1980, 106). The application of Islamic rules, resolution of managerial complexities

and guaranteeing the Islamicity of the applied rules often result in practical problems which only be resolved through the supervision of this predicted religious leadership. This is the impact of the institution known as *wilāyat-i faqīh* (leadership and supervision of the jurisprudent), which is recognized in post-revolutionary Iran. This office is filled by a Muslim scholar who translates the theoretical standards of Islamic law into practice within the Islamic society. The functionality of this institution has increased in post-revolutionary Iran since it is associated with a council which investigates problematic aspects of Islamic laws in relation to emerging social complexities and proposes feasible advice to that institution.

### **1.5. Social & Individual Change**

Having in mind a possible approach to the resolution of the dilemma of relating Islam to the ever-changing conditions of human life, we now turn to a fundamental question in cultural development and social change. What is the starting point in any development and social change? What can educators do to facilitate a sustainable model of development? In this study, I prefer to use the term “cultural development/or improving the culture of development” since I assume that culture and values development is the major task of educators. Educational institutions educate students to be future citizens with a particular attitude and value system, as well as to have a particular understanding of development and social participation. My hypothesis is that each model of development happens in a specific cultural context. This culture consists of goals, values, methods and priorities, a pattern within which individuals operate. This culture is partly a product of education in its broad sense. It is in fact the outcome of both formal and informal education.

My concern in this study is the assumption that an Islamic model of development conveys a distinctive culture and values system. I assume that an Islamic model of development takes place in an Islamic cultural context. This culture is characterized by an Islamic ideology, an Islamic value system and Islamic moral standards which distinguish the Islamic model of development from non-Islamic models. This culture influences goals, values and methods for development in an Islamic society. A decisive element in creating and establishing this culture is education.

My question is: How, and to what extent, does education contribute to forming this culture? As educators, do we have to start from social or from individual levels? My understanding, which is influenced by Sadr's theory, sides with the latter. Sadr's theory suggests that to establish any social change we have to start from individuals. Cultural development or an Islamic culture of development, in my view, focuses on changing personalities. This will lead to an improving change and development in other aspects. The Qur'ānic model also suggests an inevitable link between social and individual levels.

The linkage between individual and social or between spiritual and material development is clearly indicated in the Qur'ānic passage which says: "God does not change the condition of a people until they change their own inner conditions." (Q. 13:11; see also Chapra 1992, 197 for more explanation). Cultural development and social changes in a society, according to the Qur'ān, depend on the spiritual improvement of its members. In another Qur'ānic verse (7:97) this is even more explicitly stated: "If the people of the towns had believed (in God) and guarded (against evil), We would certainly have opened up for them

blessings from the heaven and the earth.” Individual and spiritual growth will be rewarded with a full and intensive development of society in terms of the quality of life of its citizens.

Islamically, therefore, any social development should begin with individual change; accordingly, an Islamic culture of development gives priority to human development at an individual level. The most important aspect of an Islamic theory of development is that of Islamic humanology which views humankind from a distinctive vantage point. Policies, practices and all decisions in any field including development and education are based on an accepted view of humankind. Developmental goals, procedures, methods and limitations are influenced by the way we understand and define ourselves. This standpoint is derived from an Islamic humanology which looks at both aspects of man’s existence, the soul and the body. This humanology links present human life to life in the hereafter, and puts together human rights and duties in relation to God. In the following chapters, I will discuss the theoretical foundations of both the Islamic and Western approaches in cultural development and social change. This comparison will indicate the major emphasis of each approach.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Theoretical Foundations of Socio-Educational Change**

#### ***2.A. The Importance of Theoretical Foundations***

Any analytical discussion of development and education requires a clear understanding of the theoretical foundations. Individual choices, behaviors and priorities derive from basic philosophical, ideological and experimental orientations with respect to social reality (Paulston 1977, 371). Policies of change in any form and any domain are the outcome of underlying theoretical frameworks. Developmental, culture and values changes and educational reforms imply that previous theories have been challenged at a deeper level.

In this section, I shall look at some major theoretical categories regarding development and socio-educational change. For me, educational change is part of a series of wider changes on a social level. Social change also depends on the function of educational parameters. Not only do schools and educational institutions teach necessary social skills and roles, they are also expected to inculcate appropriate ideas, values, and world-views in an effort to develop a “new person.” Therefore, some scholars view education as part of the means of social transformation (Carnoy & Samoff 1990, 7). To understand the roots of educational change, it is vital to reexamine the interrelationship between social and educational change.

As Paulston (1977) maintains, many unspecified theoretical and ideological axes provide the foundations for educational change and reform studies; however, most of these are latent. It is also important to examine the impact that political power, ideology, interests and external factors have on decisions about socio-educational changes; even more important is an

understanding of the resulting conflicts over reform priorities (Paulston 1977, 394). Education in its broadest sense includes formal, informal and non-formal realms (Hallak 1990, 6).

An understanding of socio-educational change rests on a fundamental basis in the theoretical frameworks of both spheres. To reach this understanding, I have incorporated pre-modern (classic), modern and postmodern perspectives. The main concentration, however, has been the modern and postmodern periods. My goal has been to examine the possible link between theories of social and educational change. To me socio-educational change falls under a culture and values umbrella which highlights the priorities and influences goals and methods. I have generally reviewed the history of theories of development and social change to discover the origin of present heterogeneous orientations. The educational concentration is more explicit in theories that convey educational connotations.

Philosophers and social scientists have often interpreted and explained the reality of social change in their age based on particular theories. A common paradox for all theories of development and social change is to explain and interpret past events. If social commentators explain the past after it has happened, they are faced with the problem of their own subjectivity. If they are interpreting the social events of their own time, they are at risk of taking short-term variations as a whole process of a larger trend. This limitation stems from the fact that social change can only be perceived through a macro-inclusive perspective (Fagerlind & Saha 1983, 5-6).

### ***2.B. Education as a Key Element***

Among other factors, education has been considered a key variable in the developmental process. Based on the specific conception of development and the proposed

structure and goals that are identified for development, education, if used properly, can be an important instrument for development. Critical thinkers also trace social inequalities and discriminatory values and attitudes back to the impact of educational systems (Demarrais 1995, 183).

A minimum level of national education is only one aspect of developmental proposals. Nations are now investing in education as a tool for global competition. Restructuring the educational system in order to meet the prerequisite of inescapable change at either the global or domestic level is of primary importance for educational planners. It is believed that the important role of education refers to its decisive contribution to both national development and individual well-being (Schultz, 1980). People and not things are now regarded as the goals of development. As indicated in the first *Human Development Report*, "People are the real wealth of a nation." (H.D.R. 1995, 117).

Among the five "energizers" of human resource development provided by UNDP - education, health and nutrition, the environment, employment, political and economic freedom - education is undoubtedly the basis for human development (Hallak 1990, 1). However, it is doubtful that education could play any constructive role without a clear understanding of the function of variables like the definition of the word development, theoretical frames of development, the social context of putting a theory into practice, and the preferred development strategies which imply a particular culture and values system. This system requires a certain method of culture and values development which educates citizens for a pre-accepted development model.



To create culture and values development, various elements are involved. The critical question however, is: Which element plays the most decisive role? One cannot find any agreement among social theorists on the most decisive institution in the society. This dramatically depends on the theory to which one adheres. For Muslim thinkers (Misbah 1989), the institution of education in its broader meaning takes the first priority. This is due to a number of reasons:

1. Education is the first criterion by which humankind are distinguished from animals.

While human beings, like animals, behave partly on the basis of instinct, here then the difference is not qualitative. The distinction dramatically rests on rationalizing behavior. Education undoubtedly is the only means that actualizes and improves reason and cognitive ability. Education help people to actualize themselves in terms of minds and hearts.

2. Beyond all material and physical needs which are met by other institutions, the institution of education can help societies to meet both corporal and spiritual demands. Since the ultimate goal of social life, from an Islamic perspective, is spiritual development, which results in nearness to God, then the institution of education elevates other institutions as a vehicle to that purpose. For these two reasons education is deemed to be the right for human beings. Education is a basic requirement for a human being to live as humans.

3. The institution of education is an instrument for educating people to know social standards and motivating them to follow social norms. In addition it prepares them to play a proper role and find an appropriate status in the society. This is true of course when the society is not stratified in an unjust way. A review of the Qur'ānic verses reveals that teaching and

training is regarded as the main responsibility of the Prophets. In Q. 2:129 for example Abraham, who worries about the future of his clan, is quoted as having asked God to:

...raise up among them an Apostle from themselves who shall recite to them Your signs and teach them the Book and the wisdom, and purify them.

A similar message is revealed in 2:151, 3:164 and 62:2. This emphasis is due to the fact that through prophetic education the people come to understand the real purpose of life and are directed toward it. It is worth mentioning that by education here I mean both formal and informal education including all institutions which improve values and culture. This incorporates, in addition to formal education, the media, newspapers and journals, books, religious sermons, speeches and ceremonies, art exhibits, etc. (Misbah, 1989, 315-319).

In the process of social change, the first and most important step has to be made by the citizens themselves. An undeveloped population should become aware of its depressed situation. The people have to know about the prevailing values as well as the roots of their problems. They also need to be informed about their potentialities, their possibilities and the path to self-development. This knowledge can be acquired through education (however it may be defined) because through it the people will learn how to participate in solving their public and individual problems.

### ***2.C. Categorization of Theories***

Providing an inclusive classification of all the heterogeneous orientations of social and educational change is a difficult task. Some scholars have grouped these theories into three categories: theories of transmission, interpretive theories and transformation theories (Demarrais 1995, 3). Older studies classify theoretical frameworks into two main categories:

One which emphasizes the equilibrium paradigm and another that views inherent instability and conflicting elements as the key factors in explaining social change (Paulston 1977, 375-76). Allahar (1989) offers a territorial scale. Social evolutionism, for him, belongs to a European perspective, while modernization is viewed as an American (including Latin American) point of view and dependency seen as a Third World approach. He concludes that various theoretical perspectives are categorized whether based on a macro-structural or a micro-interpretive methodology (Allahar 1989, 141).

In my view, any territorial classification prevents us from acknowledging that all theoretical frameworks may be derived from a single trend. In Allahar's theory, the occurrence of the Enlightenment, for example, would be seen as the background for European theories while its possible influence on North American theories would be ignored. In his comparative survey of the history of philosophy of education in the second half of the past century, Beck (1991) insists on this interdependency.

Although I. Fagerlind and L. J. Saha's (1995) classification of theoretical frameworks is relatively old, it remains clear and is the most comprehensive. They have described social theories of the pre-modern and modern periods. The main structure of my theoretical discussion follows the line of research drawn by these two scholars. It is necessary, however, to go beyond their analysis and examine the critical impact of postmodern theories. Although I have alluded here to the postmodernist perspective, it is fairly well discussed in the coming section

It is also important to realize that recent social thinkers and educational reformers tend to be synthetic in their approach rather than support one particular theory. This is, indeed, a

postmodernist integration which tends to facilitate dialogue among differing theoretical orientations (Rust 1996, 29). No single theory is perceived to be capable of giving a comprehensive explanation of social and educational change. Through a macro review of the history of knowledge in comparative and international education, Paulston has illustrated this trend. He contends that since World War II three major trends have emerged: orthodoxy, heterodoxy and heterogeneity. For him, the 1950s and 1960s saw the dominance of the hegemonic and totalizing influences of functionalism and positivism. The by-product of these related theoretical orientations was law-like statements and generalizations.

Heterodoxy emerged in the 1970s and 1980s and defeated orthodox paradigms through critical and interpretive views. In the 1990s, the heterogeneous atmosphere has allowed knowledge communities to participate in a complementary dialogue. Social thinkers have reached the point where that they can recognize, tolerate and even appreciate the existence of multiple theoretical realities and perspectives. The collapse of the legitimacy of metanarratives has resulted in what Derrida conceptualized as re-knowing "*difference*" (Rust 1996, 32). Difference, for postmodernists, means to listen to all voices. Ginsburg and his colleagues observe that any adequate understanding of national and local educational reform is due to a consideration of development in the world system, both peripheral societies and core ones. Regional educational reform cannot be properly investigated unless we take into account global structural and ideological contexts (Ginsburg 1990, 493-4).

## **2.1. The Western Approach**

### **2.1.1. Pre-Modern & Modern Theories**

#### ***Pre-modern Theories***

A study of developmental orientation in the Western tradition usually begins with classical cyclical theories. Of these, the theories of the Greeks in general and Aristotle in particular were the most prominent. Development, for them, occurs in a cyclical form which leads to the formation of the State, which in turn plays a central role in social change. Changes begun in the independent social structure of the family lead to the emergence of villages; later, a combination of villages ends up taking on the form of a State. The central idea in this theory is the fact that development is a natural evolution of the family into the State. According to classical thinkers, furthermore, development is a set of continuous cycles of growth and decay. Modern scholars allege that this doctrine stems from the closeness of the classical thinkers to nature. Little attention was paid at this stage to education as an influential element. A more precise review of the works of Greek philosophers may result in the elucidation of the role of education. Examples are provided in following paragraphs.

The Greek classic approach to education and social change can be traced back to Plato (427-347 BC). What has continued to be influential in the idealism of Plato is his insistence on the use of dialectic (critical discussion), which propels people from mere opinion to true knowledge. Dialogue can also help students come closer to agreement or synthesis. The educational aim, for Plato is to use dialogue as a vehicle which transform the concern of citizens with the material world to a concern with the world of ideas or forms. Plato also proposed that society can be developed by education and the active role of the state in

educational matters if it moves toward the absolute Good which is the core of the world of ideas (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 2-4).

Aristotle (384-322 BC), another philosopher of the classical period, constructed his school of thought based on the principle of balance. To him all the material world is in some stage of actualization. This process moves to some end and resembles the modern view of evolution. Happiness is the chief good that social development must aim at. This goal is the result of virtuous and well-ordered souls. An appropriate education can develop the habit of virtue in a nation's citizens. Aristotle viewed education as constructive only if it leads to the Golden Mean. The Golden Means is another expression of the principle of balance which fosters the idea of moderation between two extremes in any process of actualization. States could use education as a vehicle to produce and nurture good citizens for a desirable social development (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 42-4). Therefore, the primary aim of education, for Aristotle, is that of nurturing virtuous citizens. Education according to him should not be limited to schools. It is the general task of the state to create an educating social context. This context should model citizens in accordance with the form of government under which they live. It is always the case that the better the character, the better the government (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 72).

Hellenistic culture and philosophy, but particularly Platonic idealism, considerably influenced the founders of the Roman Catholic church. Plato provided his myth about the human soul's arched-like journey: souls that once lived near the Good were exiled to the world of matter where they struggle to return to the world of ideals. St. Augustine (AD 354-430) proposed a theory founded in the concept of evil which views humankind as innately sinful, the

sin that was inherited from the sin of Adam. Human beings, in this view, are engaged in a continuous struggle to regain the purity they once had before the Fall. This religious idealism believes in the human journey from the World of God to the World of Man, and its eventual return to the former (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 5).

Augustine also articulated a Christian view of development that differed from that of the Greek thinkers; he considered the cycle of development as unrepeatable, single and unique. Thus, the cycle of growth and decay is a single process, begun with the creation of Adam, that has flourished since the first coming of Christ and will end with the collapse of the material world. From this perspective, the notion of natural process, a distinguishing characteristic in the Greek view, has been replaced with the concept of the “will of God” as the key element in the process of change in this world. Followers of this view looked at the future of the material world pessimistically, holding the idea that humankind is nearing destruction; some continued to hold such beliefs even after the Enlightenment, associated with advances in science and technology. As little choice is given to individuals in this theory due to its pessimistic view, education do not play a major role. New theories emerged only in the 17th and 18th centuries; although optimistic, they retained elements of the Augustinian view (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 8).

### ***Theories of Enlightenment***

Western developmentalists entered a new phase with the rise of the scientific revolution in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and also the occurrence of the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries. They optimistically viewed the future of humankind as ever-changing but progressive. Among Christians, Protestant reformation was a reaction to Catholic Christian

thought. Enlightenment optimism emerged in the writings of various intellectuals. In France in 1688, Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle proposed the idea of unlimited and unending progress as a dominant norm characteristic of all civilizations. Descartes, another French philosopher, focused on rational knowledge as an element elevated above other human uncertainties. In Germany, the philosophy of Leibniz offered the idea of continuity and graduity in development. In the late 18th century, Immanuel Kant insisted on natural continuity as the main characteristic of human civilization particularly of its moral existence. While he accepted the possibility of interruption in the developmental process, he believed that progressive movement never ceases. Enlightenment optimism then reemerged in works of Condorcet and Rousseau. The latter considered education a tool to help a person become part of civilized society while remaining uncorrupted by it (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 9-11). This is probably the first explicit emphasis on the role of education in social change. The same idea was proposed by Aristotle when he linked education and state in producing desirable citizens.

### ***Pioneers of Modern Social Thought***

More systematic and complex forms of Enlightenment theories were formulated in the 19th and 20th centuries. Evolutionary describes virtually all these theories, basically identified by six main assumptions. In these theories, change and development are characterized as natural, unidirectional, momentary, continuous, necessary and stemming from identical causes. For the evolutionists, social change progresses from a primitive to a modern complex mode. However, they insist that the trend of social change always evolves piecemeal rather than in revolutionary fashion. (So 1990, 19).



The pioneer of this group of theorists was a German philosopher, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. His theory of development is close to classical Greek and Roman thought (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 11). Hegel's dialectic theory, which opposed the previous stage-based developmental views, influenced later thinkers such as Marx and his followers. This conception was elaborated by the French philosopher, Auguste Comte, who laid the cornerstone of modern sociology in the form of his three-staged positivistic explanation of the evolution of human life. For Comte, theological, metaphysical and scientific or positivistic change are three hierarchical stages of evolution that have occurred in the history of human society. In other words, religion, reason and science, according to Comte, can play a major role in explaining social change. Comte's theory offers the new idea that the stages of social change are indicators of development in human thinking. He argues that the root cause of all social change is change in the human mind. As he views science as the final stage, clearly Comte would admit that education has had a large role in scientific advancement. Perhaps, it may be said that for Comte, education has played a transforming role in shaping people's minds (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 12).

In the late 19th century, Herbert Spencer, a British philosopher, joined his voice to the evolutionary school of thought. He proposed the idea of the "survival of the fittest" as an explanation for evolution in human society. He believed that, as in the plant and animal kingdoms, human society operates based on the principle that only the strongest survives. The works of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, French sociologist Emile Durkheim, are the scene of the next stage in social evolutionary theory. Durkheim and his contemporaries looked upon society as a living organism, progressing from a simple phase to a more complicated

modern one. In this view, human society is not a whole, integrated organism whose components all develop simultaneously. Therefore, societies are always divided into developed and undeveloped. Undeveloped societies are representative of the primary stage while the developed communities are examples of modern and complex phases of the developmental process.

A sociological analysis may indicate the impact of these evolutionary theories on all colonial movements. Dividing human societies into developed and undeveloped has created the attitude that developed societies should help undeveloped ones to follow the same evolutionary path already experienced by the former. This explanation associated with the aiding policy provided justification for colonization (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 12-14).

By the early years of the 20th century, evolutionary theory faced multidimensional challenges. The occurrence of two World Wars gave rise to questions about the irreversibility of a single developmental process in human life. Societies could decline even as they appeared to be heading for further development. Highly traditional religious rituals survived in modern industrial circumstances despite the fact that social theorists regarded them as relics of the primitive stage of change. The explanations of evolutionists who had proposed that each society must progress from a less-developed phase to a more civilized stage, were strongly challenged. These challenges devalued the viability of evolutionary theories and paved the way for the emergence of those explanations which interpret social changes based on the function of social structures (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 14).

This new interpretation was the result of both anthropological and sociological understandings. Structural-functionalism emerged and dominated sociological thought during

the four decades between the 1930s and the 1970s. The systematic formulation of this theory was primarily due to the efforts of Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton.

Modern models and approaches which had their philosophical roots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, i.e., during the age of the Enlightenment in Europe, can be divided into two very broad categories. One group has viewed the economic interests of nations and classes as harmonious, while the others has looked upon those interests as conflicting (Black 1991, 23). The central element in social change for both groups has always been economic interests.

Influenced by early biological studies, Parsons formulated his social theory based on the metaphor of a biological organism. For proponents of this theory, society is like a whole system composed of interrelated parts (religion, education, political institutions, family, etc.). These parts function based on a homeostatic principle which allows them to achieve harmony and equilibrium. If a pathological event creates some form of social tension, all parts must function to regain equilibrium. The harmonious coordination among institutions led Parsons to conceptualize the society as a “system” (So 1990, 20). According to a functionalist view, therefore, the purpose of schooling is not limited to an intellectual one, it also includes political, economic and social aims (Demarrais 1995, 7). Functionalists regard schools as sites for meritocratic selection and socializing students for existing citizenship as well as places where people can be trained for stratified occupational roles (Demarrais 1995, 183).

Structural-functionalists depart from evolutionists in viewing all social changes as functions which result in social harmony. Therefore, any kind of conflict or tension is harmful to social harmony. This theory, however, as with previous schools of thought, could not

successfully refute all critiques and challenges. Since it did not take conflicts, clashes and disharmonies into account, it has been criticized as static. Moreover, it was accused of conservatism because it considered both conflict and tension to be dysfunctional. Adaptive change is only possible for followers of this theory through education, which results in both individual and social change. Therefore, schools are only pattern-maintainers. Schools are not, and in fact cannot be, innovators. Educational reform must then be the result of an interaction between society and schools (Paulston 1977, 379). Educational reform in an equilibrium-paradigm structural functionalist view is a way of improvement. It must improve the educational system's effectiveness, efficiency or relevance. Although these goals may accommodate the educational system to the world of work, they may also increase or at least reinforce inequalities in education and society. Moreover, it is not easy to determine consensual goals and procedures for an educational system. Some people perceive as constructive what others view as destructive or regressive (Ginsburg 1990, 476).

These challenges eventually facilitated the emergence of a type of neo-evolutionism at the hands of scholars like Talcott Parsons, the founder of structural-functionalism. This form of structural-functionalism was an effort to explain social change through an evolutionary perspective. The evolution of societies, for neo-evolutionists, was a three-staged process of integration, differentiation and reintegration. This melded version of structural-functionalism has in turn opened the gate to modernization theory (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 15. Cites from Parsons, 1966).

Modernization theory represents a dramatic reaction to the evolutionary theories of the 1920s and 1930s, having itself emerged in the 1950s. The lack of convincing intellectual

evidence for the separate evolutionary and functionalist theories forced modernists to think about a synthetic model consisting of evolutionary and functionalist assumptions (So 1990, 18-19). Moreover, the intellectual consequences of the two World Wars and the disintegration of the European colonial empires in Asia, Africa and Latin America helped this theory to provide an optimistic picture for the human future. This theory was advocated first by American social scientists in an effort to change the conditions of Third World nation-states and prevent them from falling into the hands of the communist bloc led by the former Soviet Union (So 1990, 17). The central concern of this theory was to show the necessity for developing societies to follow the same path to development as the industrialized West. Citing Huntington (1976), Fagerlind and Saha profile the theory as follows:

The process of modernization can be characterized as revolutionary (a dramatic shift from traditional to modern), complex (multiple causes), systematic, global (affecting all societies), phased (advances through stages), harmonizing (convergence), irreversible and progressive (1995, 16).

The achievement motive, reinforced by newly acquired modern values, is one psychological aspect which modernists elaborate on. Modern values can be taught, according to modernists, through socialization which takes place in social institutions such as families, schools and factories. Modernization theory however suffers from its inability to show a causal link between achieving modern values and behaving properly. In this theory, there is a model which provides a set of five variables as a pattern of modernization. Modernizing institutions create modern values, modern values in turn cause modern behavior, modern behavior will lead to a modern society which is economically developed. Except for the first two sets of variable, the causal links between the variables are doubtful and debatable. Moreover, scholars contest

that it is impossible to provide the universal definition of modern values and modern behavior required by this theory.

Recent studies<sup>1</sup> reveal that it is impossible to show a causal link between the proposed variables. In addition, some scholars argue that, unlike the fundamental assumption of modernization theory, modern attitudes are not necessarily incompatible with traditional ones. A third critique refutes the assumption that individual development equals social advancement. Modern values and behavior at the individual level will not inevitably lead to socioeconomic development unless all or a dramatic majority of individuals view and behave in this modern way. A final challenge condemns modernization theory for its ethnocentric bias which presented a view in which modernization equals Westernization (Fagerlind & Saha, 1983, 15-17).

Parallel to the development of a sociological approach to modernization theory, economists have also put forward human capital theory as a theoretical framework for explaining development based on structural functional notions. For economists the development process required improvement in capital investment, including human resources; according to them, this is the foundation of development in any society. Major figures such as Theodore Schultz have observed that the process of producing a qualified labor force through education is a productive investment which facilitates economic development. Both modernization theory and human capital theory are strongly concerned with large public expenditure on education as a means of improving human capital. However, overemphasis of human capital theory on education and neglect of other factors like family background and the

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<sup>1</sup> See Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 17. They quote from Delacroix & Ragin, 1978 and Sutcliffe, 1978.

innate abilities which influence occupational and income success, constitute an important critique of this theory. Other structural factors like economic, political and social systems are influential in individual attainment. Another problem is that this theory cannot precisely explain the impact of education on labor quality (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 17-19). Above all, since the human capital theory is production-centered, its emphasis on education is indeed an attempt to improve investments and increase benefit. Both Islamic and humanistic perspectives challenge the idea that the human being is merely a piece of capital.

Although social thinkers have implicitly or explicitly realized that any change or development is the result of previous tension or conflict, some have regarded it as pathological or abnormal in relation to the existing social system. Therefore, in European thought it was only Hegel that emphasized conflict as a key dimension in his theory of change. His dialectical model with its three-stage process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis influenced Marx to develop his new theory with an emphasis on social class conflicts. Marx proposed his theory as a way to resolve class tensions through an inevitable struggle between the two conflicting classes of society, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The root of all human conflict, according to Marx, is the economic structure, particularly the modes of production and the concentration of capital in the hands of a small portion of society. Marx alleged that social institutions (including educational ones) are means to create social norms proper to the economic structure. The propertied class aims to legitimize its authority through educational institutions. There will be no change in the social structure as long as the working class is not aware of its exploited condition (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 19-20).

To mobilize the masses in their struggle with the capitalist system, developmental programs must include mass literacy and ideological conscientization. Through these two programs the proletariat can be made aware of its situation as the victims of exploitation. (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 20-1, cited from Melotti, 1977).

Despite its considerable impact on developmental thought, Marxist theory missed some important points. While Marx spoke about colonialism, he neglected the idea of underdevelopment. (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 21). The overemphasis on class conflict prevented him from analyzing and accounting for cultural conflicts (Paulston 1977, 388).

In my opinion social conflict is not restricted, as Marx has argued, to conflicts between economic classes. For example, it was religio-political conflict that led to the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran. These motives outweighed the economic motives behind the Revolution. For decades, Muslim activists who have experienced ideological tensions have been accused of fundamentalism. Except for the former Soviet Union, China, and some parts of Eastern Europe, most capitalist societies have never experienced Marxist proposals in terms of socio-economic changes. Capitalism has functioned within the existing economic structure in many capitalist societies. The cloudy points in Marxist theory led to the emergence of the dependency theory.

Dependency theory, unlike evolutionary and modernization theories, looks at development as a causally related phenomenon of the changes that occur between and within societies. Development in a region or in a society is related to the underdevelopment of another region or society. This causal relationship exists between central or metropolitan societies on the one hand and peripheral or dominated societies on the other. Inspired by Marx' ideas on



class conflict and exploitation within a class society, the American economist Paul Baran developed the theory that the poverty seen in undeveloped countries is rooted in the high standard of living in the Western world (Baran, 1957). Studying the development problems of Latin America in the late 1950s and 1960s, Andre Gunder Frank reformulated this new systematic theory. The key concept of his theory is its division of the world into core and peripheral countries.

Despite its significant impact on recent thinking about development, the dependency theory has also faced some critiques. Overemphasis on the external causes of underdevelopment, ambiguity about the real consequences of foreign investment, trade and aid in some specific conditions, neglect of the impact of non-capitalist countries like the former Soviet Union and their relations with countries like North Korea and Afghanistan, are just some examples of the challenges addressed to this theory.

Present world conditions have necessitated a type of interdependent relationship between developed and developing countries. Yet dependency theorists are unable to provide guidelines about non-dependent development (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 22-5). The three decades of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s served as a battlefield for the conflicts between modernization, dependency and world-system schools of thought. In the late 1980s, social thinkers advocated a move toward synthetic theoretical frameworks (So 1990, 12).

### ***Giving a Greater Role to Education***

Several unanswered critiques have forced social thinkers to focus on the educational dimensions of development rather than try to establish a new theory. In none of the previous theories did education play a vital role. Education, if given any part, was but one among many

other elements. This was justified in various ways. Some theorists did not see education practice as an expression of a prevailing theory. Others did not adopt a comprehensive view in their approach. For other scholars the exclusion of education was due to the fact that formal education was not a mass-concerned parameter. They may have observed that formal education was limited to a minority of the population. Certainly in evolutionary theory, educational institutions were applied as a tool for training the youth of elites to exercise imperial power in order to maintain the dominant/subordinate group orientation. Similarly, in Marxist theory, education plays a significant role in the development of a socialist society.

However, it was after this period that education was given a more vital theoretical role. This tendency motivated liberation theorists to join Marxist and dependency theorists in placing more of an emphasis on education. Holding the same perspectives, the adherents of liberation theory tried to find the roots of underdevelopment and the means of eliminating it. Using a humanistic approach, liberation theorists stated that the initial step toward development is to conscientize oppressed populations about the roots of the injustice of their situation. The key instrument for liberation theorists is education. The word “conscientização” is borrowed from the Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire whose works are prominent in recent development thought. His ideas are regarded as the earliest impetus for the creation of later critical theories.

Freire sees development as identical to liberation and insists on the role of education as the key means to liberation. He argues that national salvation depends on the role of individuals. Individual understanding is helpful when it is free from the mediation and definition of Church authority (Freire 1996, 67). Education can or must help individuals to

acquire self-reflection, discover the state's hegemony and perform positive actions (Demarrais 1995, 28). Since education in developing countries can produce a literate population aware of the conditions which oppress them, it has been regarded a potential threat to the economic and political systems. To what extent education can promote liberation and exempt the oppressed from social difficulties needs further investigation (Fagerlind & Saha, 1995, 25-6).

Current understandings and interpretations of development are explicitly influenced by the ideas of conflict and upward movement which are key to both revolutionary and evolutionary theories. Development, for modern thinkers, is viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon both in theory and practice. Therefore, all previous development theories are criticized for being one-sided and not comprehensive (Fagerlind & Saha 1995, 29-31). It is difficult to give an accurate explanation of development without taking into account aspects like health, education, social well-being, political structure, ideological and cultural differences as well as environmental and economical dimensions. These can only be comprehensively examined from within an inclusive perspective.

### **Closing Words**

The necessity of being inclusive and synthetic in approaching theories and thoughts is a lesson I have learned from studying Western pre-modern and modern socio-educational theories. New elements must also be considered. None of the theories discussed exhibits an emphasis on the impact of culture and values systems and ideological input. Only modernization theory links social change with the implementation of modern values at an individual level. A lesson from the post-modern approach is that facts are always connected

with values.<sup>2</sup> Values discussion is however rarely found in the above-mentioned theories. It is evident that different theories embody varying values emphases in relation to different views of development. In an Islamic world view, for instance, change should begin with values and attitudes at an individual level. Social change is, in fact, a reflection of individual values change if it takes place at a grass-root level. We behave as we think and as we view and evaluate ourselves in relation to our surroundings. We are therefor influenced by our philosophy of life.

In addition, a possible method for socio-educational change is to approach it systematically. A systematic approach views social and educational problems as interconnected, interdependent and interacting elements (Banathy 1994, 28). I have also come to understand that national reform policies are inevitably related to a global context. A realistic approach is another concern in my conclusion. To bring about realistic educational reform, we could start as Morgan proposes:

Educational development starting completely anew almost never happens. We have schools and teachers laden with traditions which are not going to go away. Our task is, taking them as they are, to make them better; to make them more responsive to the needs of each child and responsive to the long-term needs of society. And we can't stop the educational process while we figure out what needs to be done. (Morgan 1994, 44)

While a realistic approach is critical of the static and inhibiting dimensions, it appreciates functioning and improving facets.

In my view, it is difficult even through a synthetic approach to provide a uniform course of action for all societies. It may be more feasible to propose as inclusively as possible a mosaic of approaches which provide the grounds for necessary domestic and multicultural

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<sup>2</sup> See Demarrais 1995, 27-8. The author attributes this idea to Habermas and Foucault.

considerations. It is vital to recognize and evaluate the “Other,” their failures or successes which enable us to make our own decisions. It is also important to realize that the implementation of educational reform is not only a way toward social development but is also an avenue to respond to the need for basic human rights. In concluding this section, I would like to quote Clive Becks’ final statement concerning his comparative survey about the philosophy of education: “We must accept complexity. But the happy paradox is that once we have accepted the impossibility of perfection, we will, other things being equal, come somewhat closer to achieving it.” (1991, 320)

## ***2.2. Post-Modern Perspective***

To achieve a better understanding of the theoretical foundations of socio-educational change, I have examined postmodern theories as new, contesting school of thought. Utilizing a socio-historical method, I have reviewed some of the most important writings by postmodernist thinkers to illustrate some of the problems and alternatives in education and social change. My major concerns include the intellectual shift from modern to postmodern conceptualizations, the linkage between postmodernism and critical pedagogy, and possible progressive alternatives. Despite postmodern critiques, there exists a promising basis for creating a synthetic model which incorporates both modern and postmodern attitudes in social and educational change.

In this section, I shall examine socio-educational change as it has been explained in postmodern theories. This part is complementary to the discussion in the previous section on modern theories of socio-educational change. No modern theory remains impervious to

suggestions for educational change. It will be interesting therefore to see how postmodern ideas have influenced theories of educational and social change.

Postmodernism has been at the core of most of the debate over academic issues since the 1980s. Words with the prefix *post*, like post-industrialism, poststructuralism,<sup>3</sup> postmodernism and post-liberalism, have been at the core of discussions among social thinkers. After an allusion to the theoretical and social origins of the formation of postmodernism and its expansion into various other disciplines, I shall deal with its impact on educational thought. Topics like postmodern offerings in educational change, postmodern educationalists, postmodernity and critical pedagogy and the evaluation of postmodern educational ideas are aspects which will be concisely discussed in this chapter. Through a socio-historical analysis, I will attempt to analyze the difference between a modern and postmodern perspective in educational change. As I have come to realize, postmodernism has linked its language of critique to the language of struggle and educational change. However, we have to realize that an appropriate balance between the “language of critique” and the “language of hope and possibilities” may help us to eradicate frustrating ideas in existing educational theories.

### **2.2.1. Theoretical & Social Origins of Postmodernism**

Henry A. Giroux has alleged that postmodernism in its broadest sense encompasses both an intellectual position (a form of cultural criticism) and an emerging set of social, cultural, and economic conditions which echoes the characteristics of the age of global capitalism and industrialism (Giroux 1988, 9). Postmodernists oppose philosophical systems of thought that provide some universal standard, such as what may be found in the works of

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<sup>3</sup> Post-structuralism is a more precise expression of postmodernism which represents a philosophical movement in

Adam Smith, Sigmund Freud, Georg Hegel, August Comte, and Karl Marx (Rust 1991, 616). Postmodernists are strongly influenced in their philosophy by the concepts of existentialism, phenomenology and hermeneutics. Indications of the influence of previous currents in philosophical thought include challenges to conventional philosophy, an emphasis on singularity and particularity and a distrust of objective determinism (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 365).

On an epistemological level, postmodernists have tried to tear down the certain and transcendent claim to truth of modernist discourse. This action resulted in discrediting the reliability of prevailing conceptualizations of what constitutes knowledge and truth (McLaren 1988, 53).

To gain a clear understanding of postmodernism, we have to reexamine its modern background. Although largely regarded as a Western phenomenon, modernism conveys ideals like rationalism, humanism, democracy, individualism and romanticism, which gradually but consistently have emerged in different places and at different times (Elkind 1995, 9). Modernism is a faith in rationality, science and technology which reinforces a belief in permanent, continual and progressive change and the unfolding of history. Education, consequently, serves as a socializing tool which legitimates codes by which the grand narrative of progress and human development will be infiltrated into future generations. Knowledge within the discourse of modernism portrays a Eurocentric boundary of culture and civilization. This culture and civilization has been scripted by the white males who offered models of “high culture” opposed to what the elite regarded as mass or popular culture.

Postmodernism began as a challenge to this mentality and as a movement to restructure our social, political and cultural geography (Giroux 1988, 5-6). Although the term *postmodern* is primarily an American term, most of its initiators belong to European schools of philosophy, particularly in France (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 365). At a global level, postmodernism suggests that the world order is shifting from a bipolar to a multipolar power configuration. This has resulted in the emergence of global markets and world concerns through local involvement (Rust 1991, 618-9). Postmodernism, in contrast to modernism, celebrates language rather than thought and honors human diversity as much as it does human individuality (Elkind 1995, 10).

Another concern for postmodernists was the hegemonic aspect of modernism. In opposition to pre-modern and modern theoretical frameworks, a new trend emerged in the Frankfurt school in Germany under the name “critical theory”. This group of social thinkers and philosophers at the Institute for Social Research during 1923-50 expressed views which contrasted with the positivism of Descartes and Saint-Simon. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer led this school in its attempt to develop a new interdisciplinary approach to the study of society and culture (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 365).

These critical points of view were, in fact, precursors to the formation of post-positivism with the revival of concepts such as the value of subjectivity, the legitimate use of non-experimental and qualitative methods and the rejection of absolute truth in science.

A main concern of postmodernism is to avoid giving authority to what Lyotard calls “grand narratives” or “metanarratives”. This concept, as Cherryholmes (1988) defines it, is something “similar to paradigms that guide thought and practice in a discipline or profession.” Lyotard claims that postmodern skepticism toward metanarratives results from their tendency



to lock civilization into a totalitarian and logocentric thought system. Metanarratives are totalizing discourses that claim universal validity. These forms of “theoretical terrorism” deny contingency, values, struggle, and human agency. They offer universal rational structures for what counts as the good, the true, or the beautiful (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 363). Instead of seeing society and history through a direct, subjective human experience, metanarratives provide a totalizing theory which depends on abstract principles and theoretical constructs (Rust 1996, 31).

Some studies with a Marxist tendency have portrayed postmodernism as the cultural skin and/or superstructure of the current form of global capitalism. This cultural skin represents the cognitive mood of people who are restless, critical, unsatisfied and insatiable (Brosio 1994, 3-4). Postmodernism has also caused problems for a number of facets of modern culture. Its followers struggle against the concept of a fixed universal knowledge because of the tremendous impact of information technology. As we are in the age of electronically mediated culture, cybernetic steering systems and computer engineering, the conditions of knowledge are dramatically changing. Culture and civilization can no longer be ethnocentrically based on America and Europe. We are living in the age of the ‘information society’ in which, as Daniel Bell declares (1973, 194), knowledge and information are replacing industrial commodity production. In our postmodern condition, speed has become the most important element of life. All bonds of previous restraints have been broken and no one can fully own information or sell it independently. Information technology has created a new site and structure for schooling and education. Students have fast and full access to clusters of information, culture and values data

and cross-cultural communications (Rust 1991, 620-2). Insufficient treatment could lead to culture and identity crises.

Education is dominated by rapidly multiplying communications apparatuses. This dramatic and overwhelming impact of electronic communications has resulted in knowledge dilemmas and complexities. Some postmodernists view our age as largely artificial. People find it difficult to distinguish the substance from the image. Our privacy and our intimate lives have also been captured by electronic technology. The invasion of information has projected aspects of people's lives as flashing cursors on both real and imaginary monitors. We are robbed of our true humanity by fantastic images. This environment necessitates a new type of schooling, just as the factory model of the modern age is no longer sufficient. Our schools should be free from the invasion of the capitalist economic advantage (Rust 1991, 620-2). After all, while we have to be more sensitive to the dangers of communications technology, we must also reconsider its emancipatory potential (Rust 1991, 626).

### **2.2.2. A New Trend or Merely the Continuation of Modern Theories?**

An important question is whether postmodernism is a continuation of the modern age or whether it is something new and different. It is not easy to give a definitive answer because we are too close to the postmodernity that surrounds us. Like its emphasis on diversity as the key element in cultural representation, postmodernity itself does not represent a single clear theory. Some scholars, therefore, are seeking to construct theoretical syntheses out of new trends and social conditions (Kellner 1988b, 32). Jurgen Habermas, for instance, in a 1980 paper, initiated the idea that postmodernism is not a new concept, but merely an anti-modern sentiment. Later he attacked postmodernist claims that it represents a rupture in history and viewed it as a form

of neo-conservative ideology (Kellner 1988, 241). He remains supportive of the “project of Enlightenment” and argues for the indispensability of this project claiming that we should not give it up to those who wish to “negate modern culture.” (Rust 1991, 613). Some scholars, however, allege that postmodernism is a new historical epoch after the demise of modernism while others claim that it marks a clear change in artistic and literary styles within the modern era (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 361). As early as the 1950s, Irving Howe recognized the end of modernism in literature. This recognition was reaffirmed later by Leslie Fiedler in 1960 within the same field (Cahoone 1996, 8).<sup>4</sup> In architectural modernism Charles Jencks (1996, 469-70) declares the July 15, 1972, 3:32 as the precise moment of its death. This sudden death, according to Jencks, took the form of a demolition of a modern building in St Louis, Missouri “when the infamous Pruitt-Igoe scheme, or rather several of its slab blocks, were given the final *coup de grâce* by dynamite.” This modern rational scheme had been substituted for traditional patterns. It conveyed modern rationalism as the by-product of the Enlightenment.<sup>5</sup>

A third group has adopted Max Horkheimer’s idea and regards postmodernity as a “society in transition” or “a stage of growth” rather than a completely new social formation or an anti-modern reaction (Jencks 1996, 477 & Kellner 1988a, 267). Fredric Jameson (1984) views postmodernism as both progressive and regressive, both positive and negative. Apart from Jameson and some others, most scholars have considered postmodernity from a one-sided perspective and passed judgment upon it either positively or negatively (Kellner 1988b, 31). Postmodernism, according to many scholars, reflects a withdrawal from the authority and the

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<sup>4</sup> Cahoone (1996, 22) quotes from Irving Howe, “Mass Society and Postmodern Fiction,” in *The Decline of the New* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1970), 190-207, and Leslie Fiedler, “The New Mutants,” in *The Collected Essays of Leslie Fiedler*, vol. 2 (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 379-99.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed explanation of Jencks’ assertion regarding the demise of modern architecture and the later attacks

conceptual systems of Western culture. In 1954, Toynbee contended that the modern age of Western authenticity was beginning to be replaced by a new postmodern age advocating the coexistence of different cultures (Nicholson 1989, 198). Ernesto Laclau stated that “postmodernism cannot be a simple rejection of modernity , rather, it involves a different modulation of its themes and categories” (Giroux 1988, 6 quotes from Laclau 1988, 65). A mild version of postmodernity appeared in Elkind’s statement that it is not a revolt against modernity but a set of attitudes and efforts to modify and correct modern ideas that are too narrow or too broad (Elkind 1995, 10).

Followers of the concept of postmodernity as a distinct era claim that postmodernism represents an era characterized by new cultural features, a new type of social life, and a new economic order. Others take postmodernism not as a sharp break in Western political and cultural life but as another theoretical discourse which competes against other theoretical orientations of the modern age (Rust 1991, 611). The consequences of these various attitudes have emerged in policies of educational change. Revolutionary tendencies in educational reforms could be the final outcome of periodizing perspectives in postmodernism.

### **2.2.3. Postmodern Educationalists**

Reviewing the postmodern discussion, we realize that educational thinkers have only recently entered into postmodern debates. The limitations of modern theories motivated educationalists to examine postmodern educational findings. The rapid growth of critical theory in education is, in fact, simply feedback on the shortcomings of modernist theories. The advocates of critical theory are one of the major sources for postmodern educational

examination. Writing on postmodern education, Stanley Arnowitz and Henry Giroux observe that we can have a radical approach to education and democracy when these concepts are replaced by the old-style master narratives found in the liberal arts, modern science, and philosophical positivism (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 363). Peter McLaren is another figure who has developed the concept of a “critical pedagogy”. Critical pedagogy deals with the politics of power relations on the side of the oppressed. William Stanley, among other numerous contributors, juxtaposed critical postmodern pedagogy with social reconstructionist tradition (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 374-5).

#### **2.2.4. Educational Change or Educational Reform**

It is clear from their discussion about socio-educational change that postmodernists prefer to use the term “educational change” rather than “educational reform.” The term “reform” for them, always carries moral, political and cultural connotations. Postmodernists approach education and educational theories with the same approach they take to other disciplines, using a deconstructionalist approach. This approach leads them to question any final interpretation or authentic meaning. They may argue that if one looks up the term “reform” in the dictionary and then connects it to the technical usage of the term, she/he will understand postmodern sensitivity to the term. For them, any signifier can only direct us to another signifier, not to a final signified.

In educational or non-educational reform processes, the person deals with correcting an error or removing defects and deficiencies. This process will result in a sort of authenticity for a specific meaning or interpretation in a given theory. The term reform connotes culture and values implications. The term also conveys a type of non-revolutionary process and moral

treatment. In all these cases, we will face the problem of final interpretation. In establishing educational reform, we face questions such as: “who defines what is right and what is wrong?” or “who determines what is correct and what is an error?” We also face the question of who defines efficiency and deficiency. This problem also appears in cases dealing with moral values. Some immoral values and practices can definitely be moral for another person or another culture.

Another problem is that educational reform may sometimes need a dramatic revolutionary change of what we have previously taken for granted. Student movements, for example, or critical and revolutionary theories of educational change may necessitate dramatic changes. Therefore, I prefer to use the term “change” instead of reform throughout my examination of educational change according to the postmodern perspective.

#### **2.2.5. Postmodern Ideas in Educational Change**

In responding to educational change from a postmodern perspective, some scholars believe that since schools are mirrors of family and society, change emerges in schools as a reflection of what has already happened in the family and society. Therefore, prior to any conscious and planned change/reform agenda, schools must have undergone a major transformation (Elkind 1994, 8). To provide a picture of postmodern schools, Elkind sheds light on the postmodern condition of the family and society. He asserts that schools are already postmodern and that we simply have to acknowledge changing conditions. For Elkind, a postmodern school echoes the sentiments, values and perceptions of the postmodern family and society.

The emergence of a permeable family instead of a nuclear family, has changed school sites into places for acknowledging shared parenting, consensual love and urbanity with open and flexible boundaries between home and workplace, public and private life, child and adult-multicultural and anti-bias curricula, self-esteem and para-pedagogical roles. Therefore, it is the reformers -not the schools- who need to be reformed (Elkinds 1994, 12-4). Socio-educational change planners must review their understandings and conceptions about the cultural elements of the information society.

As I understand it, postmodernists are especially concerned with what we teach, how we teach, and why we teach. They want to be sure that students are provided with democratic, open, heterogeneous, non-sexist, non-racist and self-reflexive cultural identities (Keith 1995, 48-9). Other scholars observe that since education is a tool for building culture and transmitting it to the next generation, it is extremely important to reconsider and rethink current educational theories and practices. Conscious educational change is, nonetheless, a multidimensional phenomenon which must be addressed comprehensively. To bring about educational change, postmodernists have challenged various aspects of education. The aim of education for some postmodern educationalists is to teach students to struggle against inequality and emancipate themselves from oppressive relationships. Others maintain that education should result in self- and social empowerment (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 376-7).

Postmodern critical ideas, such as redrawing maps of meaning, desire and difference and questioning traditional forms of power associated with modes of legitimization can help us to develop a broader theory of schooling and a critical pedagogy (Giroux 1988, 25). Educators can restructure the context of learning by redefining authority. This change will give voice to

subordinate, excluded and marginal groups. Postmodernists also offer educators ideas about liberating and empowering pedagogy. For postmodernists, all narratives are partial and any form of knowledge and pedagogy concerned with legitimizing sacred and priestly authorities is to be rejected (Giroux 1988 26-7). Students must be given the opportunity to speak up and to locate their identities in a proper social context.

It is vital to remember that scholars like Giroux insist that postmodernism can never dismiss the emancipatory possibilities of the language and practice of a revitalized democratic public life, which is an important concept in modernism. Concerning curriculum, postmodernists view it not as a set of separate subjects and materials but as a means of empowering people and transforming society through an inside-out process. Postmodernists have also sided with an interdisciplinary approach that replaces disciplinary boundaries (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 379-80). Jean-François Lyotard (1996, 491) characterizes the contemporary, postindustrial society and culture as an environment within which the classical dividing lines between disciplines disappear and borders between sciences overlap.

Richard Rorty, who is influenced by the ideas of Nietzsche, Gadamer and American pragmatism, argues against the Platonic assumption that "Truth" exists apart from Man and assumes a new goal for education, saying: "We need to see education not as helping to get us in touch with something non-human called "Truth" or "Reality," but rather in touch with our own potentialities" (Nicholson 1989, 200).<sup>6</sup> Truly, Nicholson concludes that according to a postmodern feminist, pedagogy is not meant to destroy tradition but to give students the

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<sup>6</sup> Nicholson quotes from R. Rorty 1982, "Hermeneutics, General Studies and Teaching," *Selected Papers from the Synergos Seminars*, 2, 3-4.



opportunity to reinterpret it for themselves in the light of new problems and perspectives (Nicholson 1989, 204).

Dealing with similarities within differences as a major concern in postmodern educational theory, Kanpol stresses the practical aspects and advises that teachers have to take into account are students' differing cultural experiences. This should be combined with drawing out the similarities across these experiences. Therefore, decision-making in school sites should be based on mutual cooperation rather than on the traditional top-down authoritative style (Kanpol 1992, 226). Inspired by the postmodern idea of seeing the 'Other', parent associations and students rights groups presently demand to be allowed to participate in school management policy and decision making (Rust 1991, 617). Cooperation is also a key element in the learning process and is aimed at preventing various forms of oppression, subordination and alienation (Kanpol 1992, 228-9).

Another contribution of postmodernism is its role in calling attention to the moral and ethical aspects of education. Including differences and traditionally marginalized groups and opening room for the silent "Other" in a learning environment is, in fact, a part of morality in postmodernist theory. Other moral aspects include helping students to be able to recognize cultural differences and emphasizing diversity and social discourse direct education toward a pluralistic democratic society.

Postmodernists have also stressed the political nature of education. In educational institutions only certain types of knowledge or world-views or ways of thinking are considered legitimate or worth teaching. Keith explains that acquired knowledge in a given time or place is not necessarily a system of thought that directs students to some truth, but is mostly something

that fits in with existing social conditions (Keith 1995, 50). Postmodernists have discovered the subtle impact of 'hidden curriculum' in shaping personal and social identities. Postmodern writings on language, discourse and narrative as major elements in forming people's minds have facilitated our understanding of the role of curriculum and the teaching-learning process in liberating or oppressing the population (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 384-5). The suggested term "border pedagogy" in Giroux's essay (1991, 248) advises educators to move toward the peripheral borders from the dominant central culture to see the margins (Brosio 1994, 24).

In reviewing postmodern educational ideas, we realize that it is difficult to integrate postmodern premises and critiques of education. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, for instance, believes that problems are always rooted in the hegemony of a dominant state. Jurgen Habermas and Michel Foucault insist that the evaluation of knowledge as a by-product of the educational system will only be accurate when we discover its connection to power (Foucault 1997, 17). For them, the acquisition of reliable knowledge is possible when an open, free and uninterrupted dialogue takes place. They argue that facts are always interrelated with values. Human knowledge is shaped by the impact of social and historical contexts (Demarrais 1995, 27-8).

To sum up, I would like to rephrase Keith's statement regarding the key themes of postmodern education. For her, elements like self-reflexivity, self-examination, critical questioning, and locating things in their socio-political contexts are central in planning any critical and postmodern educational policies (1995, 53).

### 2.2.6. Postmodernism & the Critical Pedagogy

As an expression of the “new” postmodern sociology of education, critical pedagogy deals with topics such as the subjectivity of knowledge, the existential experience of knowledge, the socio-economic and political interests provided by schools and finally the conflicts and contestations which emerge in schools. This body of literature on critical pedagogy has constituted the major focus in Giroux’s writings, particularly one of his recent books *Teachers As Intellectuals*. Giroux attempts to elucidate the impact of language both in schools and other educational settings. Language, for him, is something more than merely a reflection of the relationship between words and meanings. He views systems of language and ideas as the foundation for systems of power (Goodman 1988, 142-3).

To initiate any change in schools, Giroux places an emphasis on two major elements. Restructuring schools as “democratic public spheres,” and repositioning teachers as transformative intellectuals are critical alternatives to traditional and conservative practices (Goodman 1988, 146). Critical pedagogy, according to McLaren and Hammer, opposes empiricist and traditionalist approaches. It advocates concerns such as how to live meaningfully in a world confronted by pain, suffering, and injustice (1989, 39). The two scholars describe critical pedagogy thus:

In short, critical pedagogy is about the problematization of language, experience, knowledge/power, and culture, how they are mutually constitutive of subjectivity... That is, critical pedagogy wrestles with the question of how individual subjectivity is produced through language and also by social, historical, and economic relations. (1989, 40)

Critical pedagogues insist on making pedagogy more political and politics more pedagogical. This interrelated process requires schools, on the one hand, to enter directly into

the political sphere through a struggle to define meaning and the power relationships. On the other hand, schools should utilize an emancipatory form of pedagogy which treats students as critical agents competent to analyze and investigate knowledge (McLaren & Hammer 1989, 40). Another key component in critical pedagogy is to teach students to be counter-hegemonic. Students must be able to know how their desires and needs, their identities and dreams are shaped through dominant cultural forms (McLaren & Hammer 1989, 51).

As Giroux maintains, critical theorists advocate a social structure which is neither hierarchical nor exalted (McLaren & Hammer 1989, 55). Postmodernists always prefer a critical pedagogy which views educators as socio-cultural workers. Rather than as limited professionals, teachers and educators are looked upon as engineers of appropriate ideologies and social practices. They are responsible for helping students to develop a critical consciousness of the connections between culture, history and politics (Ozmon & Craver, 1995, 382-3).

Describing the pillars of a postmodern critical pedagogy, Giroux first states:

Critical pedagogy needs to be informed by a public philosophy dedicated to returning schools to their primary task: places of critical education in the service of creating a public sphere of citizens who are able to exercise power over their own lives and especially over the conditions of knowledge production and acquisition.

Students, according to postmodernists, need to learn critical thinking rather than simply store facts or information. Critical thinking is an ability to question the facts or a given system of knowledge. Therefore, both students and teachers enjoy the ability to reexamine the underlying reasons of conventions and dominated ways of knowing (Keith 1995, 52). To give more concrete suggestions to educators, critical thinkers ask educators to stop seeking solutions

outside of their own environment even if they are carefully formulated. Educators should collaborate in analyzing and examining the contextual conditions of their own classrooms and communities in order to build empowering pedagogical models.

In his discussion about postmodern critical pedagogy, Kellner focus on “critical literacy” as another key theme which gives the learning process a broader sense. Students who grow up with critical literacy are able to read popular and media culture critically. Critical literacy is in fact a means of empowerment. Empowerment in this context means that students are capable of comprehending and critically evaluating the taken-for-granted aspects of their cultures (Kellner 1988b, 47). Critical pedagogy educates students to become active citizens and participants in making and remaking society.

After all, it is crucial to know that the ideas of any critical pedagogue cannot provide “cook-book” descriptions of “what are the best ways of viewing and acting in schools.” Once a critical pedagogue has inspired us, we no longer want to be passive consumers of ideas and blind imitators of what others have offered. We need to rethink ideas and make what we see compatible with our own possibilities and limitations. If we do so, we have both understood and applied critical pedagogy.

It seems appropriate to me here to repeat the motivating words of McLaren and Hammer, who state: “The future does not belong to those who intend to remain as they are, and those who (unintentionally) unlearn the meaning of hope, but to those who can think and act as critical remarkers of history, and who choose to do so” (1989, 56).

### **2.2.7. A Critical Evaluation of the Postmodern Educational Perspective**

As a new, confusing, and multidimensionally untested theory, postmodernism has received few critiques. A glance at some of the data provided above indicates that if we want, as postmodernism teaches us, to critically evaluate it, we must touch on various areas. The reason for this is that the postmodern approach is fragmentary at the level of specific concerns and manipulates numerous aspects. It is indeed a very unhappy family of intellectual movements and conflicting views (Cahoone 1996, 1). Politics of language, reliability of knowledge and truth, culture of oppression and silence, Westernism, Eurocentrism, critical and democratic pedagogy, liberatory theory, power relationships and hidden curriculum are only some aspects which are touched upon by postmodern thinkers. It is therefore a mistake to look for a single, essential meaning which could be applicable to the all terms representing the postmodern thought. A comprehensive evaluation of each of these areas requires independent research. Therefore, my evaluation here is holistic and follows a gestalt method.

Ozman and Craver (1995) complain that the postmodern language of educational alternatives is too academic to be interpreted and applied in the “real” world. Postmodernists are also challenged for merely refuting modern theorists rather than providing new, alternative options. They have expressed their message in an overwhelming negative tone rather than in a positive or normal one which ordinary citizens can understand (Ozman & Craver 1995, 385).

Others maintain that postmodernists have neglected self-critique. If all theories are political and ideological, how can postmodernists exclude themselves from this principle? When postmodernists are antagonistic against other theories for being totalizing and subtly legitimizing power and control, how can they evaluate their own theory as un-laden? Although

it is important to see the differences, we must not close our eyes to commonalities. An overemphasis on differences, particularly from critical theorists and an oversimplification of commonalities mean that postmodernists may risk an unhealthy extension of separatedness in human life (Ozmon & Craver 1995, 386).

The examination of socio-educational change through a postmodern perspective has caused me to question my own theoretical knowledge about education and social change. The acquired paradoxical ideas have created an internal challenge in my mind. Although I have come to acknowledge the inevitable, progressive impact of elements which are promoted by postmodernists, I am still doubtful about some other findings. Elements like the impact of power relationships, dominant and high culture, metanarratives, language of critiques and possibilities and information technology on human knowledge, the giving of a voice to silent groups and the promotion of critical thinking are promising aspects of postmodern thought. However, a total rejection of universality and the authenticity of any sort of human knowledge and an oversimplification of human commonalities will move us, in my view, towards a “world at risk!” The rejection of a single and final authentic knowledge or interpretation should not lead us to the relativity of human knowledge. If we lack any authentic criterion, will we not have unlimited infinite possibilities of self-asserted authentic knowledge?

I would also like to point out that the postmodern consideration of subjectivity and images as opposed to objectivity and reality calls attention to a neglected aspect in human knowledge. This, however, should not move us toward another type of one-sidedness of idealism. I think human knowledge is a result of the juxtaposition of both image and real,

subjectivity and objectivity. Therefore, if we neglect the real in favor of the image, we are weakening the realistic aspect of human knowledge and revealing it to be a myth.

Although postmodern critiques are indeed reactions against the metanarratives of Western “high culture,” I have to respond to some of its paradigms which seem to include non-Western cultures. If one accepts that a part of human knowledge is the result of divine inspiration and the gifts of the prophets to humankind from God, we will then possess a kind of universal and authentic knowledge. This type of knowledge can be neither oppressive nor elite-centered. As I have discussed in my chapter about the Islamic view of social change and social justice, since the very purpose of prophethood was to establish social justice, the knowledge provided by the prophets can be neither elitist nor domineering. If we believe, as religious individuals, that apart from the frustrating and oppressing realities in the history of all religions, there exist God’s instructions to direct human life toward social justice, then we have already accepted a universal and authentic belief. The total rejection of universality forces postmodernism itself into a generalization of non Anglo-American cultures.

Moreover, if we deny universality even in moral values, we will never be able to include the many cultures of humankind under any single, widely accepted definition. If moral values are specific and particular due to the authenticity of various cultures, the values in one culture will be anti-values in another. Additionally, if postmodernism and critical theory are reactions against recent manifestation of capitalism and its related theories, we must not extend it to incorporate all of human knowledge. As I understand it, postmodern critiques of the origins of human knowledge must be addressed only to the humanities and social sciences.



Mathematics and some areas of the natural and physical sciences could be value-free and apolitical.

In education, although the postmodern tone and language is mainly negative and contestatory, its critiques are alarming and awakening.

Finally, postmodernism is not a fully tested theory. It is difficult to put together a synthetic version from such diverse ideas; nonetheless, its various ideas, once tested, may improve dimensions of educational thought. As in other modern theories, the present tendency is to deal with particular aspects of education instead of inventing a single synthetic theory. Examining modern and postmodern theories of socio-educational change, I have come upon the idea that an Islamic theory is distinctive in various respects. Muslim social thinkers and those involved in education treat many of the above-mentioned issues through an Islamic perspective. This approach is characterized by Islamic culture and values. The following section provides a portrait of an Islamic theory which reflects the particularity of an Islamic approach.

### ***2.3. Islamic Approach***

It should be noted that debate over theoretical aspects of socio-educational change has not only been the concern of Western scholars. Non-Western scholars, for instance, Chinese, Japanese, Asian, African, Muslim and other scholars have produced their own explanations for change and development within the contexts of their respective intellectual histories (Fagerlind & Saha, 1989, 10-11). An inclusive comparative approach requires an awareness of non-Western explanations. As a Muslim student, I have investigated only the Islamic approach

in comparison with the Western perspective. Other non-Western theories demand independent studies.

This section examines the concept of socio-educational changes from a Qur'ānic perspective. Socio-educational changes are reviewed through the framework of social norms as explained in the Qur'ān. The writings of modern Shī'ī thinkers who have investigated this issue from a sociological standpoint are also consulted. Elements of *taqwā* (piety) and social justice are critically reexamined for relationships which might allow a qualified access to nature (natural resources). Emphasis on these two elements is characteristic of an Islamic theory of culture and values development. Various Qur'ānic verses are studied comparatively to provide a possible conclusion concerning this topic. The reader is thus supplied with the essential information needed to determine the effects of a study which approaches a social topic from an Islamic perspective.

The *sunnat Allāh* (God's norm), indicating the procedure of cause and effect in the universe (Mutahhari 1981, 134), is one of the key topics in the Qur'ān. As groups of these norms deal with human social life, an examination of those which discuss social changes must be included in our discussion.

In this section, I will try to determine the Qur'ānic point of view regarding social norms. I will also examine the issue of change in human life from a sociological perspective. After a brief allusion to Ibn Khaldūn's idea about cycles of social change, I will switch to a consideration of modern Shī'ī thought. The writings of recent Shī'ī thinkers, particularly the

late Āyatullāh Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr<sup>7</sup> (1935-1980), will serve as my main references. Ibn Khaldūn's historio-sociological analysis has been reformulated by some recent Shī'ī thinkers, particularly Sadr, who have attempted to extract an Islamic theory of social norms from the Qur'ān.

My discussion will then combine Sadr's theory with theoretical elements taken from the works of Āyatullāh Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (1919-1979) and Āyatullāh Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, two other Shī'ī thinkers who have developed independent approaches to Qur'ānic sociology. I believe that the Qur'ān, as a divine gift, used as an educational text in Islam, can provide the ideas for an Islamic model of change and development and the role that education, both in its formal and informal sense, may play in these areas. Throughout this discussion, therefore, I have tried to focus on the Qur'ān.

### **2.3.1 Pre-Modern & Modern Perspectives**

#### ***Early Islamic Thought on Social Change***

As Western Europe hovered on the edge of change, about to leave the Middle Ages behind and plunge into the dramatic era of the Renaissance, 'Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) of Tunis proposed his theory of socio-political change in the Islamic world. His ideas about social change were so influential that some scholars regard him as the founder of modern sociology and cultural history (Mahdi 1964, 5). His socio-political theory, can be considered as an example of conflict theory in social sciences. Socio-political changes, according to this Muslim thinker, are explained based on a cyclical conflicting process (Fagerlind & Saha 1989, 10-1). Since his main concern was Islamic historiography, with a

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<sup>7</sup> Hereinafter I will refer to him simply by the name Sadr. See foreword.

focus on the events of the Islamic Middle Ages, his ideas about social change served as a preliminary stage for the establishment of an Islamic theory of social change. For him, the cycle of social change always shifts away from a tribal lifestyle towards a sedentary city life. The continuous rise and fall of empires is seen as the outcome of a cyclical change from rigid tribal discipline and bravery to the ease and softness of city life. Each group of nomadic victors that invades in one cycle is the prey of the next group of nomadic invaders who still retain the unspoilt characteristics of their harsh desert lives (Ibn Khaldun 1980/1394). He was probably influenced in this point of view from his experiences in the North African desert where he witnessed cyclical tribal tensions (Saha & Fagerlind 1983, 11).

Although Ibn Khaldun's historiography was not unique in Islamic history, it remained distinctive for centuries because it surpassed the contemporary descriptive orientation of his and later ages. His theory was then elaborated by other Muslim scholars in later times. Muslim scholars of today who have reexamined this theory, have provided independent and more explanatory theories. This trend may be perceived among both Shīʿī and Sunnī scholars, although my concern here is only with the Shīʿī point of view.

### **2.3.2. Modern Shīʿī Thinkers & the Qurʾānic Socio-historical Norms**

A careful review of Qurʾānic social concepts reveals that God manages the universe, including the lives of human beings, based on given norms, criteria and procedures. These norms explain the relation of God to humankind and emphasize the finite and changing character of this life on earth. Inspired by the Qurʾān itself, Qurʾānologists have called these ways of management "God's procedures/norms" derived from the Arabic phrase "*Al-Sunan al-Ilāhīyah*" the plural form of the Qurʾānic term "*Sunnat Allāh*." Verses in the Qurʾān

maintain that these Godly norms never change and can never be replaced (see for example, Q. 35:43).<sup>8</sup> This, however, does not mean that the Qur'ān supports a concept in which human behavior is passive and God is the dominant and direct actor. God's norms (*al-Sunan al-Ilāhīyah*) reflect only the rules that govern the universe. The function of each norm may correlate to a set or sets of physical, metaphysical and sometimes unknown causes and effects. However, the procedure is attributed to God because He is the one who created the universe governed by these rules. To participate actively and consciously, human beings should discover these norms and act accordingly. This is like the human discovery of nature in natural and physical sciences which facilitate qualified human access to natural resources and the physical environment.

According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, the Qur'ān informs us about a logic which governs human behavior and its connection to the interrelated order of the whole universe. In addition to the known individual and social consequences, the Qur'ān reveals that the religious beliefs and actions of any individual or society affect other elements of existence, making life easier or more difficult (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1991, vol., 6, 60 & vol. 8, 1970, 196). There are examples in the Qur'ān attributing the rise or collapse of a nation or a civilization to God. There are known socio-historical reasons for these events. The Qur'ān invites its audience to look upon all events monotheistically and God-centeredly, and to see the ultimate role of God in the ups and downs of life. To have a clear understanding of the Islamic view of social change, we must briefly reexamine the Qur'ānic concept of social norms. These norms imply another

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<sup>8</sup> Throughout this project the character (Q.) stands for the word Qur'ān. The translations of verses of the Qur'ān in this dissertation have been taken from: *The Qur'ān*. (1991). M.H. Shakir. Trans. New York: Elmhurst: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'ān, Inc. & *The Qur'ān*. (1995). A. Yusuf Ali. Trans. S.A.A. Razwy. Ed. New York: Elmhurst: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'ān, Inc.

explanation for social changes beyond what is provided in the secular social sciences. The Qur'ānic instructions in all domains are always world-view-laden.

Here I will deal with some norms which explain the relationship between individual actions and their consequences in the social context of this world. It is, nevertheless, crucial to note that these Qur'ānic social norms are represented in a historical context. They cannot, it seems, be discussed ahistorically. I suppose that the application of this approach is probably due to the fact that human history provides a scene indicating the translation of these norms into the reality of human life. Therefore the discussion is not merely theoretical. Interestingly enough the three Shī'ī thinkers referred to above have investigated the Qur'ānic social norms from a gestalt, historical perspective.

There are other Qur'ānic norms which discuss the outcomes of human actions in the Hereafter or in this world but only in an individual context or in one's relation to God. The proper place of the latter discussion is Islamic theology, personal ethics and mysticism.

Human actions can be divided into two types. Some have individual outcomes and some bring consequences to both the doer and society by and large. In addition to individual behavior, social behavior, from an Islamic point of view, is also regulated by divine norms. The difference, however, is that the consequences of collective behavior affects all members of a society, both doers and nondoers. These consequences are similar to those of a natural disaster; a destructive flood, for example, which has an impact on all members of a society. This, indeed, may allude to the fact that human social behavior can result in changes to nature and natural resources, consequences which are normally inclusive.

The Qur'ān 7:96 says, "And if the people of the towns had believed (in God) and guarded themselves (against evil), We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth." This Qur'ānic verse reveals that the immense amount of blessings humankind enjoys from both heaven and earth for example, rainfall, agricultural growth, physical and psychological health and well-being, and social security are outcome of faith in God and of restraining oneself from doing wrong (piety). If the majority of people in a society have faith and self-control, the blessing which results will encompass the whole population. Tabataba'i maintains that the promised inclusive blessings in this verse will occur when all of humankind or the majority of citizens in a society acquire faith and piety. The rewards or punishments related to individual actions are not the subject of this verse. This verse discusses the global outcome of human collective behavior (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 8, 101). His proof for this interpretation is the usage of the Qur'ānic phrase of "*ahl al-qurā'*" (the people of the towns) which includes the major population of each territory.

On the contrary, if the majority of the population commits blasphemy, tyranny, hypocrisy, disbelief and impious behavior, negative consequences will touch the entire society. In this regard Qur'ānic verse 8:25 warns: "And fear an affliction which may not smite only those of you who are unjust." To offer another example, when a majority of people do not follow health instructions, the immunity of many will deteriorate and disease can then infiltrate the whole population (Misbah 1989, 128-129).

Most events and social changes which are regarded as disconnected from deliberate human behavior from a non-Islamic standpoint are considered the consequences of human actions from a Qur'ānic point of view. Even some natural disasters are regarded by the Qur'ān

as the outcome of man's misdeeds. The population that abuses God's blessings,<sup>9</sup> will lose them. This, of course, does not mean that the metaphysical causes are replaced with the law of cause and effect. Every natural phenomenon has undoubtedly its normal cause which can be discovered through science. Nonetheless, it is important to discover the outcomes which reflect God's norms in the whole universe. Our actions, from a Qur'ānic viewpoint, can make God's rules function even when we are unwilling. In Q. 16:112, for instance it is stated:

And Allah sets forth a parable: (Consider) a town safe and secure to which its means of subsistence come in abundance from every quarter; but it became ungrateful for Allah's favors, therefore Allah made it taste the utmost degree of hunger and fear (closing in on it) like a garment from every side, because of what (the evil) they (its people) wrought.

In this verse a society's misuse of and lack of appreciation for God's blessings are regarded as sufficient reason for the withdrawal of those blessings. Abuse of God's blessings can result in an unjust distribution of wealth and power and the rejection of prophets and their instructions. Carelessness, negligence and the rejection of prophetic instructions are mentioned in the next verse of this chapter as factors of change. Prophets and their divine education are considered to be a spiritual blessing.

These elements, I assume, are beyond the more familiar concepts of leisure and abundance. They inform us about another side of the coin. When people follow a top-down pattern of dominance over others in their social relationships and disregard prophetic instructions to use their wealth and power as God wants them to be used, the elements of discrimination and oppression will emerge. This, in turn, will lead to poverty, insecurity and social disintegration. People then find themselves in a situation where the violent side of wealth and power causes a society to disintegrate.

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<sup>9</sup> I assume that a concrete example of abusing God's blessings is the unjust distribution of wealth and power among members of a society.



### **2.3.3. Socio-Historical Norms & Human Choice**

Two main points should be added here. The above mentioned correlation between human social behavior and abundance is beyond what social scientists have argued for. Social development and well-being first of all require a tangible base; a high level of science and technology, for example, and highly educated human resources. However, in a God-centered world-view we have to open our eyes to see the other side of the coin, namely the impact of faith, piety and the role of God in our lives. This side, reflecting basically a pious wealth and power relationship, will effect the sustainability of social abundance.

Moreover, the Qur'ānic perspective emphasizes the interactive relationship between social changes and man's faith and behavior. Social changes are the reflection of human collective behavior. Human behavior both in its individual and collective forms are determined by our attitudes and world-views. Human beings choose world-views which, even unconsciously, shape their behaviors. These behaviors in a social context entail ease and abundance or difficulty and deprivation. This attitude is the opposite of the pre-Medieval mentality which viewed human beings as creatures under the total control of divine rule (Fagerlind & Saha, 1983, 31). The central point in an Islamic perspective is to see the role of human choice in historical and social change. If the variable of human free choice is neglected, there will be no room for any religion, ethical system, or challenge of reward and punishment. If a person's behavior is under pressure from internal or external forces then how can she/he be responsible for her/his actions? Why does God ask us to behave religiously and believe in Him? Our capacity to do good or evil, for which we will be rewarded or punished, is only understandable if we have the choice to do either one or the other. Human free choice, as I have mentioned in my literature review, is one of the key aspects of the Islamic humanology.

To sum up, we may conclude that predictions as to the absolute purpose of human social life or an explanation of human actions is a difficult task because of the decisive role of human free choice. Unlike the natural sciences, in humanities and social sciences the role of human free will always interferes with forecasting. We can not know the results of our choices before they happens.

Emphasizing the capability of individuals to fight against oppression and to behave in accordance with their choice, the Qur'ān 4:97 maintains that the Meccans in the time of the Prophet Muḥammad called themselves the “oppressed” and powerless because they felt themselves trapped under oppressive conditions. However, this was not an excuse to abandon their responsibilities. According to the Qur'ān, they had the opportunity to emigrate from that ethos to another (Mutahhari 1986, 17). The Qur'ān quotes the answers they gave to the angels who came to them to stop their opportunity to live on earth:

In what state were you?” They shall say: “We were weak in the earth.” Then they (the angels) shall say: “Was not Allah’s earth spacious, so that you should have migrated therein?”

Based on this verse, those who suffer under oppressing circumstances with no opportunity to change the situation still have the option to leave it for a better one. Therefore, we always have the power of change, the Qur'ān maintains. Prophets play the role of an mediator in teaching people to maintain their freedom and take control of their lives. One goal of prophetic education is to educate people to realize the possibility of change under any circumstances.

### **2.3.4. The Direction of Social Change**

A controversial aspect of the discussion of social change is to determine whether the direction of human history is toward improvement or collapse. This will affect a person's decision to approach socio-educational changes. The post-medieval optimism of the West, which eventually led to the Enlightenment, shifted the attitude of social thinkers, encouraging them to consider all social changes as desirable and progressive. M. T. Misbah's analysis (1989) of this issue has led him to a new explanation. Since our evaluation of social progress and development is value-laden, the final judgment, he argues, is based on our value system and the way that we define development and evolution.

Some thinkers believe<sup>10</sup> that a society is more developed when it enjoys a higher level of advancement, productivity and quality of life. People however understand differently the concept of quality of life. Societies which are economically more developed may suffer from higher levels of air pollution, urban overcrowding, crime, traffic and psychological stress than do countries with a lower level of development (Murray 1992, 5). Therefore when, how and based on which type of criteria can we judge that a society is more developed than others remains cloudy.

It is hard to believe that the trend of social change is always progressive, Misbah asserts. From an Islamic perspective evolution and progress takes place when the whole or at least the majority of the population in a society acquires spiritual perfection and nearness to God. All other advantages are regarded as progress if they help us advance toward the Absolute Perfection, namely God (Misbah 1989, 166). This, however, does not mean that Muslims can neglect the material side of their lives. Spiritual development without the prerequisite of

material and economic development is futile. The one who lacks a reasonable quality of life will lose his/her life in the hereafter (Mutahhari 1991, vol. 2. 105). Therefore, based on an Islamic value system the definition of development is different. If technological and scientific advancement do not lead to piety and nearness to God, the society is still underdeveloped. The reason for this is that a society that is distant from God usually suffers from lack of divine morality. This idea, nonetheless, does not reject the necessity of industrial and technological advancement. There is no doubt that development and progress are primarily based on having a high quality of life and high standards of well being. Nonetheless, the most industrialized societies which are not God-centered and do not follow the prophet's instructions, cannot be regarded as developed from an Islamic perspective.

Therefore, if we could review human history as a whole, we would label the present generation as more developed than the previous one when the majority of this society comes nearer to God. Nearness to God means to translate prophetic instructions into each aspect of our lives. We lack the evidence to assert that every new generation in history has been more developed in this respect from its predecessors. Therefore it is hard to conclude that social trends are always progressive. Based on some texts,<sup>11</sup> Muslims believe that human society will be the most developed at the end of time, when Imam Mahdī, the twelfth Imām of Shīʿites (peace be upon him) reappears (Misbah 1989, 166-67).

There is, however, another comparative method for evaluating nations and societies. If our criterion for the comparison of two societies in two distinct time periods is not the level of

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<sup>10</sup> See chapter 1, "Literature Review", my section on "Shifts in the Concept of Development."

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, Sadr 1996, 118. Relying on some prophetic traditions, Sadr speaks of an era in which humanity will witness justice and well-being under a divine and global state.

nearness of the people in each society to God, other types of relative perfection will only create more ambiguity. Since progress and perfection are multidimensional phenomena, progress in any society is relative. A society which is more developed in one particular aspect may be less developed in another dimension. How then, can we assume that the direction of human history and social change is always progressive? (Misbah 1989, 167).

The evolutionary (progressive) idea of social change can be challenged in other ways. Although the history of social change has usually indicated a shift from a simple to a more developed society, this process is only a tendency; it cannot be regarded as a norm. The term "tendency" stands, in my mind, for an experienced trend, not a determining and unchangeable rule. There is a big difference between a norm which repeats itself without change and a tendency which only reflects the past trend of social change. If the evolutionary theory is no a norm, its application for the future direction of social change is not more than a generalization. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that as the human population increases, communication and social interaction will become more complicated. This complexity necessitates more advanced social institutions and more developed technology. However, all these can be seen as consequences of a gradual increase in the population. This variable is not a norm. It is more likely that the increased population will encourage society to take measures which will block the rate of increase. It is also understandable that some socio-political or natural events may destroy a huge proportion of the population. In these cases, communication will decrease dramatically (Misbah 1989, 167-68).

Some social thinkers have argued that the evolutionary and progressive process of social change is inevitable due to the explicit advancement of science and technology. This

process has been witnessed by human beings generation after generation. A general look at history indicates that human societies have always turned from a less developed phase to a more progressive stage in terms of science and technology. This argument also suffers from the same limitations as the previous one. Technological advancement in the past has been nothing more than a tendency (an experienced trend). The unprecedented scientific capability of human beings at the present time is an outcome of previous scientific experiences. The transition of knowledge from generation to generation and technological advancement is not a norm. No one can be assured that this process will continue forever. Is it impossible to imagine that the destructive weapons which are built by the hands of human beings will someday destroy all of human civilization? In that case, humankind must begin a new cycle of progression. Technological and scientific advancements are not hereditary but may change through social events (Misbah 1989, 168-69). Therefore, it is too hard to assume that human social life is absolutely progressive.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **Sadr's Model of the Islamic Culture**

#### **of Development & Social Change**

##### ***3.1. Preliminary Elements***

In an earlier chapter I stated that my major concern in the discussion of culture and values development and socio-educational change is to explain Sadr's theory in this regard. To provide a clear picture of this theory, while at the same time emphasizing the impact of education as revealed in the Qur'ān, I will begin with an introductory section. In this section, I will start by providing a summary of Sadr's intellectual career.

Next I will address the question of whether it is methodologically feasible to rely on the Qur'ān in dealing with subjects that are usually discussed in the humanities and social sciences. I will then elaborate on those elements which distinguish an Islamic perspective from a secular understanding in the area of cultural and socio-educational change. To show this difference, Sadr begins with an allusion to the impact of the Islamic world-view on the connections that individuals have with nature and society. He also provides a different explanation for the underlying elements of development and social change in Islam. Here, he highlights the role of education in changing individual personalities as the basis of social change. He consults several verses of the Qur'ān in an attempt to discover its views regarding social classes and social conflicts. This exercise

leads him to the conclusion that there is a class more vulnerable than others which needs more and better educational investments.

Finally, he develops a theory to explain the hidden elements linking human beings with nature and society. His model, in my opinion, provides a profile of an Islamic culture of development and a procedure for culture and values development.

### **3.1.1. A Brief Biography of the Martyr M. B. al-Ṣadr**

Al-Shahīd (martyr) Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr was born on 25 Dhu al-Qaʿdah 1353<sup>1</sup>/1 March 1935 in Kāzīmīyah, Iraq, to a family famous in the Shīʿī world for its learning and its contributions to Islamic education. In Kāzīmīyah, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr went to an elementary school called Muntadā al-Nashr, where, according to the reports of some of his schoolmates, he established himself early as a subject of interest and curiosity to his teachers, so much so that some students took to imitating him in his walk, speech and manner of sitting in class. Although he sat for all school exams, he was often absent from classes. His teachers and the staff of this school, nonetheless, noticed that his intellectual capabilities clearly exceeded those of a typical adolescent of his age (Husainī 1996, 59). In terms of education, he grew up under the supervision of his maternal uncles Muḥammad Riḍā and Murtaḍā 'Āl-i Yāsīn, and of his older brother, Ismāʿīl (1340/1921-1388/1968) (Mallat 1993, 8 & Husaini 1996, 65-6).

In 1365/1945, his family moved to Najaf<sup>2</sup> where Sadr remained for the rest of his life. He immediately started his higher studies in *fiqh* and *usūl* (two branches of Islamic law) under the supervision of Āyatullāh al-Khuʾī (one of the most outstanding Shīʿī

<sup>1</sup> The dates given here for Sadr's biography indicate the Islamic (lunar) year first, and then the Common Era year.

<sup>2</sup> Najaf, a city in Iraq, has been known as the most important center of Islamic studies since 446/1054, when Abū Jaʿfar M. Ḥ. al-Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d.460/1067) founded a center where students of Islamic studies came to learn under great masters.



jurisprudents, who died in 1413/1992). These studies continued until 1379/1957, when he started his own seminars in *usūl* and then in *fiqh* (Hā'irī 1986, vol. 1, 44). Najaf was already, particularly in the twenties, known as the most important center of the school of Shī'ī *fiqh* and of resistance against anti-Islamic encroachments, especially that of the British (Mallat 1993, 9).

Despite the dominance of Islamic jurisprudence as a subject of instruction in Najaf, Sadr began to investigate certain unexplored areas of Islamic knowledge. He believed that if Islam is to function as a way of life, Muslim scholars must consider many other areas which together form the Islamic system as a whole. We can trace this effort back to 1955, the year in which Sadr published his first work entitled *Fadak fī al-Tārīkh* (*Fadak in History*), an analysis of the episode of Fadak and its significance in Shī'ī history. This study, which appeared in the early years of his residence in Najaf, shows great maturity on the part of the young scholar in terms of method and substance. After this beginning, Sadr went on to discuss subjects that were little-known in Islamic scholarship. His efforts produced a substantial body of writings that covered, in addition to *fiqh* and *uṣūl*, economics, socio-political theory, history and Qur'ānic studies. The invaluable theoretical framework that he constructed in the area of socio-cultural and values change was what inspired me to study it in more detail in this thesis. As a former pupil of one of his students, it is both an honor and a duty to discharge this debt to one whom I consider to be my indirect teacher.

Until a decade ago, Sadr was almost completely unknown in the Western world, and in the Middle East familiar only to a few scholars through his book *Iqtisādunā* (Our

Economy). In the late 1980s, Sadr's reputation began to grow, and gradually extended to different countries by means of his exiled followers and disciples in Iran. This reputation eventually made its way to Europe and the United States.

In 1981 he was introduced by Hanna Batatu in an article in *The Middle East Journal*, published in Washington. The article mentioned the importance of Sadr for the underground Shīʿī movement in Iraq. Later in 1984, his famous book *Iqtisādunā* (Our Economy) was translated in part into German, with a long introduction on the Shīʿī ʿālim (scholar) by a young German orientalist by the name of Andreas Rieck. Then acknowledgment came in Israel, and in France, where a well-informed new journal on Middle Eastern affairs -devoted most of its issue to the thought of Sadr (Mallat 1993, 7-8). In 1993, C. Mallat authored a comprehensive volume investigating Sadr's decisive role on the renewal of Islamic law. Besides providing biographical data on Sadr, this research examines Sadr's contribution in offering new ideas in Islamic law as linking elements between Najaf and international Shīʿī thought. Other aspects of his originality and scholarship were discussed and published on later anniversaries of his martyrdom. More recently, a comprehensive Arabic volume which investigates various dimensions of his thought appeared in 1996. This volume was published by Dār al-Islam Foundation in London, and includes the contributions of sixteen writers who have elaborated on Sadr's ideas on a number of subjects.

Sadr wrote several articles on such subjects as Islamic education, politics and history, all of which offer rich insights into the overall system on which Sadr had been working since he was a young man. These writings demonstrate how he derived his

understanding of these matters on the Qur'ān. While Sadr tried to show the superiority of the thematic method of exegesis in comparison with the conventional method of interpreting the Qur'ān, he also attempted to explain some of the wider-ranging viewpoints of this holy scripture. These remarkably rich treatises originated as lectures given in 1979-80 concerning history, politics, and issues of religious methodology (Mallat 1993, 14). A series of lectures published in Arabic, entitled *Al-Madrasah al-Qur'ānīyah* (The School of Qur'ānic Thought), deals with the Qur'ānic viewpoint on history, society and related norms.<sup>3</sup> In 1979, the last year of his life, Sadr published another contribution on Islam and the state, focusing on the origins of power in Islamic government, as part of a series of six booklets published in a collection entitled *Al-Islām Yaqūd al-Ḥayāt* (Islam Guides Life) (Mallat 1993, 67).

In my view, Sadr was the only Shī'ī thinker who not only played an effective role in the Islamic renewal, but also attempted to create a new alternative Islamic system. As history shows, Muslim modernists have for the most part concentrated on analyzing certain aspects of Islamic thought, but Sadr was trying to create a system that would provide an alternative to both the Western and Communist schools of thought. He insisted that real reform will only occur when life has been Islamicized in all its facets. Sadr's solutions to problems were characteristically to-the-point. Being a multi-faceted researcher who applied his scholarship to investigating various domains, he was merely a pioneer in some aspects. Some of his ideas, therefore, remained unelaborated. He always approached matters in a straightforward manner and concentrated on providing an Islamic

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<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Muḥammad Bāqir Ṣadr, "The Holy Qur'ān and Laws of Historical Change," in

answer for each. However, time did not allow him to complete his task, for after having long been the target of persecution in Iraq, his life was cut short by the Ba'athist regime, which could not tolerate him as a religious intellectual leader. He was brutally tortured and executed along with his sister Bint al-Hudâ in 1980, in Baghdad.

### **3.1. 2. Sadr's New Thematic Approach to the Qur'ân**

As I have indicated, my major concern in this study is Sadr's contribution to Qur'ânology, particularly his explanation of an Islamic culture of development which entails a specific model of culture and values development. I have investigated this discussion in Sadr's study of socio-historical norms. I also try to discover a possible link between Sadr's socio-historical theory and education. The Qur'ân describes itself as a divine educational text which aims at helping human beings to find their way along dark and confusing paths (see e.g., Q. 14:1, 57:9). Human beings are endowed with the quality of free choice which enables them to follow many avenues. I assume that the major challenge for human beings during their lives is to discover a straight and clear path. As long as we do not confine ourselves to perceiving education merely as a tool for implanting information in the human mind, we have opened the gates to bringing values back into human life through education. Therefore, education is not simply an instrument for information processing and developing of science and technology.

In an extended sense, education also functions in order to inculcate specific types of ideals and values in people's hearts. Education, then, deals with minds and hearts simultaneously. Human life presents us with challenges in the form of ambiguities and

incompatible choices. It is my assumption that revelation provides a complementary element enabling human beings to overcome such obstacles. This element strengthens and reinforces human reason in responding the challenges of life. Thus recourse to the Qur'ān or any other divine book is perceivable in this complementary pattern.

The most critical point here is to determine to what extent we might expect Islam or the Qur'ān (as a divine educational text) to touch a believer's life, to discover the domain where religion in general and Islam in particular play a guiding role. Muslim modernists offer different answers. Some have argued that religion or Islam deals only with the private aspects of human life. To them, religion has the least impact on human life. There is no feasible pattern in Islam that can direct our collective life at an extended level. Collective patterns have been discovered throughout history through a long process of trial and error. Human beings in their present life are capable enough to solve dilemmas and find solutions. Inherited knowledge has enabled them to shape and manage their lives. As with natural resources that have been developed by means of science and technology, in managing our collective life we have taken refuge in the social sciences. Religion can do nothing here (Soroush 1997). Human life is an ever-changing phenomenon which cannot be confined within the limited content of the Qur'ān or any other religious text, they argue.

An opposite assumption holds the idea that Islam in particular and religion as a whole touches all aspects of human life. Advocates of this idea argue that a human being's life is not his or her own to do with it as he or she wants. Human lives belong to God. Since we did not create our lives, we must treat them according to God's will,

which is expressed in religious injunctions. From an Islamic point of view there is no such a thing as human rights without human responsibility. All human rights derive from the fulfillment of responsibilities to the Giver of human life (Nasr 1995, 442). The fulfillment of human responsibility towards God requires humankind to regulate all aspects of his/her life in accordance with Divine Law and moral injunctions both of which are a part of religion. S. H. Nasr also maintains that there are no relationships between human beings at any level, starting with relationships within the family, and extending to the relationships which link Muslims with other human beings at a global level, that religion do not touch it (Nasr 1995, 442-3).

Nasr goes one step further and observes that, according to Islamic teaching, religion is not an external element which we incorporate into our lives, rather, it is divinely imprinted in human nature (*fiṭrah*).<sup>4</sup> Human beings are born with a concern for religion. Religion is embedded deeply in our souls. We cannot evade religion any more than we can avoid breathing (Nasr 1995, 444). Turning against this God-given nature can last, as Sadr explains it, only for a short period of time. The reason is that religion, as a part of our being, is an unneglectable divine norm (Sadr 1979, 114-7).

In responding to the first, highly confining argument, Sadr proposes a new approach to understanding the Qur'ān and to translating it into the realities of human life. Sadr believes that the scope of religion and of scripture in directing human life is essentially based on one's definition of religion and one's approach to the religion and

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<sup>4</sup> The roots of this teaching about Islam or religion in general lie in the discussion of human *fiṭrah* (a particular type of human ontology) and its essence. See the Qur'ān 30:30 and the interpretations provided for this verse. M. Mutahhari (1995) has investigated the doctrine of *fiṭrah* in an independent work entitled

divine writings. He maintains that although the Qur'ān is not a scientific text which deals with particular domains of information and knowledge, it provides rules and regulations that govern human behavior. The term behavior in this context, as stated by other scholars, refers to those consciously chosen actions and reactions that have a decisive impact on human dignity and perfection (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 73-7).

Sadr points out that when we talk about the impact of Islam or any religion in human life, we deal with two aspects. The content of a religion is divine and does not submit to historical norms. As God's word and as the expression of God's will, religion is beyond any norm. However, the application and the successful implementation of religion in any society depends on the efforts of the prophets, their successors and their followers. This aspect, which indeed goes back to human behavior and its outcomes, is governed by divine norms. Norms of this type can be deduced from the Qur'ān (Sadr 1979, 47-8), which touches on human behavior and its consequences to show him the way of change.

The remaining question is how one can discover inclusive answers in the Qur'ān? Sadr replies that this depends considerably on one's approach to it. In proposing a thematic method, he quotes a statement from Imam ʿAlī who once said:

It is the Qur'ān. Ask it to speak up. It, nonetheless, never does so. But I will tell you about it. Know that it contains knowledge of the future, statements about the past, healing for your maladies and regulation for whatever faces you. (Ṣāliḥ 1967, 223, *Khutbah* 158)

Inspired by Imām ʿAlī's statement about the Qur'ān, Sadr proposes a dialogical approach to understanding the text. He observes that, as the Imām explains, the Qur'ān

does not speak by itself; rather, people must ask it to speak up (Sadr 1979, 20-1). Muslims can consult the Qur'ān in two different ways, Sadr argues. These two methods represent two schools of interpretation, i.e., thematic and conventional Qur'ānic exegesis (Sadr 1979, 8-9).

Preferring the thematic approach,<sup>5</sup> Sadr observes that sometimes we face a problem, examine it and present it to the Qur'ān along with the proposed solution which is normally the outcome of human experience. Yet we also try to discover the Qur'ānic solution. We turn to the Qur'ān to examine it and explore it in search of an answer. Here we aim to make the Qur'ān speak up. The researcher in this method has to engage in a dialogue with the Qur'ān. He/she performs an active role when he/she asks the Qur'ān to reflect on a selected subject (1979, 25-26).

The researcher has detailed information about a subject, knows the proposed human solutions but looks for the Qur'ānic perspective. To find an answer the reader must also consult related verses in various contexts. It is hard to explore the Qur'ānic perspective in one specific context. Elements of the Qur'ānic perspective are usually found in different contexts. These elements must be collected, analyzed and put into one theoretical framework. The researcher, in this approach, begins with problems in real life, goes back to the Qur'ān, and turns again to reality to provide answers (Sadr 1979, 27-8).

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<sup>5</sup> There have been few thematic studies of the Qur'ān in recent years. M. A. Darrāz devoted his Ph.D. dissertation (1948) at the Sorbonne elaborating the structure of Islamic ethics in the Qur'ān. He aims therein to discover the Islamic moral theory in the Qur'ān. (See al-Rufā'ī 1996, 147). Misbah Yazdi also has investigated ten major themes in the Qur'ān through his thematic approach. His studies on ethics in the Qur'ān, history and society in the Qur'ān and Islamic humanology were consulted for various chapters of this dissertation.



Another approach is to begin from the Qur'ān and investigate from within the verses, thus remaining in the Qur'ānic context. Here the reader wants to know what the Qur'ān offers to him/her. Qur'ānologists who have utilized this method begin with the first chapter of the Qur'ān and analyze it verse by verse to the end of the last chapter. They may also begin with a specific chapter and try to interpret all verses within that chapter. The connection between the Qur'ān and reality is blocked here. The reader listens only to the Qur'ān, which constitutes a passive approach, since he/she brings to the task an empty mind. No question is posed in order to initiate dialogue with the Qur'ān (Sadr 1979, 25-6).

The former method, referred to by Sadr as the thematic approach, is distinguished by another characteristic. The active critical researcher in this approach attempts to discover the hidden connections between the various concepts contained in different verses. Sadr assumes that a group of verses will provide a specific theory. Only an analytical method can unveil the thread that unites them. Therefore, Qur'ānic verses do not convey disintegrated concepts. A subtle linkage exists between certain verses which combines them, allowing then to deal with aspects of one single theme. The discovered linkage is the Qur'ānic theory. The Qur'ānic theoretical pattern is indeed a complete pattern which includes conceptual elements from various verses. These theoretical frameworks represent the Qur'ānic orientation with regard to certain predetermined aspects of human life (Sadr 1979, 27). The passive reader is, on the other hand, faced with a series of disparate Qur'ānic concepts provided that he/she has been able to collect all related verses and put them in one category.

An important point remains untouched. How does the active reader make the connection between humanity and divinity in his/her dialogue with the Qur'ān? The Qur'ān, to Muslims, is the word of God. It reflects the divine pronouncement on various aspects of human life. Dialogue occurs when the reader presents acquired human knowledge to the Qur'ān. The difficulty lies in recognizing the borderline between humanity and divinity. The active critical reader begins with what human beings have obtained in the course of a period of trial and error. This intellectual background will help him/her to pose good questions. It is however not an alternative which is imposed on the Qur'ān by the reader. The final answer comes from the Qur'ān itself (Sadr 1979, 28).

Here Sadr elaborates as follows:

This thematic approach is also a uniting method. It is integrating since it unites human experience to the content of the Qur'ān. This integration, of course, does not mean that the reader submits the Qur'ān to the human experience. The reader attempts to put these two aspects (humanity and divinity) in one context in order to search for a synthetic conclusion. The researcher strives to explore the Qur'ānic concept which represents the Islamic orientation before the theme presented and human experience. (1979, 28)

The acquired human knowledge, therefore, will help the one consulting the holy scripture to raise appropriate and effective questions. It is not only a critical approach to the Qur'ān that requires such a question; indeed, any truth-seeking operation depends on asking the right questions. Gaston Bachelar states that a piece of scientific knowledge is the result of a question. If there is no question, there is no scientific knowledge (ʿAbdullāwī 1996, 197).

Sadr maintains that the thematic approach has been employed by Muslim jurists (*fuqahā'*) for centuries in their jurisprudential studies. They have always

begun with the contextual problems of real life and attempted to discover the Islamic orientation from the main sources (Sadr 1979, 30). One has to understand that the difference between Islamic thematic methodology and the method that is used in the social sciences goes back to two different assumptions. Muslim scholars aim at exploring Islamic perspectives while secular scholars attempt to invent theories (Rufāʿī 1996, 135). They are not concerned with the compatibility of their findings with religious standards. The reason is that Muslim scholars always look at the Qurʾān as the word of God. It is therefore looked upon as a source of exploration.

This thematic approach can be utilized in non-jurisprudential fields. The Qurʾān can be studied using a thematic approach for non-jurisprudential problems. However, Muslim researchers need to develop this approach both horizontally and vertically. Since human life is ever-changing, Muslim scholars in each age face new questions and new facets in human life. The scope of the investigation must be extended to include emerging complexities. The number and the particularity of problems will gradually increase. Research concerns should also be accommodated on a parallel path. This horizontal development, as Sadr proposes, is only one side of the coin. Yet the untouched realm is what Sadr calls vertical research development. Muslim scholars must be able to come up with theories and perspectives for every aspect of life. The discovery and provision of numerous Islamic rules and laws are only immediate answers to daily issues. These answers must be reexamined to enable the investigator to come up with the Islamic theories that apply in each case. Sadr's hypothesis is that a fundamental theory underlies each group of Islamic rules in each domain. For example, the Islamic rules concerning

man-woman interrelationships or family standards are related to a fundamental perspective and a theory about the roles men and women play within the family and society (Sadr 1979, 31-32).

Economics, marketing, politics, and youth and adult education are similar cases and require the same methodology. This procedure includes any domain which is connected to human conscious behavior with an impact on his/her dignity. The substantial task of Islamic scholarship is to explore these fundamentals. Feasible models can be arrived at based on these theoretical foundations. The horizontal and vertical development in the thematic approach will enable Muslim scholars to treat the problematic aspects of human life effectively. Muslim investigators should not only come up with emerging problems and provide detailed regulations, they have to make an effort to get below the surface and explore the theoretical depths of Islamic rules. New human findings are the cornerstone to formulating new questions. These questions motivate Muslim scholars to consult the Qur'ān each time from a new perspective. However, it is not enough to find separate answers to these questions (Sadr 1979, 33). If Muslim scholars stop at this level, future difficulties will remain problematic and may lead to confusing contradictions.

Since Islamic society at the present stage suffers from the lacking of an infallible leader, it is vital to explore fundamental theories. These theories function as strategic outlines for feasible models. The interface of Muslim and non-Muslim cultures and values, particularly the contrast between the ideals of certain advocates of modern life, has motivated Muslim scholars to look for fundamental theories embedded in Islamic

rules. These fundamentals direct them to the Islamic answers for emerging problems as opposed to non-Islamic answers. The motivating agenda behind this active role is that Muslim scholars cannot be silent or indifferent in the face of emerging problems and their secular answers. If the answers are non- or anti-Islamic, they ought to look for Islamic alternatives (Sadr 1979, 36-7).

Sadr concludes that despite the above-mentioned emphasis on the advantages of the thematic approach, one cannot neglect the importance and the necessity of the conventional method in understanding the Qur'ān. These two methods are not, he argues, alternatives. They are complementary. The conventional approach provides the basis for more advanced steps. Muslim investigators first arrive at the terminological and technical concepts of verses by means of the conventional method. The next step is to reexamine and analyze the concepts obtained in this fashion through a comparative and analytical method. This analysis and comparison prepares Qur'ānologists to resolve possible inconsistencies and arrive at fundamental theories (Sadr 1979, 37-8).

In this section I have tried to show how Muslim scholars consult the Qur'ān to find Islamic answers for daily problems. This also explains why I have included references to verses of the Qur'ān throughout this dissertation. An awareness of this pattern is also fundamental to understanding Sadr's theory of socio-educational change. His own methodology in developing this theory consisted in a thematic approach to the Qur'ān.

### **3.1. 3. Humankind's Relationships with Nature and Society**

Before presenting a portrait of Sadr's theory of the Islamic culture of development and socio-educational change, I must first point out that Sadr alludes to some fundamental elements that distinguish an Islamic point of view from a secular perspective on this issue. Here again, Sadr consults the Qur'ān and maintains that to explain the human relationship with nature and society we can adopt either of two different approaches. In one method we study human relationships with nature and society from a secular perspective. In the other, human relationships are examined from a God-centered perspective. The latter is the standpoint that Sadr adopts (Sadr 1979, 127), inspired as he is by the Qur'ānic humanology revealed in Q. 2:30. This perspective views human beings as creatures (created by God), who have been put on this earth and who will be taken from it by God. Their life-span on earth will be nothing more than a mission and a vicegerency. The way that human beings relate to nature and society depends essentially on their attitudes about their status on earth.

The Qur'ān views this status as divine vicegerency, as reflected in Q. 2:30 "Your Lord said to the angels: I will create a vicegerent on earth." This verse provides the cornerstone of Islamic humanology. Human relationships with nature and natural resources, according to this view, do not consist in possessing or being possessed. Human beings are the trusted vicegerents of God on earth. Before having any right, they first have the responsibility to superintend that with which they have been entrusted, i. e., nature. Their interrelationships with one another are also viewed as depending on their status as co-successors on one earth. Therefore they need to know to what extent and how they are expected to cooperate in developing the earth and its natural resources (Sadr

1979, 129-30). This attitude views all human beings as trusted co-vicegerents who carry the same responsibility towards the earth and towards each other.

Human relationships with nature and society, with or without consideration of the core element of vicegerency, will lead to two different patterns of behavior. The ups and downs in human history can be explained on the basis of certain Qur'ānic norms which govern human behavior. These norms and the recorded consequences of their abandonment explain the difference between respecting and neglecting divinity in the human relationship with nature and society (Sadr 1979, 130).

Sadr interestingly observes that the two above-mentioned perspectives explain two patterns of the human relationship with nature and society. One pattern includes only three elements: the individual, nature and society. The other incorporates God at the center of this pattern and connects these elements to one another. The type of connections will definitely vary to the extent that this core element influences the interconnections between the three other elements (Sadr 1979, 129-30). Sadr then points out that the second, four-fold pattern, as revealed in the Qur'ān, is not a norm imposed on human beings. Human beings, through a divine dialogue, have chosen to be God's vicegerents. They bear this responsibility freely even though they do not always maintain it. All human beings accept this vicegerency when they are created on earth. The Qur'ān 33:72 reveals:

We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but humankind undertook it; he/she was indeed unjust and foolish.

Comparing the two verses (2:30 & 33:72), Sadr concludes that they provide information about two sides of one fact. In 2:30 the offer and establishment of human

vicegerency is attributed to God. Therefore, human beings are created as God's vicegerents on earth. In 33:72 it is revealed that humankind has accepted an unbearable Trust. This Trust or Responsibility is the acceptance of vicegerency, Sadr argues. Sadr also observes that since the Trust mentioned in 33:72 was first offered to the heavens, the earth and the mountains and then to humankind, it must be something ontologically related to the creation of the universe. The heavens, earth and mountains cannot be addressed in such a way that allows them to accept something or refuse it. Thus the Trust is offered in accordance with what he calls ontological norms. Accordingly, the human vicegerency on earth is in itself a divine norm. It reflects God's management of the universe (Sadr 1979, 131-34).

Although the four-fold pattern (God-centered) of the human relationship to nature and society is an expression of a divine norm which is interwoven with human existence, it can be refused by human choice. We can understand then why many human societies throughout history have chosen a three-fold pattern (secular). They have neglected their connection to God and acted oppressively with regard to nature and society. The last phrase of 33:72 alludes to the roots of this negligence, while oppression (oppressing him/herself or others) and ignorance are at the root of the removal the divine element and the adoption of the three-fold pattern (Sadr 1979, 134).

This explanation is the starting-point of two different approaches which explain the human relationship with nature and society. One is God-centered and the other is secular. The first looks at human history as the scene of human activities reflecting the mission of vicegerency. The substance of this mission is to deal with nature and society



as a vicegerent (ʿAbdullāwī 1996, 201). The second follows a positivistic view and studies the history in isolation from divinity. For Sadr human vicegerency refers to those human mental and psychological capabilities which enable him/her to build his/her life actively. Connection with divinity gives a new meaning to human life. Instead of relative ideals (such as a classless society for Marx or liberal democracy in capitalism) absolute divine ideals form the goals of a believer (ʿAbdullāwī 1996, 236-7). The theory of human vicegerency combines vicegerency with human responsibility. Human beings in this view are responsible for the types of relationship that they adopt with nature and society. The presence or the absence of this mutual responsibility could lead to what is Qurʾānically deemed as the life or death of a society.

### **3.1. 4. Dead & Living Societies**

An examination of verses in the Qurʾān indicates that, just as an individual both lives and dies, societies too may flourish or cease to exist. Societies are groups of individuals who agree to live together. Social relationships which are based on powers or capabilities connect people to one another. Individuals' lives and deaths may be examined from within or beyond social contexts. In social contexts people interact. These interactions contribute to the establishment of social justice and/or inequalities. To the Qurʾān, social life or death results from social justice or social inequalities. It seems that social interactions create a generally inclusive life which belongs to society, by and large. This social life, like that attributed to individuals, is normative (Sadr 1978, 56-7).

The quality of social life depends on the performance of the entirety or the majority of citizens in a society. Social collapse or survival is also determined by society

as a whole. The Qur'ān explains the roots of social life and death in several verses. In some verses (15:4-5, 23:43, 7:34, 10:49), it is revealed that nations (like individuals) have a pre-determined life-term which ends at a given deadline. Since social life and death are attributed to the society by and large, it must have a cause within the social context. When the whole population or the majority of citizens interrelate justly or unjustly, they are participating in social life or death. This social fate includes all individuals, both participants and non-participants (Sadr 1979, 58-9). When a social disaster happens it hurts all individuals. Individual life and death, by contrast, affects only the one specific person.

I suppose that social life and death and their causes as revealed in these verses are examples of social change. And if social change is the consequence of individual behavior, then the root must be sought within individuals. People behave justly or not based on their chosen values system. The values and ideals that determine behavior are constructed through formal and informal education. Values education, therefore, plays the most vital role in forming personalities. Social behavior is a reflection of the human personality. To invest in social change, one must educate individuals.

Basing himself on another verse (8:53), Sadr elaborates on the linkage between social and individual change. This verse states: "Allah will never change a Grace which He has bestowed on a people unless (until) they change what is in themselves." The grace (*ni'mah*) in this verse, as I understand it, includes all qualities which bring about social integration, social justice and social well-being. This verse also explicitly links social deprivation with individual values problems. Something negative happens within an

individual or individuals prior to any social problem (Sadr 1979, 65). Here, Sadr highlights the role of prophetic education. This education aims at resolving human conflicts. Sadr articulates:<sup>6</sup>

Within their social relations, people confront tensions and conflicts of interests. The divine religions (prophetic instructions) intervene to operate at two levels simultaneously. To resolve social conflicts, prophets always begin with the resolution of an inner cause. This is because of the fact that any educational support at the social level is merely half of what is needed. The uneducated inner self will definitely show itself through other forms of social tensions. Therefore, the effective solution, according to divine religions, is to foster individuals to expend at two levels. The two concepts of *al-jihād al-akbar* (the major campaign) and *al-jihād al-asghar* (the minor campaign) in Islam allude to the necessity of developing individuals both inwardly and in their social behavior. (1979, 206-7 & 142-3).

For Sadr, the prophetic mission, as the Qur'ān reveals, targets both social justice and individual self-development. In the Qur'ān, priority is given to individual values construction (1979, 142-3).

Those who refuse to follow the prophetic instructions and oppose social justice are usually the owners of wealth and power. These individuals are notorious for having the wrong values. Their values system causes them to rebel against following prophets or acknowledging their poor disciples. They expect prophets to come from the higher classes in society. The Qur'ān 34:34-35 reveals: "Never did We send a Warner (prophet) to a population, but the wealthy ones among them said: "we do not believe in the (Message) with which you have been sent." They said: "We have more in wealth and in sons, and we cannot be punished." They projected their desires for social authority on

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<sup>6</sup> Since my key source for Sadr's theory has been his work: *al-Madrasah al-Qur'āniyah (The Qur'ānic School of Thought)* which compiled from Sadr's Arabic lectures, I have had to translate much of the text, and in some cases have had to take an interpretive approach to this task.

prophets and regarded them as competitors for a share of the power they held, and resented giving up any of their authority.

Since these individuals normally enjoy a high standard of living and great influence (which is exemplified in this verse by the terms “wealth” and “sons”), they can hardly follow a just pattern of social life. Sadr thus concludes that access to immense wealth and power without having a well-trained and divinely value-laden personality will lead to social oppression. This, in turn, will result in social stratification and social disintegration (Sadr 1979, 67). Social life and death, Sadr concludes, depends on the quality of power relationships. The effective element in social interrelationships is individual personality. Therefore, to examine the core parameter in social change, we have to go back to individuals and examine their inner structure. This examination will help us to direct educational investments to the right place. My understanding is that in our attempt to study development or social change, we have to take into consideration the Qur’ānic concepts of social life and death. This will help us to understand the human conditions of each society and the avenues of power relationships. The criterion, according to the Qur’ān, is the level of social influence exercised by prophetic education.

### **3.1. 5. Sadr’s Typology of Socio-Historical Norms**

The typology of socio-historical<sup>7</sup> norms is another element which is considerably emphasized in Sadr’s theory about socio-cultural and educational change. This typology reflects Sadr’s attempts to link social normativeness and human free choice. Sadr

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<sup>7</sup> I stated earlier that Sadr begins his theory of socio-cultural change with an explanation of historical norms. In the above-mentioned typology as well, Sadr’s groups together divides historical norms. The reason is perhaps because human history, from one perspective is the scene of past social events. These

classifies Qur'ānic socio-historical norms into three major categories. But he concentrates on two categories which he believes help to widen human behavioral choice and to convince people to give greater consideration to Qur'ānic educational concerns.

Some Qur'ānic norms reflect an explicit causal pattern which implies a set of causes and effects. They are revealed in conditional discourses. To elaborate on this type of norms Sadr provides corresponding examples from natural sciences. In natural science, for instance, we learn that water boils at 100 centigrade degrees under normal atmospheric pressure. This knowledge enables us to boil water by heating it to 100 °C and to prevent its boiling by removing the heating element. This understanding of natural norms enables us to change our surroundings as we wish. It widens the scope of human choice and action. It is nonetheless crucial to note, Sadr adds, that this natural law has nothing to say about whether the cause is present in a particular context or not. It never indicates whether water will be exposed to a heating element or no, or whether this heating element does or does not reach the degree of 100 °C. The only thing that it is concerned to state is that whenever we have the cause, we will definitely observe the effect (Sadr 1979, 101-3).

Some Qur'ānic historical norms resemble this pattern of natural law. They link two events or two groups of occurrences within a socio-historical context. Q. 17:16, for example, links the social disintegration of a society to the misbehavior and authoritative actions of the owners of wealth and power in that society. When the society is discriminatively stratified, wealth and power are not distributed justly. Social interactions

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events according to the Qur'ān are normative. An awareness of these norms enables us to foresee the

will accordingly reflect a top-down social pattern. Clashes will take place between groups, each of which pursues its own interests. This verse, then, links social disintegration to the emergence of a class which opposes social justice. Another verse (13:11) correlates social change to individual inner changes. Sadr observes that these conditional patterns always increase human choice. When people know the causal pattern, they can manipulate causes and effects. When individuals insert or remove a cause, the effect will emerge or disappear accordingly. Therefore, human free choice is the determining element in this process. As in natural laws, these socio-historical norms never describe when and to what extent causes are present. They only explain the correlation of certain causes and effects (Sadr 1979, 104-6).

The second category of Qur'ānic socio-historical norms, one which in his view deserves more educational investment and has greater significance in the Qur'ān, consists of those norms which reflect a natural or an ontological trend in human life. Sadr calls them natural "trends" or "normal tendencies"<sup>8</sup> to distinguish them from the first category, consisting of rigid "norms" or rules.<sup>9</sup> Since they are not norms, human beings can interrupt and challenge them. However, the break-down of these trends does not necessarily last for a long term. Human beings may interrupt them for a short duration. A

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present and future trends of social change.

<sup>8</sup> In his explanation of this category of Qur'ānic norms, Sadr uses the term "*intijāh*" which can probably be translated as a "trend" or "tendency." This term is distinguished in Sadr's terminology from other Qur'ānic norms. For the other two types Sadr proposes the term "*qānūn*," with a possible translation of norm or law.

<sup>9</sup> For Sadr a scientific norm/law (*al-qānūn al-ʿilmī*) usually stands for a non-challengable law. Human beings are not capable of challenging natural and ontological laws. They cannot break them down or escape from their consequences. A Muslim may decide not to pray since prayer (*ṣalāt*) is nothing more than a legislation. It is not an ontological law. A Muslim may possibly drink alcohol though it is forbidden in Islam. This too is not an ontological law. No one, on the contrary, can challenge a real norm or an ontological law. It is, for instance, impossible for a person to prevent or postpone boiling a liquid when all conditions are provided (1979, 111-2).

long-term interruption however may lead to social disorder or the collapse of the society. Normal patterns of sexual intercourse, for instance, must relate men to women, Sadr argues. The reason is that this pattern alone reflects a natural and ontological trend in the development of humankind. If a population breaks this law and allows men to have sexual relationships with men and women with their own sex, that society is distancing itself from the natural “trend.” Although it is possible for a nation to break this trend, since it is not a rigid norm, continuous long-term interruption inevitably entails social disorder. This will result in social disintegration. Sadr concludes that anything more than a short-term violation of these trends will lead to a complete collapse of that society and an effective end to the violation (Sadr 1978, 111-4).

The Qur’ān in fact speaks on three separate occasions about the people of the prophet Lūṭ (a prophet who lived in the time of prophet Abraham), holding it up as an example of a nation that broke the natural pattern of sexual intercourse (see, e.g., Q. 26:166). Lūṭ castigated them for their indulgence in homosexuality. They were accused of performing an invented sin (see Q. 7:80-1). Interestingly enough their false commitment is regarded in this verse as an exception to normal behavior (Misbah 1997, vol. 2, 243-4). They rejected their prophet’s instruction to meet their sexual desires through a natural and divinely legal method. They however reacted negatively to his counsels, and dismissed the prophet from their city (see Q. 7:82). A divine decree was then put into effect to destroy the entire nation. As a result, an entire civilization was lost (Q. 26:172-3).

Sadr also maintains that the distribution of responsibilities between men and women within the family and in society is another example of this trend (the second category of Qur'ānic norms). If men and women exchange their roles and responsibilities, they have broken a natural trend (Sadr 1979, 111-14). Thus men and women cannot change the model according to which roles and responsibilities are divinely distinguished. Each sex deserves a set of rights and responsibilities in accordance with their ontological capabilities. This of course does not mean that the discriminative patterns of role playing which exist in many societies should be maintained. This must be evaluated after a careful consideration of their identical and varying abilities.

The best example of the norms (trends) in this category is religion as it affects human life, Sadr states (Sadr 1979, 115). He adds that the Qur'ān speaks of religion in two different contexts. Sometimes religion is deemed as a system of divine laws and regulations sent to prophets throughout history to educate their nations. Q. 42:13 reveals:

The same Religion He has established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah - the which We have revealed to you - and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses and Jesus in order to set up (the same) Religion and make no separations therein...

In addition to this Qur'ānic discourse, which regards religion as a system of revealed law, Q. 30:30 takes religion to be an ontological, innate norm which is existentially installed in the human soul. Human beings are born with a tendency towards religion. They are created as God-centered. This verse reveals:

Then you set your face steadily and truly to the Religion: a type of Allah's creation according to which He has created humankind: no change (let there be) in Allah's creation: that is the established Religion: but most among humankind do not understand.



Based on this explanation, religion is not just one phenomenon among many others which were established by prophets throughout the history of human civilization. It is also an ontologically set element in human beings. Humankind, then, cannot easily manipulate it. It should not be forgotten, however, that since religion is a norm of the second type (i.e., a trend), it can be broken for short periods of time. Secular societies may even put aside religion for a brief period. This negligence may happen at either the individual and collective levels, but it remains a deviation from a natural innate trend. Thus religion is a norm, although not of the same category as natural laws such as the boiling point of water. It can be suspended, as happens in the case of the natural pattern of sexual intercourse.

The damaging consequences of such a break-down are inevitable. A glance at human history indicates that deviation from any ontological and natural standards has usually resulted in social disorders. The negative consequences of challenging these standards are completely different from what we regard as punishment in other norms. Disobeying the religious laws, for example, will, according to Islamic belief, result in consignment to Hell where angels administer punishment. The break-down of social norms will usually entail imprisonment or fines. These consequences are pre-determined by religions or governments. The punishment in the above-mentioned Qur'anic discussion is the inevitable outcome of disregarding an ontological norm. It is not something which is legally attached to a law (Sadr 1979, 116-18).

An important point here is that the long-term break-down of these trends usually entails social disintegration, even though such an outcome is not always immediate.

Qur'ānic verses suggest that the negative consequences of breaking divine norms may be slow in emerging. Q. 22:47, for instance, replies to those who had demanded swift application of promised punishments. "Allah will not fail in his promise. Verily a day in the sight of your Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning." The reason for such delay is the slow pace of social evolution (Sadr 1979, 118-9). The translation of God's norms takes more time than what we normally require for preparing our plans. When a policy, a model, or a plan is translated into social reality, the outcome emerges sometimes after a decade or decades. A review of human history reveals how God's norms have been translated into reality sometimes after a generation.

### ***3.2. Body Discussion on Sadr's Model***

#### **3.2.1. The Determinants of Sadr's Model**

In an attempt to propose a theory of an Islamic culture of development and social change, Sadr examines the historical and social norms in the Qur'ān through a complementary method. In the discussion of these two aspects, he provides the outline of a theoretical framework for Qur'ānic social norms. These norms are key elements in explaining social changes from an Islamic point of view. His independent work in this respect, because it is pioneering, deserves consideration. By taking it into consideration, one can form a picture of his model in linking social change to culture and values development. As an introduction, he discusses some general elements which govern the theory he suggests and which define the scope of his argument. A brief account of these elements can help us to have a better understanding of his theory.

1. There are numerous verses in the Qur'ān which insistently encourage us to re-examine the ultimate fates of previous civilizations and their causes. This encouragement implies that human history and social life are normative. If there were no common norms governing human social life, this encouragement would be useless. This approach prevents us from looking at social and historical change as something random or as something run by unknown metaphysical causes. Human history, according to the Qur'ān, is normative and these norms can be discovered through prophetic instructions. Prophets in each age have taught humankind the rules governing his/her individual life as well as the collective lives of all society, through the divine Books. Records in the form of tales about previous nations, their reactions against the prophetic movements, and their fates provide concrete examples of these divine rules governing human life<sup>10</sup>.

Examples of these teachings are revealed in the Qur'ān. When the Qur'ān talks about the collapse and disintegration of the previous nations that had rejected their prophets and their missions (47:10; 12:109; 22:46; 30:9; 35:44; 40:21, 82; 50:36-7) it invites us to seek the causes of their decline. Q. 47:10 reveals, for instance:

Have they not then journeyed in the earth and seen how was the end of those before them: Allah brought down utter destruction upon them, the unbelievers shall have the like of it.

This and other corresponding verses inform us of an effective norm that has persisted throughout human history. These verses provide examples of destroyed nations at the time of various prophets. The last phrase of the above-mentioned verse reminds us

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<sup>10</sup> Sadr's approach to understanding the Qur'ānic stories represents a new method in the study of Qur'ānic narrative. A brief review of the Qur'ān indicates that the numerous stories about previous nations occupy a considerable portion of this divine book. They contain various educational messages. Sadr attempts to discover the normative messages about history and society behind these stories.

of the expected continuity and effectiveness of this norm among coming generations. The key message in these verses is, then, an invitation to examine the history of past generations. Historical documents and historical data within the divine books inform us about various nations all over the world. An examination of this information indicates the reliability of the Qur'ānic explanation.

Sadr then argues that the Qur'ān, for the first time, opposed previous theories which viewed social change as normless or forced to submit to metaphysical or unknown causes. The Qur'ān rejects the suggestion that human history is an immense combination of random events. Historical ups and downs are all normative. Eight centuries after the age of Islamic revelation, Ibn Khaldūn developed a theory about social change. Four centuries later, at least, the European thinkers of the Renaissance provided theories to explain social change (Sadr 1979, 71-2). Ṭabāṭabā'ī also argues that Muslim historians were the first to discuss social norms because they were inspired by Qur'ānic teachings about human social life and its norms (Mutahhari 1991, 214).

The Qur'ān emphasizes that history and society are both normative. The extent of our influence and active role in society depends on how conscious we are about social norms. Any neglect or ignorance leaves us passive, dominated by these rules (Sadr 1978, 70-73). Prophetic education is essentially a way to teach people these rules and show a way of life that will enable them to play an active role. Divine Books, particularly the Qur'ān, reveal examples of prophets' teachings about socio-historical norms. The collection of these teachings and also their instructions in other aspects of human life form one aspect of prophets' divine education. The reexamination of this education will

lead to the discovery of a prophetic culture of development and social change. It will also inform us about the key elements in their divine education.

2. If human history and social changes are normative, they must be explainable by scientific means. Historical and social rules are scientific and all-inclusive. They govern the social realm in the same way that the laws of physics dominate the natural domain. Socio-historical norms do not function randomly and haphazardly. They are like every other norm in nature and the universe. In several cases, the Qur'ān states that God's norms are irreplaceable and unchangeable. Q. 33:62 insists: "You shall not find any change in Allah's norm." A corresponding concept is repeated in Q. 17:77; 6:34. This emphasis prevents us from being tricked by the idea of an exception. In any social change, we have to look for an underlying divine norm which interrelates causes and effects (Sadr 1978, 75-77). As the socio-historical realm, like other fields, is normative, we are able to discover these norms and function accordingly. Prophets, by means of their books, have educated their followers to realize these norms, try to discover them and understand to behave in accordance with them.

3. According to the Qur'ān, all these socio-historical norms have been established by God. They are always considered to be part of God's procedure and norm (*sunnat Allah*). The Q. 6:34 calls these norms God's words (*kalimāt Allāh*). This term conveys the message that ontological norms are the expressions and the channels of God's power and wisdom (Sadr 1978, 76). The terms "norm" and "Allah" combine two concepts. The term "Allah" functions to link the physical world to the metaphysical and science to faith. Our understanding should also take this facet of its meaning into consideration. The term

norm conveys a message of causal interrelationship between the facts and events in the physical world, both animate and inanimate (ʿAbdullāwī 1996 199).

Through this kind of teaching, the Qur'ān encourages its readers to see the role of Allah even within scientific rules. Therefore, when we discover a rule in any field, this does not mean that we are distanced from God. This is because we can never replace God with a known scientific rule. Norms, according to the Qur'ān, are nothing more than an expression of God's management. Norms convey the fact that God has created the universe normatively. In this way, we can understand the interrelationship between the divinity and the normativeness in any norm. This explanation is distinct from the Augustinian point of view (as was explained below the section on Western pre-modern theories of socio-educational change) which replaced divinity with normal causes.

For Muslim thinkers, although any social event is related to God, it is based on a set of norms that can be discovered through scientific methods. Scientific norms and divinity are not alternatives to each other; rather they function within a hierarchical causal system. All scientific norms in this view are regarded as God's wise management of the world. They are in fact reflections of God's power and management over the universe and since they are norms, they can be discovered resulting in a kind of prophetic education through which faith is related to knowledge and reason (Sadr 1979, 77-81). This is a characteristic of prophetic education in contrast to a secular education, which distances itself from divinity. When the Qur'ān combines divinity with normativeness, it proposes a religious approach which is distinguished from a secular and a positivistic method. While the Qur'ān calls attention to the normativeness, it reveals that socio-historical

norms are nothing other than expressions of divine wisdom. The educational aspect of this approach is to link wisdom with faith. This approach indicates how a believer explains and interprets the correlations of cause and effects.

4. Despite the fact that socio-historical events are normative, humankind retains the ability to create change because these norms serve as explanations for consequences of human behavior. Norms are not fixed rules beyond human access. As the Qur'ān reveals, human beings are at the center of these norms and capable of relating to them through their behavior. We act and social norms function accordingly; they never prevent humankind from enjoying choice and freedom, however. There is no contradiction between the divine norms governing history and society and an individual's free choice. In several verses, the Qur'ān correlates social change with the individual's free choice (Sadr 1978, 83-4). Each individual should learn how to form his/her personality, his/her social behavior in such a way that he or she can create change at the collective level.

Q. 13:11 says: "Allah does not change the condition of a (group of) people until they change their own individual condition." Based on this and other similar verses (such as 72:16 which correlates the abundance of natural resources in a society with a people's maintenance on the right path), Sadr concludes that socio-historical norms come under human rather than under divine control. These correlations, Sadr argues, do not confine human free choice but increase the individual's responsibility since he/she is the one who has the final decision whether to follow or reject the divine rules (Sadr 1978, 85). In chemistry, for instance, when we are informed of the key elements of water we are able to produce it. Our power to produce water is due to our knowledge of a natural rule. In the

humanities also our knowledge about the consequences of our behavior enables us to produce or prevent these consequences. Normativeness in human behavior suggests a pattern within which an effect is related to a consciously chosen behavior. I have discussed Sadr's typology of socio-historical norms and their correlations with human choice in the above devoted chapter.

5. Sadr finally makes an effort to clarify the exact domain of socio-historical norms. He observes that only a given type of human behavior fits the category of social norms. The behavior of people in this group is distinguished by three main characteristics: it must be human behavior (related to a human doer or a group of human doers), it must be a conscious and purposeful action (pursuing a specific known purpose) and it must be social (having a social context and social consequences). Our goals in our conscious behavior derive from our ideals and our values system. This values system is influenced by our philosophy of life. We may also behave in such a way that the consequences rebound on ourselves. When we eat or drink or sleep the concern is ourselves. Therefore, behavior with a social context and social consequences are socio-historically normative (Sadr 1978, 91-4).

A deal transacted by a dealer or by a group of dealers, a confrontation between two nations led by leaders, a political contract made by a politician, and a social theory proposed by a social thinker, if they entail social consequences for the majority of people, are all examples of behaviors governed by socio-historical norms. Social behaviors which lead to the establishment or destruction of social justice, attempts at the application or refutation of God's rules, obedience or disobedience of prophetic teachings are other



examples. The Qur'ānic norms are attributed to those social behaviors which have a social context and consequence, even though the doer is one person or a few members of society. The behavior is socially normative and conveys social consequences when it is attributable to the whole society (Sadr 1978, 91-5). These characteristics of socio-historical norms are implied in the verses under discussion.

### **3.2.2. A Fourfold Theory of Social & Cultural Change**

Having explained these introductory elements, Sadr presents his socio-educational hypothesis. I have formulated his hypothesis in a fourfold interrelated theoretical framework. A diagram summarizes Sadr's theory at the end of this section. The Qur'ānic view he proposes regarding social change rests on four major bases. Allah, humankind, nature and society are four elements which are linked in Sadr's model. He believes that Allah, as the creator of the universe and the final goal of all human activities (Sadr 1978, 179-82 & 228), as well as the first educator of human beings through His prophets, represents the first basis. Individuals, men or women, are located in the second stage in his theory. Relationships always begin with Allah who has created humankind and facilitated for men and women the Prophetic education. God has sent numerous prophets from the dawn of creation to direct people towards divine morality. Each prophet teaches his nation through written instructions that he has received from God. Prophetic education, therefore, serves as a connecting element between God and humankind.

### **3.2.3. Prophetic Education in the Qur'ān**

I observe that this part of Sadr's hypothesis is well explained in Q. 96:1-5.

Addressing the Prophet Muhammad, the verses reveal:

Read (the Qur'ān) in the Name of your Lord Who created... He created humankind from a clot. Read! And your Lord is most Honorable, Who taught (the use of ) the Pen. He Who taught humankind what he/she knew not.

It is worth mentioning that in this chapter<sup>11</sup> of the Qur'ān, the first revealed, the creation of humankind is associated with divine education and teaching. Among the first messages to the prophet Muhammad, the Qur'ān mentions the significance of learning and teaching. The prophet is called to start reading the received verses of the Qur'ān.<sup>12</sup> This reading must be associated with the Name of both the creator and the educator. As a sign of His highest honor, God taught humankind through the pen and divine writings.<sup>13</sup> By sending prophets and divine Books, God taught what people did not know. He also created humankind endowed with the ability to learn through writing, reading and communicating. If any human being suffered from a shortage of this capability, he/she learned nothing.

To educate human beings and to facilitate the actualization of their capability of learning, God sent numerous prophets. Therefore, the Qur'ān considers the Lord as the first educator of humankind. Laying emphasis upon the significance of divine education, the Qur'ān 55:2 regards the teaching of the Qur'ān as the best and most important sign of

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<sup>11</sup> According to Shi'i exegetes, this chapter is the first chapter of the Qur'ān that was revealed to the prophet Muhammad. (see Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 20, 322-23)

<sup>12</sup> Although the addressee in these verses is the Prophet Muhammad, the divine aim of revelation is to educate the entire human race. The prophets are intermediaries. This idea is reemphasized in Q. 17:106. As this verse reveals, God sent the Qur'ān gradually, over the course of twenty-three years, to the Prophet Muhammad in order for him to read to the people the content of revelation and to educate them accordingly (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 20, 323).

<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, in Q. 55:4 it is revealed that God has taught humankind how to express itself and communicate with other people. People are endowed with the capability to learn how to express themselves and engage in verbal and written communication (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 19, 95). This verse refers to the verbal aspect of the divine education besides the above-mentioned verse, which alludes to the written dimension. Moreover, since this verse mentions that the Qur'ān was provided through prophetic education

God's beneficence. Tabataba'i observes that this fact will be clearer if we note that the teaching of the Qur'ān in this chapter precedes even the phrase which mentions the creation of humankind. The reason is perhaps the fact that the Qur'ān includes the explanation of human prosperity and way of life (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 19, 94).

I should also mention that in this section, I have looked at education in its broad sense, as a tool which creates self-consciousness about one's inner and outer possibilities of self-development. This education saves humankind from wandering and alienation. Therefore, it includes both formal and informal training, including prophetic education.

To provide a clearer definition of prophetic education, I must refer to the Qur'ān's explanation of it. This education I presume is the very foundation of social and individual change. In Q. 13:11 it is stated that social change, whether it improves or destroys, is essentially due to a change in individuals. Individuals think, evaluate, decide and behave in accordance with their personalities. A decisive element in forming human personalities is values education. Values education is the key to creating change in individuals. Therefore, the prophets first attempted to change individuals from within (values and ideals change). As the Qur'ān reveals (3:164, 2:129, 62:2) the key aim in sending prophets is to mention to people the divine signs, to purify them of immoralities, and eventually to teach them the contents of the divine books and the clues of living wisely. The key elements (notification, purification and divine education) proclaimed in these verses are the pillars of prophetic education and the main stages of self-development.

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before referring to human creation and their endowment with verbal ability, it deals with an educational aspect that is beyond humankind's ontological aspect.

These elements help people to develop themselves in order to be able to establish social justice. Social justice emerges when all individuals are well educated in terms of values. The establishment of social justice as the second aim of prophetic education is restated in another verse. Q. 57:25 reveals that the provision of prophetic education, providing evidence, divine books and behavioral standards are all tools for the establishment of social justice. These elements are provided by prophets in order to help people to achieve the latter. Prophetic education, therefore, touches both individual and collective levels. It acts as an intermediary between individual and social change. In his theory of individual and social development Sadr attempts to highlight the link between these two aspects.

For me, prophetic values education aims at training people based on divine standards, improving individual behavior through the establishment of piety and facilitating the bases of social justice. Prophets educate people to translate their spiritual potentialities. They teach humankind to build a just, God-centered life in this world. This will emerge and form human lives in the hereafter, too.

To illustrate the third basis of Sadr's theory, I assume that beyond the first relationship with God on the bases of creation and the prophetic education of individuals there are three different relationships established. One relates each individual to him or herself, the second deals with other individuals (society) and the last connects him/her with the natural environment. In his volume on the Islamic moral system as is reflected in the Qur'ān, Misbah Yazdi discusses all three of these types of human relationships in relation to God, self, and society (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 242-3). To the extent that every

person is educated by prophets and reflects their teachings, the relationship that he/she has with himself/herself, with nature (utilizing natural resources in order to meet his/her needs) and with other people (in social interactions) are different. The Qur'ānic social norms, discussed by Sadr, mainly focus on the second and the third of these types of relationships. The third basis of Sadr's model, as I shall explain, contains his analysis of human relations with nature.

#### **3.2.4. The Human Link with Nature**

The third basis in Sadr's theory, therefore, describes the way in which each person reacts to Allah and to prophetic education in terms of his/her relation to nature and society. This, indeed, indicates the reaction of each person against the teachings of prophets. Individuals sometimes utilize nature and natural resources in order to meet their needs. At other times, they interrelate with other people in an effort to shape their social life. Although these relationships are relatively independent at first glance, they are Qur'ānically interrelated and create feedback for one another. This interrelationship can be deduced from verses in the Qur'ān. Sadr tries to show the correlation between these two types of relationships through a theoretical framework within the concepts of the Qur'ānic verses.

In his/her relationship with nature, every individual strives to acquire the most and the best results. This attempt entails the quality of life. According to the Qur'ān, when human beings have full control over nature and enjoy more and better means of production, leading to a feeling of wealth and richness, they are more likely to try to oppress and dominate others in their social relationships. This stage is the starting point

of the discussion of the Islamic culture of development and the necessity of cultural and values development. Sadr attempts to explain how the Islamic culture of development and values education can influence the pattern of development and social change. The argument is that when individuals have not yet internalized piety and self-control (lack of the prophetic values education) they most likely tend to extend their wealth and power to the furthest extend possible. This intention motivates the privileged to extend the scope of their power to society. They plan to conquer the peak of social power and social status. This requires them to pass by many citizens. It is revealed in Q. 96:6:

Humankind is most surely inordinate (and transgresses all bounds), when he/she sees him/herself free from want.

Again in a corresponding verse, the Q. emphasizes:

And if Allah should increase provision for His servants they would certainly oppress/revolt in the earth...(Q. 42:27)

For Sadr, these two verses allude to the fact that an individual's unjust and immoderate social behavior is the consequence of his/her excessive access to better and more qualified tools of production and natural resources. In human history the opponents of the prophets were always the owners of wealth and power. It must not be forgotten, however, that Sadr explicitly disagrees with Marx who asserted that the concentration of the tools of production and wealth in one small part of society makes the possessing class oppressive and dominating. Sadr observes that, as the Qur'ān reveals, the roots of all kinds of social disorders and conflicts are found within individual human natures (Sadr 1978, 208-9).

When an individual has not internalized the prophetic values teachings and lacks piety (*taqwā*), he/she tends to utilize his/her wealth and power in an oppressive way. This tendency comes out of his/her self concept as a wealthy person with control over natural resources. Oppression, according to this point of view, is the result not of wealth and power but of values illiteracy. Those who are not prophetically educated attempt to utilize their wealth to extend their hegemony over other people. In his theory of conflict, as I will explain it, Sadr refers all social tensions to an unsolved inner conflict (Sadr 1978, 220).

My explanation here is that economic, political and human development in an Islamic society is not sustainable if it does not occur within an Islamic cultural context. The Islamic culture of development means to install a religious values system through prophetic education in order to make the development pattern value-laden. Sadr argues that social oppression derives from an unsolved inner conflict. This is, in turn, rooted in values illiteracy and involvement with undivine ideals. To Sadr, when citizens overcome natural resources and feel powerful, their inner conflict will find new patterns of expression at a social level. Wealth and the feeling of being privileged provide a psychological background for people to project their inner conflict in dominant-subordinate power relationships. Inner conflict is unsolved while individuals suffer from values and ideals illiteracy (Sadr 1978, 225-6).

To support this idea, Sadr compares the people in developed and industrialized societies with similar people in simple and undeveloped societies. He comes to the conclusion that the oppressing relationship is a characteristic of the rich and powerful in

the developed societies, those who neither morally nor prophetically educated. If we look at simple and underdeveloped societies such as those of aboriginals, we will find that there is less of a possibility that there are citizens who enjoy a considerably high level of wealth and power. Hunting, fishing and simpler processes of production provide for a minimum level of the requirements of life. Therefore, power relationships cannot be so damaging. People in these societies usually strive to have access to a minimum level of natural resources which enable them to overcome everyday difficulties and wait for tomorrow's struggle. They are happy that they can escape hunger, poverty and premature death. Therefore, citizens are less likely to think of oppression and hegemony over one another.

Developed societies that have access to modern tools of production can overcome nature to an amazing extent. The discovery of steam power, electricity, electronics, computers and artificial intelligence have empowered the citizens of developed countries, allowing them to modify productive instruments both qualitatively and quantitatively. Mass production, consumerism and socio-political competition are some features of privileged and wealthy societies with access to modern technology. This access has facilitated the human ability to overcome natural resources. Full access to wealth and power changes the pattern of power relationships. For Sadr, this increases the possibility of a pattern of dominant-subordinate power relationships. This, of course, is a reflection of an unresolved inner conflict. Sadr does not deny the possibility of oppression in a simple society. The possibility, nonetheless, increases when citizens enjoy a considerable level of wealth and power.



The final element in his socio-educational theory is an inner individual conflict which derives from values illiteracy. Sadr argues that, usually, the development of the tools of production, and full access to nature and natural resources result in inner conflicts being reflected at the social level through various forms of social tensions. Then the solution for any social conflict must be sought within human beings (Sadr 1978, 224-5). The key element will be values education, I assume. To Sadr, social relationships are always the expression of the inner structure of individuals. Inner structure is influenced by ideals and values which are formed based on one's philosophy of life (Sadr 1978, 226).

Examples of the previous prophets and their campaigns against the rich indicate that the concentration of wealth and power has frequently changed their attitudes and the values system. As evidence for this claim the Qur'ān alludes to the stages of unbelievers' campaigns against prophets, as Rafsanjānī argues. First, they rejected the prophets as leaders. When the Prophet Muhammad, for instance, invited the Meccans to accept Islam they replied: "Why was not this Qur'ān revealed to a man of importance in the two towns?"<sup>14</sup> (43:31)." This verse implies that the rich believed in a social stratification based on wealth and power. It was therefore difficult for them to accept the prophecy of a poor man. When they lost their campaigns against the prophets at this stage, the opponents of the prophets changed their objection and asked: "Shall we believe in you while the meanest follow you?" (Q. 26:111).

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<sup>14</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī quotes from Ṭabarsī several traditions interpreting the two towns mentioned here as referring to Mecca and Ṭā'if, the two most important trade centers at the time of the Prophet Muhammad (see Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1991, vol. 18, 158-9)

It is worth mentioning that Rafsanjānī also picks up the same message from these verses which are revealed in various other chapters (Rafsanjānī 1991, 220-1). It should also be maintained that the struggle over social sovereignty as indicated in the Qur'ān takes place between pious people and the impious holders of wealth and power. Wealth itself does not carry any positive or negative connotations. Therefore, the Qur'ān presents the case of Sulaimān, the wealthiest prophet in human history (Q. 37:35). However, he was a prophet and piety (*taqwā*) directed his power towards the establishment of social justice. What the Qur'ān opposes is the sort of oppressive sovereignty which is derived from a wealth detached from religious culture and values (Rafsanjānī 1994, 190).

### 3.2.5. The Human Link with Society

To complete the fourth element of his theory, Sadr maintains that the individual's relationships with nature and society are bipolar. He adds that as human relationships with nature as well as full individual ownership of natural resources influence social interrelations; the latter, according to the Qur'ān (Q. 7:96),<sup>15</sup> also has an impact on the extent and the quality of people's access to natural resources. Sadr hypothesizes this part of his theory as to refer to this norm: just and pious distribution of wealth and power in a society will lead to a full access to natural resources and an inclusive mood of production. As long as social relationships are just, based on divine values like *taqwā*, brotherhood and compassion, and are free of oppression and tyranny, societies will have more and better access to nature and natural resources. This positive relationship is inclusive of

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<sup>15</sup> The mutual relationship between social justice and full access to natural resources in this verse is explained as follows: "And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heavens and the earth, but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned." I will explain this verse below.

both the earth and the heavens (Sadr 1979, 226-27). The words heavens and earth (*al-samā' wa al-arḍ*) in this verse refer to full access to natural resources both above and below the earth.

One can see the difference between two models of development in the above-mentioned verse. One type contains religious culture and values (faith and piety) while the other is religiously values-free. The former is the result of social justice and individual purification, while the latter leads to social hegemony and oppression.

Citing the Qur'ānic evidence for his discussion about the relationship between social justice and a full access to natural resources, Sadr refers to the following verses.

1. Q. 72:16: "And that if they (Pagans) should keep to the (right) way, We would certainly give them to drink of abundant water."
2. Q. 5:66: "And if they (Jews and Christians) had kept up the *Tawrāt* (Torah) and the *Injīl* (Bible) and that which was revealed to them from their Lord, they would certainly have eaten from above them and from beneath their feet."
3. Q. 7:96: "And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil), We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth..."

Keeping to the right way,<sup>16</sup> behaving in accordance with the contents of the *Tawrāt* (Torah) and *Injīl* (Bible) and believing in God and guarding oneself against evil (acquiring piety) is revealed in these verses as expressions of just social interactions, Sadr argues (Sadr 1979, 227). He observes:

(the quality of) Human relationships with nature are correlated to the (extent of) establishment of justice in human relations with their fellows. Whenever justice is flourished in human relations with his/her fellows more and more, their relations with nature will accordingly be flourished. If, on the contrary, justice goes absent from the first line, flourishing will be absent from the second line. It means that a just society puts

<sup>16</sup> Ṭabāṭabā'ī interprets this phrase to mean: submitting to Islam and acting accordingly. See his interpretation in *al-Mīzān* under this verse (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 20, 20-22).

flourishment in human relations with nature, but a tyrannical society keeps these relations unflourished. (1979, 227)

If we compare the meanings of these verses and consider the context that they were revealed in, we will understand Sadr's interpretation. In commenting on these verses, Sadr states that the amount and the quality of access to natural resources in a society basically depends on the way that its people behave in their social life and how they establish their social relationships. The central idea in these verses, especially when we consider the context of the preceding verses, is the importance of social justice. These three verses, as Sadr interprets them, reveal a relationship between the establishment of faith and social piety, social justice and maintenance in the right way, on the one hand, and abundant production and access to an immense amount of natural resources on the other. I assume that these verses link sustainable development with the establishment of a specific culture and values system first in individuals and then at the social level. The core elements in this culture or values system is faith and piety and, more comprehensively, behaving in accordance to the content of revealed books.

I have to add here that a value-laden full access to natural resources does not lead to oppressive behavior because it is, as the Qur'ān reveals, the outcome of faith and piety/self-control (Q. 7:96/*āmanū wa ittaqaw*). These values are acquired by the individual before he/she has any access to wealth or power. They have approached the question from the root. Just social relationships are indeed a manifestation of internalized values of faith and piety. These values are imparted when the members of a society follow the prophetic instructions. This kind of immense wealth is the consequence of a just social life. Therefore, it does not lead to an unjust social pattern.

I also would like to highlight a complementary point which helps to clarify the message in the above-mentioned verses. Tabataba'i observes that the interrelationship between a person's social misbehavior and his/her denial of a good standard of living (lacking sufficient access to natural resources) is mentioned in other verses of the Qur'ān. By contrast with the content of the verses referred to earlier, these other verses reveal the corrupting and damaging consequences of unjust human behavior. In Q. 30:41, 42:30 and 13:11,<sup>17</sup> explicit calamities, afflictions and forms of corruption among human beings are considered to be the results of human misdeeds. What is more, Q. 13:11 reveals that changes in the condition (positive or negative) of any nation relates to prior individual change in its people.

Tabataba'i argues that social corruption may occur with or without human manipulation. Sometimes corruption occurs within a given human plan. Events such as wars, social insecurity, poverty and national or international oppression<sup>18</sup> are the work of human oppressors. Societies may also suffer from other forms of corruption which occur spontaneously and without any human plan. Horrible earthquakes, storms, floods, droughts and shortage of rainfall are other types of corruption or calamities that are beyond our ability to foresee (Tabataba'i vol. 8, 197 & vol. 16, 195).

All these examples are, as the Qur'ān reveals, the outcome of unjust human social behavior. For Tabataba'i the link between human behavior and other functioning

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<sup>17</sup> A preliminary translation of each of these verses is as follows: Q. 30:41, "Corruption has appeared on land and sea on the account of what the hands of humankind have earned, that (Allah) may make them taste a part of their deeds, that they may turn back (from Evil);" Q. 42:30, "And whatever affliction befalls you, it is because of the things your hands have wrought, and (yet) He forgives most (of your faults);" Q. 13:11, "Verily Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change their own conditions (from within)..."

<sup>18</sup> I may add to this category the emergence of life-threatening diseases such as AIDS and various types of cancer that affect a considerable portion of populations.

elements of the universe which cause improvement or corruption on earth resembles the relationships which exist between various parts of the body in health and sickness. Human beings do not behave in isolation from the order of the universe (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 8, 196). Sadr's theory of the interrelationship between human social behavior and the quality of life (which is partly the result of human access to natural resources) will be complete if we analyze it in the context of these three verses which mention the negative consequences of human social behavior. Sadr's thought alludes to this type of relationship, but he does not provide the related verses from the Qur'ān.

To illustrate the impact of education on this mutual link, I have to maintain that Q. 5:66, among all the above-mentioned verses, has direct reference to the establishment of the contents of the Torah and the Bible. These two texts are indeed examples of the prophetic curriculum.<sup>19</sup> As Eisner states, curriculum plays a central role in education. He observes that "like the systole and diastole of the beating heart, curriculum and teaching reside at the center of education" (Eisner 1992, 302). This emphasis, of course, does not connote neglect of the importance of other elements. However, it points out the vital role of curriculum and teaching in education.

As I mentioned earlier, the Prophets and the holy Books are two main tools for divine education. Prophets aim to teach humankind in accordance with the content of the holy Books. This education must first lead to the establishment of a religious values system inside the believers and then to the establishment of social justice at the social

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<sup>19</sup> For Tabataba'i the claimed interrelationship between the two parts of this verse can be defended only if the Torah and the Bible are free from human manipulation. He argues however that these two texts are not those which were revealed to Moses and Jesus (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 6, 38).

level. The contents of the holy Books are instructions on how people need to be purified in order that they behave justly. This purification and just social behavior will lead to a full access to natural resources. Sadr also explains the link between social reconstruction and the values education of citizens in the same society (Sadr 1979, 141-2). The messages included in other two verses (72:16; 7:96) also imply educational concern. Keeping to the right way and faith and piety, which are themselves the results of self-development, are the targeted aims in prophetic education. Therefore an analytical approach to the three above-mentioned verses indicates that prophetic education is a linking element between self-development, social justice and a full access to natural resources.

Sadr then concludes that, according to these same three verses (72:16, 5:66, 7:96), a balanced distribution of power, wealth and natural resources in society (social justice), a fundamental task of all heavenly religions, will lead to an increase of wealth, blessings and well-being. If individuals' relationships with one another are just, they will have a better and more qualified access to nature. The amount and the kind of natural resources possessed depend on the level of a just social interrelationship (Sadr 1979, 226-7). For the Qur'ān, as we have seen, the above-mentioned social norm is not limited to Muslim society. The second verse talks about Jews and Christians and includes them under the same norm as Muslims. Therefore, the core point in this Qur'ānic norm is an inclusive religious perspective which assigns a central role to true faith and piety. This differs from a secular and scientific interpretation which looks for a non-religious element in social norms.

Sadr also insists that this link between an individual's relationship with nature on the one hand and his social relationship (social justice) on the other is not something related to the divinity or hidden aspects of Qur'ānic teachings.<sup>20</sup> Although this aspect undoubtedly forms a part of Muslim beliefs, the Qur'ān in these verses provides a social norm which occurs in history and society, Sadr argues. In an unjust society, a group or a class or a political system may dominate the population, resulting in unjust social interactions. People usually follow the dominant socio-political structure. Society then disintegrates. The human and natural resources in an unjust society are blocked or destroyed, resulting in a weak collective control over nature. On the contrary, in a just and God-centered society all discrimination dissolves since all groups and individuals experience an equal relationship with Allah and consequently among themselves. No one can claim any priority over anyone else. Those who are more pious and behave more justly are more honored. The outcome is unity and the integration of all human resources and other utilities (Sadr 1978, 226-8).

Pharaonic society, according to Sadr's terminology, is a disintegrated society. The Qur'ān provides examples of these societies that fit the pattern of a dominant-subordinate power relationship. The root of the difference between a God-centered and a secular unjust society goes back to the impact of two patterns of values and ideals. In a Pharaonic society, values are formed based on wealth and power and involve bitter competition. The values system in a God-centered society on the other hand derives from a religious world-view at whose core is the unity of God. True belief in the unity of God unites all

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<sup>20</sup> It seems that Ṭabāṭabā'ī explains these verses in *al-Mīzān* as referring to a metaphysical relationship



humankind under one umbrella. This core discredits all types of man-made discrimination. Humankind, with all its particularities is deemed as one single family. Stratification and unjust classification is, according to the Qur'ān (Q. 28:4), characteristic of a Pharaonic society (Sadr 1978, 228-9).

Two Qur'ānic verses allude to the above-mentioned unity: Q. 21:92: "Surely this is your nation, one single nation, and I am your Lord, therefore, worship me," and Q. 23:52: "Surely this is your nation, one single nation, and I am your Lord, be careful (of your duty) to me."

My conclusion is that since the words *umma wāḥida* (single united nation) in the above two verses appear after the narration of some prophetic events, it is reasonable to conclude the possibility of the establishment of a just and united society which incorporates various nations. The idea of one single nation in the Qur'ān encourages us to think of the possibility of a global village which includes various cultures and unites different nations under one single umbrella. That utopian society is one which is God-centered. Following Allah's rules and being pious before the divine instructions are the uniting element. A real sustained social co-existence is related, according to the above-mentioned verses, to the type of values inculcation and ideals selection practiced therein.

Whatever the meaning of the Qur'ānic term *umma* (nation) with its numerous textual variants -e.g., in these two verses it refers to the prophets, or their religions or their true people (nations) - the uniting element is Allah. Therefore, followers of the prophets throughout history, despite their differences in terms of time and place, local

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between human behavior and full accessibility to nature. (See Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1970, vol. 8, 205-7)

culture and values, are regarded as one single nation. This is because of the uniting role of Allah and educational impact of His prophets in just societies. All prophets, although sent to different nations, have brought one message and direct their followers toward one single target. On the contrary, when the Qur'ān talks about unjust (Pharaonic) societies, it considers them to be disintegrated. This is because of the oppressive and dominating powers which are replaced by Allah in just societies. In an unjust society, relationships are always oppressive from one side and oppressed on the other. Each group attempts to obtain more interests and carry less expenses. When human resources are treated unjustly and are destroyed, society loses out on the potential that lay in these resources. Each group attempts to take care of its own interests and protect itself from assimilation or destruction (Sadr 1978, 229-30). There is no social integration then.

I think Sadr's conclusion will be better understood if we relate it to the explanation of Ṭabāṭabā'ī. The discourse of the three above-mentioned verses (72:16, 5:66, 7:96) hints at a metaphysical message, too. The expressions of *min fawqihim*<sup>21</sup> (from above them), *min al-samā'*<sup>22</sup> (from the heaven) and *mā'an ghadaqā*<sup>23</sup> (plenty of water) allude to the impact of metaphysical elements. These outcomes, all of which are under our control, are related to the earth. The present level of human knowledge is ineffective, however, when it comes to manipulating the heavens. Humankind, with its present level of knowledge, is unable to manage the rainfall or to intervene against destructive floods.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, we can conclude that human behavior

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<sup>21</sup> Q. 5:66.

<sup>22</sup> Q. 7:96.

<sup>23</sup> Q. 72:16.

<sup>24</sup> While I was writing this chapter, I was among those who experienced the 1998 ice storm in eastern Canada. The entire province of Quebec in addition to the eastern part of the province of Ontario suffered from one of the most devastating storms of the century. This storm paralyzed two or three million citizens in one of the most developed countries of the world. A secular review of this occurrence would be that it

has both earthly and heavenly outcomes which facilitate or prevent access to natural resources. These outcomes are explainable based on sociological and theological understandings. They constitute the Islamic culture of development and call our attention to the religious values elements of development.

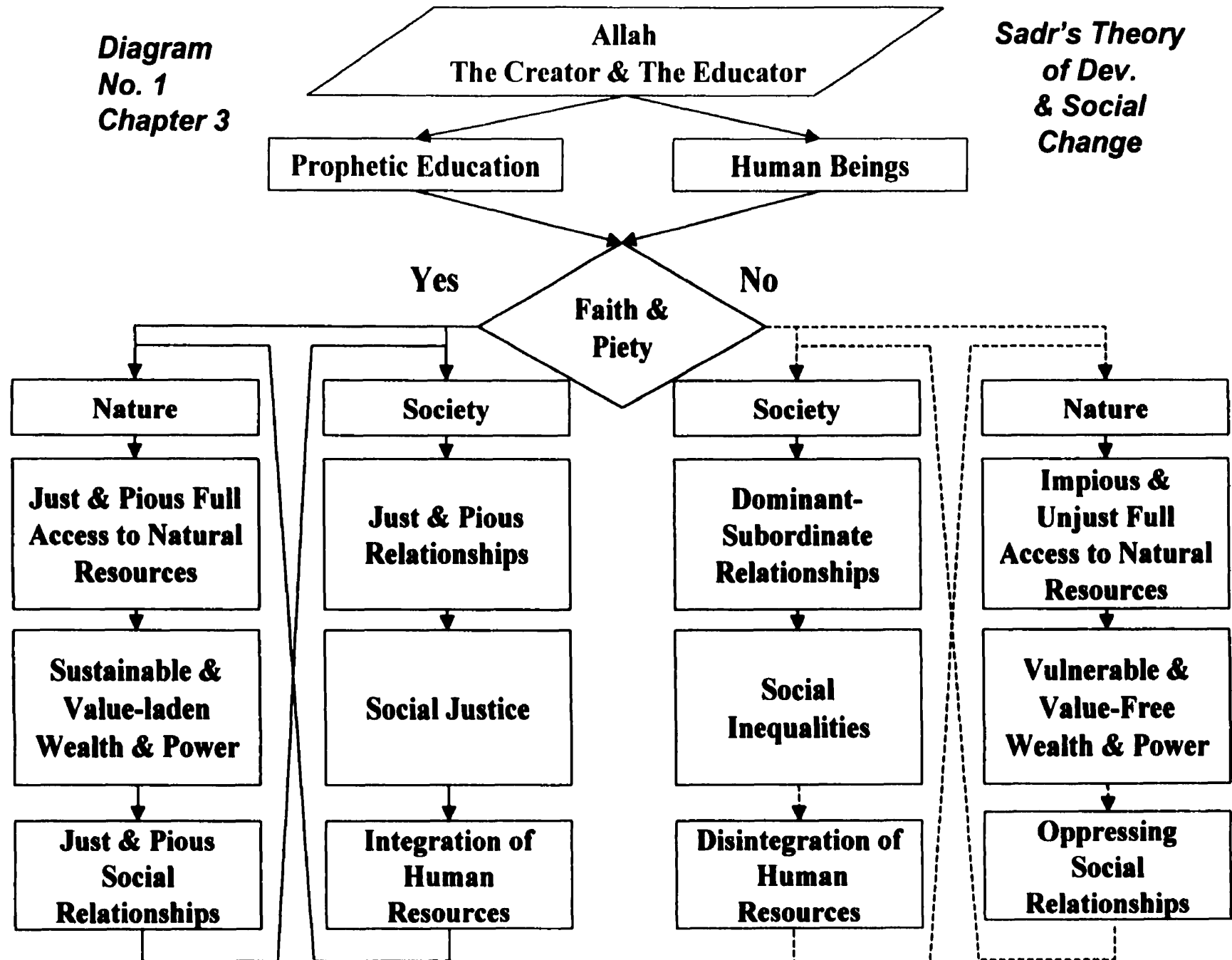
To summarize Sadr's theory about the Qur'ānic social norms and their relationships with human behavior in relation with nature and society, I have designed the following diagram:

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was consequences of the anger of the mother nature. A religious view of this storm might be that it was a warning from God. The storm warns people about the negative consequences of their behavior before God and His will. It shows us that despite our invented utilities, we cannot escape the heat and darkness of a storm which affected only one or two provinces. Human beings feel the results of their misdeeds even though they feel they have some control over nature. People need to improve their relationships with society and nature as God's vicegerent on earth.

**Diagram  
No. 1  
Chapter 3**

**Sadr's Theory  
of Dev.  
& Social  
Change**



As we see, this diagram includes two typical models of development associated with two kinds of culture and values system. The core distinguishing variables are faith and piety which are the final target in prophetic values education. These variables create different consequences for the development pattern. One model will lead to a value-laden sustainable development while the other entails disintegration in nature and society. In Sadr's theory social justice and sustainable access to natural resources are linked to one another. Therefore, any improving model should invest in these two aspects simultaneously. An effective educational system functions to establish those changing elements as the foundation of the divine model of development and social change.

Sadr's model clearly emphasizes a culture and values sensitivity in modeling a sustainable development. I have used the term culture here as defined by Criggs (1997), i.e., as a: "dynamic and evolving relationship between a society and its environment" which results in a distinct way of life. This concept comprises "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value system, traditions, and beliefs" (UNESCO 1982).<sup>1</sup>

To show the difference between a religious and a secular culture of development and social change Sadr consults Q. 2:30 which essentially talks about the ontological mission of Adam and his offspring on earth. This verse reveals:

And when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to place on the earth a *khalifah* (vicegerent), they said: will you place in it the one who shall

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<sup>1</sup> See also Vargas 1998, 4.

make mischief in it and shed blood , while we celebrate your praise and extol your holiness? He said: Surely I know what you do not know.

Sadr analyzes this verse to explore the key elements which share in the formation of a society, the way these elements function in that social structure and eventually the consequences of their interrelationships. According to Sadr, careful study of this verse reveals to us God's dialogue with the angels in revealing His plan to establish a human society on earth. What are, then, the key elements in the establishment of this divine event? Sadr extracts the following three components:

The first element is human beings. The second one is earth or nature, since God said: "I will place a caliph on earth." Therefore (in establishing that earthly society) there is generally earth or nature and there are human beings who are placed on earth as God's vicegerents. Thirdly there is a spiritual relation which, on the one hand, links human beings to earth or nature and bridges them to their human fellows on the other hand. The Qur'ān calls this spiritual relationship divine vicegerency (*al-istikhlāf*).<sup>2</sup> These are the three elements of a society. (1979, 126)

A brief review of all human societies on earth reveals that both religious and secular societies include the first two elements. There is no society which lacks human interrelationships, nor is there any society without citizens who practice a social role in relation to earth or nature. Societies are, nonetheless, different in creating two types of spiritual relationship which in Sadr's model was regarded as the third element. Therefore the third element is flexible and changing in nature. The nature of this flexible element is that it distinguishes societies from one another. This changing element can produce a three-fold or a four-fold social structure (Sadr 1979, 126-7). The four-fold structure relates the other three included elements (individual, nature and society) while it includes

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<sup>2</sup> In a more recent volume (*al-Islām Yaqūd al-Ḥayāt/Islam Guides Human Life*), which is comprised of six articles, Sadr articulates the concept of vicegerency and also his model of the periodization of human history. Further information may sought in that volume.

another pillar. For Sadr, although this added element is not among the other elements which constitute social structure, it does both generate and preserve the society. This four-fold structure of social relationships is Qur'ānically known as *al-istikhlāf* (vicegerency). I quote Sadr's definition of this term:

*Al-istikhlāf* (vicegerency) stands for social relationships from a Qur'ānic point of view. It includes, in an analysis, four pillars. The reason is that vicegerency necessitates a vicegerenting element (*mustakhlif*), as well. This model includes vicegerenting (*mustakhlif*), the place of vicegerency (*mustakhlaf 'alayh*) and the vicegerent (*mustakhlaf*). Therefore, as well as individual, society and nature, there is a fourth pillar which has established vicegerency as an integrating element for those three elements. The integrating element (*mustakhlif*) is Allah (*subhānahu wa ta'ālā*/almighty and be praised). The vicegerent is humankind and the place and the subject of vicegerency are earth and what exists on it (1979, 128-9).

To Sadr the four-fold model stems from a religious world-view which looks upon the whole universe as God's property. There is no owner or authority other than Allah. The human role or mission throughout life is only to be the servant and vicegerent of God. Therefore human relations with nature never result in ownership. Humankind's role, therefore, is to watch over a property entrusted to it. Social relationships also must not result in more than a mutual vicegerency. Ownership, oppressive sovereignty and humiliating godness is ontologically refuted. A secular attitude which misses the fourth pillar and follows a three-fold model will suffer from various forms of oppression and tyranny which are the result of damaging competition of human beings over one another. Therefore the inclusion of the fourth pillar creates a typical change in the nature of interrelations of the three other pillars. Human beings accordingly are co-vicegerents and jointly entrusted with the same responsibility. Sadr, therefore, concludes that *al-istikhlāf* (vicegerency) is a four-fold model which explains social relationships from a Qur'ānic

point of view (Sadr 1979, 128-31). To Sadr the four-fold model represents one of the divine norms. Vicegerency is in fact an explanation of the role that religion must play in human life. Sadr previously maintained that religion itself is more than a combination of divine legislation. It is one of the ontological norms which describe the type of human existence. It stands for the particular form of human creation. However it is the kind of norm that can be delayed or disregarded by human beings for a short period of time (Sadr 1979, 124).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For further explanation see section 3.1.5. of the present chapter.



## Chapter 4.

### Sadr's Theory of Social, Cultural and Values Development

#### 4.1. Values Education & Social Reconstruction

To the best of my knowledge, the later part of Sadr's intellectual career was devoted to developing the remaining elements of the Islamic system that this outstanding Shī'ī thinker had conceived of (Rufā'ī 1996, 143). Pursuing the same line of research that he had established in *Iqtisādunā* (Our Economy) and *Falsafatunā* (Our Philosophy), Sadr was apparently engaged in writing a volume on *Mujtama'unā* (Our Society) (Ḥusainī 1989, 98). In it Sadr intended to explore the foundations of an Islamic sociological approach to development and social change. Although the thinker never completed this work, his corresponding introductory lectures (presented in 1399/1979 in the 'Ilmiyah Seminary of Najaf)<sup>1</sup> were compiled in a volume known as *al-Madrasah al-Qur'āniyah* (The Qur'ānic School of Thought).

This volume begins with Sadr's proposed methodology in understanding and consulting the Qur'ān in a search for answers to the emerging complexities in human life. The second part deals with the historical norms which characterize human history as a normative but exploratory domain. In this section, Sadr attempts to clarify the role of human beings in shaping history, as is reflected in various verses of the Qur'ān. The last part explores elements of an Islamic theory of social change, power relationships, the emergence of social classes and the function of social norms as they are revealed in the

Qur'ān. Here, Sadr formulates a theory which sees humankind at the center of two lines of relationships. These lines link human beings to nature, on the one hand, and to individuals in society, on the other. The core element in these interrelationships is the impact of individual inner self-development on social change, Sadr asserts. To explain the process of self-development and its projection at the social level, Sadr directs us to the significance of the process of values and ideals formation. This dimension forms the core of his discussion which I will briefly explore in this and the following section.

Sadr's theory traces the quality of individual interrelationships with nature and society to the inner domain of individual personality (self-development). He observes that social reconstruction depends on the self-construction of the citizens in each society. The reconstruction of inner elements of human personality is the foundation of socio-historical changes (Sadr 1979, 139). To Sadr these two elements are correlated as follows:

It is therefore true to assert that the inner content of human beings is the foundation of movements of human history. The upper social structure, along with all other elements such as social relations, social institutions and social attitudes, are related to this inner basic element. Any change at the social level is indeed a reflection of a change at a deeper level inside individuals. (1979, 141)

An illustration of the impact of prophetic education on the construction of individual personalities will enable me to analyze these inner elements through an educational approach. Sadr has divided the prophetic mission along two major lines: the establishment of social justice and the individual self-development of peoples based on the contents of divine books (Sadr 1979, 207). These two lines of macro- and micro-

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<sup>1</sup> See Rūfā'ī 1996, 138.

levels of human development are intertwined (Sadr 1979, 143). Priority is always given to individual self-development. Individual values and ideals development, as the first and most important step in prophetic education, is the basis for social development.

To show the significance and the priority of individual self-development, Sadr alludes to two Islamic technical terms: major struggle (*al-jihād al-akbar*) and minor struggle (*al-jihād al-aṣghar*)<sup>2</sup> (Sadr 1979, 143). Society, according to the Islamic vision, must implement social justice before it can fully develop. Various obstacles may intervene to prevent the establishment of social justice. A minor campaign may be the only solution for the establishment of social justice when and if oppressors persist in their campaigns against prophets (see Q. 57:25). Yet the fundamental task, the major endeavor, remains unaccomplished.

Islam proposes major struggle as an energetic campaign against individuals themselves. Self-development is considered a major campaign. It is not difficult to overthrow social oppressors who refuse social justice. A harder task is to educate people on the need to construct themselves from the inside. Muslim moral educators<sup>3</sup> call this

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<sup>2</sup> These two Islamic technical terms, major striving (*al-jihād al-akbar*) and minor striving (*al-jihād al-aṣghar*) are derived from a prophetic saying. It is narrated that the Prophet Muḥammad sent a group of Muslims on a difficult campaign. They became exhausted in the course of it. When they returned to the Prophet, he appreciated their successful efforts. Yet he addressed them and said: "I appreciate all of you who have conducted the minor campaign but you still owe the major striving." The Muslim soldiers were astonished and asked: "What is the major campaign? The Prophet said: "The major campaign is to fight yourself." He then added that the best form of striving before God is to have a major campaign against your souls to train it based on the prophetic instructions. See, for instance: (Noor Software) Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 5, p. 12, *rawāyah* 3. and also Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār*, vol. 70, p. 65, *rawāyah* 7. These two terms therefore imply two lines of campaign lasting lifetime. One is deemed as major, which represents the cornerstone, and the other is viewed as minor which stands for the upper and social level of human behavioral consequences. The major task is the process of self-development. A healthy and successful process of self-development could lead to a healthy process of social development.

<sup>3</sup> See for example: Al-Shahīd al-Thānī Zayn al-Dīn ibn 'Alī (911/1505-966/1558), *Falāḥ al-Sā'il wa Muḥāsabat al-Nafs* (*The Prosperity of Seekers and the Evaluation of the Souls*).

campaign major struggle, indicating that it comprises the hardest of tasks. The most significant part of the prophetic investment (the utilization of all aspects of prophetic energy to establish the society intended by God) has focused on individual self-development. Individual purification (values change operation) and conscientization are regarded as the main targets of prophecy (see Q. 62:2 & 3:164). Therefore, Islam highlights individual self-construction as the very foundation of social change. The reason is that as long as individuals are not prophetically educated, efforts at the social level are rootless. We are treating the surface and apparent aspect of social change if we confine ourselves to social reconstruction. Social disorders are always caused by morally uneducated citizens who missed out on prophetic instruction. Needless to say, prophets only help individuals to begin self-development. The major task remains in the hands of individuals themselves who decide to follow or refute those instructions. Self-development is a self-focused effort.

Sadr's analysis of the significance of inner elements leads him to a discussion of two major elements. Since human conscious behaviors are purposeful, individuals must consider the different options in their lives, choose their goals among them, and then move towards these goals. This means that future goals are the motivating elements of human behavior. However in comparison to our present situation the future is always a blank missing. We try to obtain what we do not have now, creating a picture of what we want to arrive at in our minds.<sup>4</sup> In fact this personal imagination is a motivating element.

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<sup>4</sup> Sadr calls (1979, 139) this form of mental motivation which represents our real goals as *qillah ghā'iyah* (final cause). Following Aristotle, Muslim philosophers divide causes into four types. Efficient creative cause (*al-qillah al-fā'iliyah*), final cause (*al-qillah al-ghā'iyah*), material cause (*al-qillah al-māddiyah*) and formal cause (*al-qillah al-ṣūriyah*). These four types of causes can be seen when we analyze human

This personal thought includes cognitive and a motivating aspects. The cognitive aspect provides a mental picture of what we want to arrive at while the motivating aspect pushes us to move towards that aim. To Sadr the inner structure stands for these two aspects (Sadr 1979, 139-40). Therefore our goals are constructed in our inner structure through a mental picture in which cognition relates to motivation (Sadr 1979, 145).

Considerations and decisions happen within the structure of human personalities. Human personality is influenced by physiological, psychological and social elements. In addition to other influencing elements, ideals<sup>5</sup> and values influence human thought and choice. Values and ideals are learnt. Consciously or unconsciously, we internalize ideals and values from family, society, and even from inanimate environments. Walls, streets, buildings and architecture, for example, may invoke specific types of values and ideals.

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consciously selected behavior (Mutahhari 1989, 233-5). The final cause is our perception of what we want to obtain. In our daily life; when we are hungry we eat, we drink when we feel that we are thirsty, we study or we think to solve a problem or to find out a fact. We may also try our best to win a highly competitive race. In these examples we have some real goals that we attempt to arrive at. However, what we are directly related to is our perception of these real goals. Muslim philosophers distinguish between these two facts as goal (*ghāyat*) and final cause (*al-ʿillah al-ghāʾiyah*). The first one represents the real goal that we try to obtain. This goal usually functions as a completing factor which meets a need or satisfies a desire or completes a deficiency (Mutahhari 1989, 244-7). Tabatabaʾi observes that in our conscious behavior the goals are always prior to our behavior when we consider our personal perceptions of those goals, but they are delayed if we think of their real and external existence (Tabatabaʾi, no date, *Bidāyah al-Hikmah*, 91). The former stands for a perception that we create in our minds as a reflecting element of the real goal. This personal perception is what Sadr views it as inner element which comprises both cognitive and motivating aspects (Sadr 1979, 140). This personal perception is essentially influenced by our ideals (Sadr 1979, 145). If we do not have any awareness of what we want to obtain, we do not move towards a real goal (Mutahhari 1989, 253).

<sup>5</sup> "Ideals" is my translation of the Arabic term *al-muthul* (the plural form of *al-mathal*) which plays the central role in Sadr's discussion about self and values development. Sadr probably has borrowed this term from the Qur'ān (Q. 16:60 & 30:27). To me the term "ideals" in Sadr's discussion resembles and functions in the same role as values. Sadr considers ideals the conscious root and the base of all aims and goals that we attempt to arrive at (Sadr 1979, 145). Ideals, according to Sadr, stem from our world-views. Each set of ideals is associated with a particular amount of psychological energy which is comparable with our world-view. This energy motivates us to move to meet our goals. The formation of ideals will influence the major and the minor avenues that we choose to reach our goals. For Sadr, ideals function as distinguishing elements in evaluating human movements in the history. Each line of movement is directed toward a specific ideal. This ideal will determine other sub-goals and minor aims. In the Qur'ān the human ideals are

To Sadr the formation of ideals depends on our view about the universe and human life (Sadr 1979, 146). The internalized values and ideals then influence our thinking, decisions and behavior. The most important task of educators here is to provide an environment which enables students to recognize values which will improve them and choose such values for conscious value insertion. This raises questions about values education, the only section which is open to us as educators.

#### **4.1.1. Challenges and Dilemmas in Recognizing Values & Ideals**

Questions and dilemmas emerge when we discuss values education. What do we mean by the term 'values'? Are values private or public? Are they built subjectively or do they exist objectively? Furthermore, do we recognize values as absolute concepts or do they change relative to various circumstances, cultures, ages, nations or other variables? The widely divergent answers to these questions reflect the fundamental philosophies, schools of thought and world views of the men and women who author them. Western societies, influenced mainly by individualism and positivism, often side with subjectivity and relativism, Halstead argues (Halstead 1996, 4-6). It is, nonetheless, vital to note that the Western approach is not a single coherent school of thought. Numerous approaches have emerged in the West to deal with values education. It is difficult even to find an inclusive list of these approaches. The liberal democratic model (Halstead 1996), Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Morris 1994), character education (Lickona 1993a), the post-modern approach (Tappan & Brown 1996), and religious moral education (Moran 1989) are only a few examples of theories in values education. Superka

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viewed as gods (see, e.g., Q. 25:43). The reason is that ideals (gods) function as final aims and major directors (Sadr 1979, 146-7).

and his colleagues in an older study have provided another list of other approaches in values education. Their typology includes inculcation, analysis, clarification and action learning as the current approaches in values education (Superka et al., 1975). Even a brief discussion of these varying approaches requires an independent study, and clearly falls beyond the present one. I only enumerate these approaches to show the difficulty of entering the domain of values education as an avenue for self-development.

Societies with idealistic or realistic, secular or religious approaches follow other perspectives. Answers then are not formulated in an either/or dichotomy. They depend on our philosophy of life and the way we view the world of human beings and their relations to the whole universe.

Despite the explicit disagreement of scholars over the definition of the term “values” I prefer to quote Halstead. His definition, I suppose, is closer to what Sadr has envisaged in his values discussion. Halstead states: “Values refer to principles, fundamental convictions, ideals, standards or life stances which act as general guides to behavior or as points of reference in decision-making or the evaluation of beliefs or actions and which are closely connected to personal integrity and personal identity” (Halstead 1996, 5). Sadr also refers to values<sup>6</sup> as directing ideals which derive from our world views and influence our life’s goals through their impact on our thinking and decision-making discourses (Sadr 1979, 146). Values in this view are regarded as the criteria of our entity both in present and in future. This is, as Desaulniers states, because

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<sup>6</sup> Although Sadr prefers to use the term ideals (*al-muthul*) instead of values (*al-qāyām*), his explanation and the characteristics he attributes to ideals approach (see the previous footnote) Halstead’s definition of values. Therefore in my opinion the discussion of ideals in Sadr’s theory is identical with the discussion of

values are ontological in their nature. They refer to “what one will be, instead of merely what one will have” (Morris 1994, xix, quoting from Desaulniers 1982).

Regardless of differences in the domain of values, societies more or less follow a common pattern of values and standards of behavior. Values education can be described, in my understanding, as a way to help individuals explore common standards and internalize them. Secularity and religiosity play an important role in determining common values. The former prepares individuals for proper citizenship and active participation (Halstead 1996, 8-9), while the latter advocates religious standards and ideals to facilitate self-construction. The result will influence human life both in this life and in that of the hereafter (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 100-2). Sadr takes a religious approach in his discussion of values. He attempts to discover a Qur’ānic set of common values as a necessary requirement for self-development. He consults various Qur’ānic verses to elaborate on the typology and formation of a human value system.

Sadr emphasizes that values education and individual self-development will lead to social change if they encompass the majority of the population in a given society. Their impact on only a few people is insufficient as a means of creating social change (Sadr 1979, 141-42).

Values education then should play the central role in educating people overall. Education, of course, has a wider meaning than schooling. Various social elements must participate in values education. To bring about any significant change, educators must begin by identifying appropriate values and changing those that have become

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values. This understanding is supported by Sadr’s intermingling of ideals to values in his discussion of



pathologically fixed. Sadr maintains that self-development begins with values and ideals change (Sadr 1979, 145).

Values (Halstead 1996), ideals (Sadr 1979), myths (Keen & Valley-Fox 1989), or gods and goddesses (Keen 1989 & Postman 1995) are just some of the themes proposed by various thinkers in an attempt to show the inner influencing elements. Sam Keen asserts that the impact of unconscious myths in shaping our recent history is as important as the impact of conscious science. Sigmund Freud's theory of mythic struggles between Ego and Id within the individual psyche as well as racial, national, religious and political myths had a tremendous impacts in creating sacred "isms" both in the East and in the West. Witnessing these values struggles as a part of the politics of modernity, humankind has become frustrated by the fear that history may end either with a bang or with a whimper (Keen 1989, x). Therefore it is crucial that we take a step backwards into ourselves and try to include self-development in the process of social and economic development.

#### **4.1.2. Values and Ideals Formation: A Forgotten Crucial Task**

Sometimes internalized myths and gods unconsciously influence our thinking and direct our behavior. Sam Keen assigns an effective credit to living myths. He observes: "The dominant myth that informs a person or a culture is like the "information" contained in DNA or the program in the system disk of a computer. Myth is the software, the cultural DNA, the unconscious information, the metaprogram that governs the way we see "reality" and the way we behave" (Keen 1989, xii). This is why Sadr asserts that any

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typology of ideals. (See Sadr 1979, 166).

self-development must begin with values and ideals; what Keen calls myths.<sup>7</sup> Myths and values can be creative or destructive, healthy or pathological. People need to be educated to handle them constructively. The challenge of rematching gods and ideals with the ever-changing realities of life is another story. We invest our myths with a sacred character, giving them the same unquestioning credit we offer to the seasons of the year. This allows them to perform the same functions as gods.

If the root of inner change is values and ideals, then we must examine the ways in which these ideals are formed and how they change. Values and ideals, as Sadr points out, depend on our world views. They are, indeed, the outcome of our philosophy of life. This philosophy fashions the way that we give meaning to life, ourselves, society and the universe. The amount and the quality of psychological energy which move us towards the objectives of our lives result from our ideals and values (Sadr 1979, 145-46). As well as one's world view, the pattern of "humanology" that each person follows influences the values system and ideals.

By humanology I mean a selected pattern by which each person explains his/her humanity, included potentialities and the way of actualizing them (SAMT 1995, 518). Our values system influences the goals of our lives and the methods that we choose to obtain them. The Qur'ān calls these ideals and values "god/*ilāh* or gods/*ālihah*." People can choose various gods. The impact of gods and ideals in human life is so influential that they direct our behavior like God. Each of us may decide to follow God, a god or gods

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<sup>7</sup> It seems that Keen attributes an unconscious role to myths. This role distances myths from ideals and values which are usually conscious. The significant impact of myths, nonetheless, motivated me to place

(Sadr 1979, 147). The most important task is consciously to examine both gods and values. We must choose our myths if we are going to behave autonomously.

Quoting Santayana, Keen pushes us to compose a conscious, active feedback to our myths: "Those who do not remember history are condemned to repeat it." Even though this statement referred originally to culture, Keen utilizes it to provoke awareness about choosing myths. Keen states: "If we do not make the effort to become conscious of our personal myths gradually, we become dominated by what psychologists have variously called repetition compulsion, autonomous complexes, engrams routines, scripts, games" (Keen 1989, xiv). To go through this process, I propose that we should reexamine both our world view and the specific elements that have motivated us to choose certain values and myths. At this point people may build their relationship with God. Other myths and gods function limitedly. They urge us to engage in a continuous revision. I argue that even personal, consciously selected myths, as Keen proposes, are not good tools for building co-existence. We need commonalities and common values if we are to get rid of personalism and relativism.

However when choosing gods, we choose them as metanarratives which convey sufficient credibility, complexity, and symbolic power to enable us to organize our lives around them, Postman maintains. We have all witnessed, heard or read narratives about communism, fascism and Nazism in modern life as gods and myths which have called their adherents to fight for the establishment of a heaven on earth. Several other gods have captured the hearts and minds of many other people (Postman 1995, 6).

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them in the same basket where values and ideals are found. My major concern in this discussion is to

Interestingly, Postman introduces us as the god-making species (Postman 1995, 7). At this point we should note that the Qur'ān warns us not to be too caught up in gods we produce ourselves (see Q. 37:95 & 7:71). Innately we look for gods and metanarratives that give meaning to our lives and guide us to a more prosperous future. This process must be accomplished through an explanatory method, but we build our gods all the same. God, the Creator, can be the true ideal in our lives but we choose to follow the created god or gods.

Although the production of gods happens inside us, it reflects the realities of concrete life which are represented to us by major thinkers. In the age of the discovery of inductive science, figures such as Descartes, Bacon, Galileo, Kepler and Newton pioneered ideas which transformed human perceptions of God from a sacred religious God to a scientist God. This narrative was then replaced by the science-god which proved more beneficial, as it gave people a measure of power and control over their lives. It was nevertheless revealed as inadequate to explain any knowledge other than that of the present. It does not provide satisfactory answers for the beginning and the end of our existence. Science gave birth to a supposedly paradise-making son known as technology (Postman 1995, 8-10).

The Father science and the Son technology promised human progress if we proved to be a technological species. The problem then was that science and technology, produced to serve people, proceeded to enslave them. The result of this frustration was a psychological polytheism. One god is not and cannot be enough. We then look for

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review those influencing inner elements.

multiple gods. Democracy, cultural pluralism and multiculturalism are other solutions which attempt to resolve the problem of the present generation of Western intellectuals (Postman 1995, 13-17). Yet the question remains: In a non-melting-pot society which provokes the co-existence of people with various cultures, myths and gods, what will give meaning to life and motivate people towards a promising future? The cultural and values borderlines that divide us will continue to do so unless human beings arrive at one God, the uniting absolute ideal. This is what Sadr calls it *al-mathal al-a'la* (the highest ideal) in comparison with other invented ideals (1979, 145-7). The following section describes his explanation about human values and ideals making. He aims at providing two lines of pathological and normal ideal making.

#### **4.2. Sadr's Typology of Human Values & Ideals-Making**

Human beings are values and ideals<sup>8</sup> makers. They never stop making values. They cannot live without values. Sadr argues that we have to learn to deal with values qualitatively. He provides his own typology of human values-making in a tripartite model. For him, the provision of this typology of values-making helps people to know how they choose values and how they can recognize the vulnerable points. Sadr's model functions, in my view, as a pathological instrument in the process of values and ideals formation.

I believe that values are the most meaningful and the most effective ideals of our past. Values are metacognitions which are consciously constructed by us. They give meaning to our present lives and influence our goals in future. To construct ideals and

values people usually take one of the three following avenues. Contextualism, pathological generalization and transcendental values-making are the three major avenues that people often follow in their values-making, Sadr hypothesizes. In his evaluation of the quality of human values and ideals Sadr attempts to go deeply to the roots of this process. He proposes the three possible ways that people follow in making values and ideals. He then emphasizes the role of prophets in educating people to make healthy and stable ideals. According to Sadr some people choose their values from the existing context of their lives. The Qur'ān narrates examples of this values selection. The reaction of most people in past generations to the invitations of the prophets has been: Let us follow what our ancestors have done. Why should we abandon the practices of our ancestors? (Sadr 1979, 148-9). (See, e. g., Q. 2:170, 5:104, 10:78, 11:62, 14:10 and 43:22)

In his analysis of this type of ideals-making Sadr concludes that people usually follow this model when they tend to be sense-centered and pragmatic. This values-making process happens through a pragmaticity. People are happy with a values system which helps them to enjoy the present situation. They are reluctant to change values which support the existing social pattern. These people are stuck with their present context and cannot get rid of it. Therefore they cannot even think of another situation. They do not see horizons beyond the present context. These values and ideals are extracted from the existing social context and are returned to it to direct their followers to the future. Therefore, they are repeated ideals. The future here is nothing more than a

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<sup>8</sup> I have already mentioned that in Sadr's theory ideals are almost identical with values. In this section these two terms have been used interchangeably.

repetition of present and past (Sadr 1979, 148-50). This repetitious process of values making will lead to a pathological values system and entails values disease.

#### **4.2.1. Roots of Contextuality in Values-Making**

An important task of prophetic education is to educate people to exchange their gods for one God. Two main parameters, psychological and political, usually intervene in this process. When the people of a society become used to ideals and values that they have lived with, they internalize those values, which then become a part of their personality. Psychologically it will be difficult, therefore, to change these established values. The difficulty intensifies if they are formed within a luxurious and pleasing environment (Sadr 1979, 148-9). People realize that chosen gods and values are effective. There is no reason to change effective gods. Moreover, values which are derived from a god or gods make human life repetitious. In this case certain gods wear the dress of absoluteness. Since gods have a limited capacity to attract people, they are finite in nature. People have to create change in them and give them newness to maintain their permanent effectiveness. People must then change the form of values and follow them repeatedly. New cycles will lead people to the same starting point. Despite the apparent newness of gods and ideals a single essence is repeated through various forms.

Another element in refuting prophetic values instruction relates to social forces and the impact of power holders, Sadr maintains. To keep the top-down pattern of social structure, the power holders create gods and ideals. They attempt to impose decisions on people or sometimes make decisions for them, both actions which shape their value system. Sometimes power holders themselves become the god and ideal of a society. The

Qur'ān uses Pharaoh as an example of someone who asserts godliness (see Q. 28:30) (Sadr 1979, 151-52). Sadr calls this a political element which influences the social values system. Besides these two elements there are other factors. Socio-political forces are not, I believe, limited to political elements. Propaganda, mass media, written culture, social celebrations and above all the formal educational system in each society are among the other factors which influence our value system. They can be misused by power holders to foster a preferred type of values system.

Sadr observes that gods and ideals can be elevated to play the role of religion in human life. They wear the dress of sacredness, as the Qur'ān calls them gods (*āliha*) (see e.g., Q. 18:15). Because of their sacredness people are reluctant to set them aside. The sacred ideals are usually taken as gods. People worship them. To Sadr, religion is nothing more than the relationship between a worshiper and the worshipped. According to the monotheistic point of view, in addition to revealed religions, some religions are man-made. These religions are elaborated from internalized gods and ideals. Since these gods and ideals are not absolute or self-generating they do not last for ever. They are, in fact, expressions of the realities in human life and cannot direct him/her towards horizons beyond. To show the difference between these two types of religions Sadr maintains that monotheistic religions are a uniting force since they direct people towards one absolute ideal. Those religions which are elaborated from the created gods are disintegrative.

To Sadr it is impossible for human beings to create a god which directs them to a horizon beyond the limitation of their understanding (Sadr 1979, 155-59). People replace them with new gods to provide meaning to human life when they become meaningless.



Despite this continuous ideal renewal, gods will loose their effectiveness at some point. The society will have to put them aside. It means that the society will loose its integrative ideal. When there is no such ideal each individual concentrates on his or herself. Instead of concern for social benefit each person works for his/her own interests (Sadr 1979, 158-61).

A society with this type of ideal problem is vulnerable to one of the three following crises. Sadr indicates that society at this level is ideally diseased from within. He believes that society in this situation is not a real being. It is a shadow of society. Social disintegration is the first crisis that threatens a society with contextual values-making. If, for instance, the society faces an external threat, it will easily disintegrate and looses its integrity. The reason is that the society in this manner is not more than a combination of citizens each of them striving for his/her own interests. The disintegration of Islamic civilization at the middle of the seventh century of the Islamic era, when Muslims interfaced the Mongol invasion, is an experienced example. A similar disintegration happened at the beginning of the twentieth century when the Ottoman empire could not guarantee the continuity of the Islamic civilization.

The second crisis could be a complete assimilation into a non-Islamic ideal when the society has lost its own identity. A third possibility is an inner attempt from those Muslim thinkers who have still a strong feeling about the effectiveness of Islam at various ages. They try to renew those ideals which seemingly proved to be ineffective. Many Muslim thinkers and Muslim reformists attempt to discover a version of Islamic

ideals which could remain effective in face of tremendous social changes. Explaining the second and the third possibilities Sadr observes:

When Muslims confronted the age of colonialism they reacted through two different ways. One avenue directed Muslim nations to assimilate themselves to a foreign (Western) ideal. Some of the Muslim rulers applied this policy in their countries. Reza Khan in Iran and Kemal Ataturk in Turkey attempted to apply the ideal and values of Europeans which had won the campaigns in many aspects. When the Islamic ideals could not attract Muslims they applied an ideal which has proved to be effective. Muslim thinkers at the beginning of the colonial age and at the end of the disintegrating age (*awāthir al-fatrah*) which was prior to the age of colonialism strove to apply the third alternative. They wanted to give a new life to Islam. They attempted to provide the Islamic ideals in a new language and to renew Islamic ideals in a way that could meet the new needs of Islamic societies. A shadowy nation interfaces one of these three alternatives (1979, 163).

Sadr then switches to the second type of values and ideals selection. For some people, values-making is a process which must fit in with their future needs. Such people are able to see beyond their existing circumstances, and choose ideals and values which can direct them to a better, more promising future. They can foretell future needs, and are not overwhelmed by their existing context. The problem, nonetheless, is that human cognition is limited. People cannot foresee all aspects of their future. Human beings are unable to conceive of the absolute ideal. Usually we perceive a side or a dimension of that absolute ideal. A hidden vulnerability in human cognition is the fact that people never consider a limited fact as limited. They attribute absoluteness to what they have perceived. Generalization and absolutization<sup>9</sup> are psychological mechanisms that people

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<sup>9</sup> Absolutization is my proposed translation for Sadr's explanation of a process of false generalization. As I have discussed in this section, people sometimes consider a limited ideal as absolute. A limited value or ideal may be deemed as something absolute and self-generating. Sadr argues that this psychological willingness to derive absolute ideals from a limited fact could be a type of false generalization. Absolutization and generalization, in my view, are interchangeable in this context. They represent a process in which we consider a limited fact as an absolute or general.

use to enlarge the limited gods and ideals. These mechanisms are nonetheless psychological. Realities will challenge them. The absolutized gods will become inadequate in practice. Since human beings are constantly moving towards a true type of perfection and these limited ideals cannot provide that answer, these ideals will become an obstacle. They will become the ideals of the first type when they have lost their functionality for the future (Sadr 1979, 164-6).

#### **4.2.2. Absolutization in Values & Ideals-Making**

Two kinds of invalid generalizations usually take place when people choose the second type of values or ideals, Sadr asserts. People who are concerned about their future usually form ideals which meet future needs. Since these ideals are related to the future, they are more inclusive than those ideals which are taken from existing situations. They nonetheless convey only some aspects of the values that human beings are looking for. Overwhelmed by the Church authorities' insistence on certain religious and (erroneous) scientific ideas and exhausted by an oppressive economic system which had stratified society into elite and workers, Westerners, for instance, chose to follow the ideal of freedom and democracy. This ideal selection was partly the result of the religious Reformation which took place in the Western Church in the sixteenth century. Although the Reformation began as a religious movement, it had political, social and economic overtones as well (Enc. Britannica, vol. 19, 1970, 37). People who were tired of the intolerable pressures of the owners of wealth, power and authority refused to follow the authoritative patterns of social order. Sadr describes this situation as follows:

Europeans who pioneered the age of the Renaissance and Reformation wanted to be free from all traps, including those of Church and of

feudalism. They wanted to be free to do what they wished. They wanted to think with their own minds and not with the minds of others. They wanted to have their own concerns. They did not want to have stereotypes that others produced for them. (1979, 167)

The Renaissance and Enlightenment were especially associated with ideals and values which included a recrediting of human individual freedom (Schaeffer 1968, 33). People could no longer tolerate the existing socio-political and economic context of that period. Freedom was a value that promised a better future for all citizens. Yet the problem was that they took the instrument as their goal, Sadr observes. Democracy and freedom can create an environment where people have a voice and power. This context requires a motivating ideal. When people are free they can decide about their ideals. But they are stuck with the value of freedom, if they stop at this point. Recrediting individual freedom -although it is one step towards the future after having been stuck with present and past burdens- is not the ultimate ideal. The future is more extensive even than this ideal. Sadr calls this generalization "horizontal generalization." By horizontal generalization, he means that people may choose freedom or other ideals to rid themselves of oppressing and unsatisfactory existing circumstances.

Freedom however cannot be the absolute ideal. Although freedom is undoubtedly a prerequisite for human development, it is not the whole story. Freedom is without any content or ultimate ideal. To develop themselves people need not only freedom, but a goal, an ideal and a safe path toward that ideal, that absolute ideal. If people cannot choose an everlasting ideal they will be self-alienated. Freedom provides a good context, but people need a motivating goal and a meaningful content. This goal cannot be something limited. People innately look for everlasting absolute ideals.

Sadr contests that the problem in Western values selection is that people who favor it have forgotten the needed goal and content in their free and democratic context (Sadr 1979, 166-68). Islamic societies therefore avoid allowing themselves to be swept up in this and try instead to fill a free and democratic context with the revealed content and ideal.

The above-mentioned pathological generalization has happened occasionally in all nations. Sadr alludes to another type of generalization which may be traced from the beginning of human history right up to the present time. This invalid generalization that has affected people throughout history is to base ideals on humanity as whole. Sadr maintains that human social life began with the nuclear family. It has been extended to tribes, clans, groups and nations. During each period, people have sided with a particular ideal related to that specific stage. Those living at a certain period, make and accept values and ideals that are from that period. Tribalism, racism, fascism and belligerent nationalism are examples of this type of values-making which have taken place in various periods of human history. These ideals were then passed on to subsequent generations (Sadr 1979, 168-9).

The major problem in our values-making is the fact that we are usually narrow-sighted, Sadr believes. It is not therefore healthy for us to form values and ideals that are disintegrated from prophetic education. If we stand in a vast field or to a vast desert and try to see the farthest horizons, we achieve only a limited view. This, however, does not mean that the end of our sight is the end of the real world, too. But we do imagine that our perceived horizon is the end of the world. The same problem overwhelms us when we

try to choose values and ideals. Values and ideals are the horizons of human life. By choosing a limited ideal, we assume that this will be an everlasting and ever-motivating ideal. Sadr argues that seemingly everlasting horizons cannot be values and ideals, but only finite horizons (Sadr 1979, 168-70). Considering this limitation, Misbah Yazdi provides a supporting argument here. He observes that because of the complexity and multidimensionality of human potentialities, the deep interactions between these potentialities, and above all else (since human life in this world is an introduction to his/her permanent life in the hereafter), Muslim moral educators must insist on the necessity of using the content of revelation as another tool in understanding and determining a values system (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 105). Revelation is a complementary tool when human beings are ambiguous about the impact of their behavior in this world on their life in the hereafter. A believer is assured that the revealed religions provide him/her with a secure life-style which will lead to the development of a whole perfect person (*insān-i kāmīl*). This is because the content of revelation is from God, the creator of humankind.

If a reader approaches the Qur'ān from this angle he/she will find out that the Qu'rān warns us that all gods which we internalize and replace with God are only empty names. These created gods are nothing but figments of our imaginations. Although both God and gods are known to us through mental forms, the former represents a real being. Created gods are nothing but mental forms. They do not convey a true meaning but rather encourage humankind to chase after a mirage. When we reach it we find it is nothing (see, Q. 53:23 & 24:39). Other verses provide other metaphors. They warn us that

submission to gods and ideals other than God is like dwelling in a spider's web. This is undoubtedly a pleasing dwelling for a spider but a dangerous one for human beings (see Q. 29:41). The resemblance is due to the fact that gods and man-made values cannot give a reliable lasting meaning to human life.

The Qur'ān considers ideals and values which are replaced by God as mirages, erroneous perceptions of reality, and as spiders' webs if people take refuge in them (see Q. 24:39 & 29:41). Usually these ideals develop into the first type, contextual ideals, when they are interrelated with a positive, easy-going life-style. They will become a part of real life. People get used to them and enjoy them (Sadr 1979, 171). At this stage people again go back to the present and past and keep the associated ideals and values.

The third type of ideals and values-making is what Sadr calls transcendental. This type is centered around a core element, Allah. Values and ideals must be unlimited and everlasting. What we create inside us is overwhelmed by the limitations which govern our existence and our cognitive narrowness. The Islamic values system is based on a world-view which relates human beings to an absolute ideal, Allah. People relate their limited being to an unlimited ideal if they choose Allah as their final ideal. Allah is not the product of our minds. He is an absolute being outside of us but related to us. He is introduced by the monotheist religions as the source of absolute power, knowledge, justice and beauty (Sadr 1979, 176).

An essential conflict will be resolved if we decide to follow this absolute ideal. Although as Muslims we always create ideals in our minds, what we worship and take as the highest ideal is Allah. Allah is an independent ideal beyond our conception. Worship

and self-development is towards Allah, not towards what we create in ourselves. Personal self-conception is a tool to direct us toward a real independent God. There is a difference between a humanelly invented name or mental form or an image that we create as an ideal in our mind and an ideal which exists beyond us. In Islamic ideology we are encouraged to distinguish between our mental form about God and the real independent God (Sadr 1979, 176-7).

The Qur'ān warns us not to choose names as values and ideals (see Q. 53:23). Submission must be directed to the real God. As among ourselves, we have a name (*ism*) and a named (*musammā*). Our mental forms ascribed to God are nothing more than names. Names and imaginations always represent an external reality. God's names and the named (god) are characterized by two different attributes. Names are limited but the named is absolute. This absolute being is our ultimate ideal (Sadr 1979, 177).

#### **4.2.3. Conscious or Unconscious Inevitable Journey**

Human beings are willingly and unwillingly moving towards God. Q. 84:6 reveals: "O you humankind! Verily you are ever toiling on toward your Lord - painfully toiling, - and you shall meet Him." Sadr comments that this verse informs us of an inevitable, exhausting progress towards God with no respite from humankind. This journey is both continuous and infinite. People, nonetheless, proceed along this road differently. Some are aware of the progress and lag behind consciously. This group undertakes their journey responsibly. Believers and worshipers of God are among this



group.<sup>10</sup> They are moving towards the status of nearness. Believers behave in their lives as God's responsible vicegerents on earth. Muslim moral educators believe that nearness is the ultimate goal of prophetic values education. The universe, including human beings, is ontologically related to God. Human beings exist because God has given them the light of existence. Nearness is the result of a conscious intuition of this link. People can obtain this divine consciousness through faith and corresponding religious actions (SAMT 1995, 519).

Unbelievers are negligent or pretend to be negligent. They feel no responsibility towards God, even though they are also proceeding towards Him. Sadr notes that this process is not a geographical or a physical journey towards God. It is an ontological journey. Nor is Allah, like a geographical goal, a final point at the end of that voyage. When we travel, we aim to reach a specific point. This is because we are performing a geographical journey. Allah is however with us at all points in our spiritual journey. This is because He is absolute and our journey is existential. In this journey we are extending our beings. Although He is the aim and the final ideal, He is with us at every stage of our lives (Sadr 1979, 181-83).

Sadr maintains that an important difference between a person who chooses God as an ideal and the one who submits to other values and ideals is that the former choice changes our movements and behaviors both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative consequence makes our journey infinite. While our ultimate ideal is Allah, we never reach a point where to a stopping point. Sadr maintains that the continuous challenge

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<sup>10</sup> Worshipping (*ʿibādat*) God in Islamic jurisprudence is indeed a responsible and conscious process of this

between monotheistic religions and other gods and ideals is an expression of humankind's attempts at relating to an absolute ideal.

Qualitative change is identical with a feeling of responsibility if the absolute ideal is chosen consciously. Due to a bipolar construction, namely the soul and the body, human beings are all involved in an inner conflict. Our bodies direct us toward earthly desires but our souls invite us to reach for heavenly attributes, for Godly attributes such as absolute knowledge, power, justice, compassion, generosity and revenge. This conflict will be only resolved when human beings feel responsible before God (Sadr 1979, 184-9). Responsibility is real only when we have to bear it before someone who has the right to ask us about our behavior. God is an ideal beyond us who has created us and has sent prophets to teach us the true way of life. We therefore feel responsible towards an independent ideal who can ask us about His gifts. The ideals and values which we create inside us do not have the same impact. Consciously or unconsciously we know that they are our products. People avoid self-invented values if they can find ways to escape them. Evidence for this distinction is to be found in the sacrifices recorded in the history of prophecy. In this history we never find a single example of a prophet who tired of his mission or felt doubtful. Prophets never wavered in their mission. This is because the impact of an absolute external ideal directed them in their purpose (Sadr 1979, 186-88).

#### **4.2.4. The Link Between Values Systems and Islamic World-Views**

As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, a values system, according to Sadr, is influenced by one's world-view. In the above section he distinguished between

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path when the believers are consciously related to the absolute ideal (Sadr 1979, 181).

two ways of proceeding in an inevitable journey. For him a conscious and responsible journey is possible when we are equipped with a clear and energetic world-view. A world-view is a pattern that people use to give a specific meaning to what they perceive. Sadr makes a distinction between God and other ideals based on the feeling of responsibility. Here he verifies the link between the values system and world view. He points out that choosing Allah as an ideal implies belief in a monotheistic ideology. This ideology is comprised of three main elements. Muslims have chosen Allah as the highest ideal if they rise from a cognitive stage to a belief in one God. The latter is the result of cooperation between mind and heart (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 171-2).

There is a difference between knowing God and having faith in Him. The latter is a choice that happens both in mind and heart. Faith in God implies faith in His attributes. Since God is chosen as the highest ideal, believers attempt to proceed towards Him. This means that they attempt to become conscious of their inevitable ontological journey towards Him. Nearness (*Qurb*) to God requires a process of self-development from us which makes us resemble Him in terms of our own characteristics. Belief in God and His attributes within Islamic ideology is completely different from the world-view found in Greek philosophy. Greek philosophers view God's attributes and more precisely the world of ideas<sup>11</sup> as independent facts lying beyond us in the metaphysical world.<sup>12</sup> Islamic ideology has an educational message when it invites us to resemble God (Sadr 1979, 192-3). Belief in God and our conscious efforts helps us to overcome the inner conflict inside us.

Yet we need a certain psychological energy and a sense of responsibility. Belief in the hereafter is the second element of the Islamic world-view which produces this energy. If we believe in the day of resurrection, we have realized that our life-span is not limited to this world. We are creating a new life in the hereafter by behaving either correctly or badly in this world. This realization links our life in this world to the permanent life in the hereafter. Belief in the hereafter functions as a supporting and guaranteeing element. People therefore behave, as they are responsible for their behavior. This is because they have realized that they are not entitled to behave as they wish.

Prophethood is the third functioning element which facilitates our divine education. Prophets teach us to know God (the absolute ideal), our inevitable journey and our destiny. They watch out for us and direct us so that we do not lose our way. They are teachers of humankind, but they teach us to choose correct and ever-lasting ideals and values. Prophets function as mediators between belief in God and belief in the hereafter as the final destiny (Sadr 1979, 194-5). As human history reveals,<sup>13</sup> prophets were never entirely successful in directing their followers to the absolute ideal. There were challenges and conflicts between prophets and those who supported other misleading

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<sup>11</sup> Augustine, one of the fathers of Roman Catholic Church called Plato's notion about the world of ideas as the World of God. (See Ozmon & Craver 1995, 5)

<sup>12</sup> See Ozmon & Craver 1995, chapter 1 "Idealism and Education".

<sup>13</sup> Periodizing human history from a Qur'ānic point of view, Sadr divides it into three major periods: the Custodial period (*dawr al-ḥidānah*), when Adam and Eve were in heaven under the special care of angels; the period of unity and integration (*dawr al-waḥdah*), when the early generations of human beings were living cooperatively; and the period of disintegration and conflict (*dawr al-tashātut wa al-ikhtilāf*), when they contested on earth for obtaining more benefits. From this period which, according to Sadr, must have begun from the time of the Prophet Noah when human co-existence was jeopardized. The conflict was so harsh that humanity needed a social leader who could resolve conflicts even by leading huge campaigns. Sadr proposes an Islamic theory which explains the formation and the characteristics of each of these periods. The Imamate is accordingly a position that belongs to the third period of human history when there have been unsolved conflicts (Sadr 1979, 241 & 1982a, 151-80).

ideals. Prophets were often forced to act as imams as well and to lead campaigns against oppressors. For Sadr, from the time of the Prophet Noah onwards prophets were always both prophets and imams. Imamate, in Sadr's view, stands for leading a prophetic campaign for the establishment of social justice. After the Prophet Muḥammad, according to Shīʿī Imāmī belief, this institution was looked after by the twelve imams.

Then there is the attribute of justice, an attribute emphasized in Shīʿī ideology. Although justice is included in God's attributes, it is of particular importance in Shīʿī thought since it carries a tremendous social impact. Social development is in need of social justice. Belief in justice, Sadr argues, implies an important educational message. If the society is proceeding towards a just ideal, this ontological nearness necessitates the application of social justice in a Muslim society. God's attributes, including justice, must not be viewed only as a handful of metaphysical facts which are disconnected from human life (Sadr 1979, 195-7).

This explanation could be what Sadr means when he speaks about the assumed relationship between values systems and world-views. In this way Sadr attempts to correlate the five principles of the Islamic (Shīʿī) world-view with the selection of an absolute ideal. Misbah Yazdi maintains that the big difference between an Islamic moral values system and a non-Islamic moral system is that the former depends on its world-view in determining moral values. The belief in one God as the only creator, owner and educator, and belief in the hereafter and its impact on our present life direct us to have a distinctive religious values system (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 100-2). It may also be the reason

why Muslims believe in an ideology which consists of three pillars<sup>14</sup>: belief in the unity of God, belief in the day of resurrection and belief in prophecy. In a Muslim society, Allah is elevated to the center of all ideals. He is the creator, the owner, the goal and the educator of human beings.

The selection of secular ideals and values has led to striking calamities in human history, Sadr asserts. Values-making, though it is a personal choice, always affects human collective life. The emergence of Hitler and the Nazi movement and the consequent problems of modern times reflect the results of a values system derived from a god or gods. These ideals disconnected human beings from the one absolute God. A more recent example, I believe, is reflected in the experiences recorded in the former Soviet Union. Marxism and communism ruled the country for decades. The disintegration of the USSR indicates the end point of one ideology and one god. Other countries that have experienced this god are also looking for an alternative. This is the reason why prophets throughout human history have attempted to replace gods with God. I assume that Sadr believes that the center point and nucleus in the Islamic values system is Allah. Values beneath or around that core are formed through prophetic values education. Prophets educate people to learn to relate to God, to themselves, to nature and to society. These relationships are influenced by internalized values. These values are all God-centered. Sadr maintains that God is absolute and that values related to Him create new horizons for human life. These values direct human behavior to resemble as much as possible God's attributes (Sadr 1979, 148-9).

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<sup>14</sup> The two other pillars, namely, justice and imamate, are only ascribed to by Shī'ī Imāmis.

#### **4.2.5. Concluding Remarks**

Inspired by certain Qur'ānic verses (e.g., 8:53 & 12:11) which discuss the roots of social change, Sadr invites us to see the existing link between social- and self-development. As in the natural and physical domain, the socio-historical aspects of human life are normative, Sadr maintains. The more we know the norms, the easier and the more active will be our treatment of a particular domain. The Qur'ān teaches us the norms which govern our social and individual lives in order to facilitate a conscious and active way of living.

Sadr points out that social reconstruction in each society begins with the values development of individuals. Values and ideals are inner elements which influence our consciously selected goals. Our values system will have an impact on the goals we aim at and on the amount of psychological energy which motivates us to attain those goals. According to the Qur'ān, values will be more effective and more sufficient only when they derive from a world-view which links us, in heart, to our Creator. Self-alienation, pathological and repetitious ideal-making, compulsory absolutization and social disintegration are a few examples of how people fail to construct a divine world view and a reliable values system.

Sadr examines the false process of values-making which has engaged minds and hearts throughout history. He concludes that prophetic education is a way to help people to construct a functioning values system. Sadr provides a theory of inner conflict as the foundation of human values-making. This theory suggests that unless we can overcome our inner conflict, we will project it at the

social level in forms of unjust oppressive social patterns. Prophetic teachings play a complementary role in helping people to solve their inner conflicts. Class tensions, national and international clashes, gender conflicts and other types of social dilemmas are expressions of an unresolved inner conflict. Prophetic education aims at the establishment of social justice and self-development simultaneously. The roots, however, extend wards to individual purification. This is derived from the prophetic teachings which are contained in holy scripture. Despite this theoretical values and ideals discussion, Sadr speaks of the practical failure of those who have followed the Islamic model. Among the three types of ideal-making only the transcendental type, according to Sadr, can foster social and self- development. He nonetheless maintains that there are historical examples of Muslim collapse. This aspect goes back to the choices made by Muslims and do not contradict what Sadr attempts to propose at the theoretical level. When Muslims distance themselves from the absolute ideal and its implications or they side with other ideals and gods, they become disintegrated. As Sadr puts it, at this moment they are but a shadow of a Muslim nation.

#### ***4.3. Social Change according to Sadr's Theory of Inner Conflict***

As I have explained previously in sections two and three of the second chapter, social thinkers in the West have developed numerous theories to explain socio-educational change and development. From one perspective, these theories could be categorized into two clusters. Conflict theories and theories of cohesion and integration have compromised other theoretical categorizations (Saha & Fagerlind 1995, 19-20 and



Feinberg & Soltis 1992, 43). Taking an Islamic approach, Sadr formulates his own theory of inner conflict to explain social upheaval and change. Here he aims at reducing social conflicts to an inner conflict within the individual. This emphasis opens a door onto a better understanding of the impact of values education and cultural development in social change.

Sadr's theory sheds light on two types of human relationships. One is the human relationship with nature and natural resources. Human beings attempt to develop the earth in order to meet their needs. Natural resources are not directly available to them. People have to develop them. This is a divine norm that shapes the human relationship with nature. People need to equip themselves with knowledge, technology and various types of expertise in order to be able to use natural resources. Describing this line of human relations with nature Sadr states:

This line includes a problem. The problem is, in fact, a conflict between humanity and nature, a conflict which stems from the fact that nature normally challenges and refuses to meet human needs. Despite a serious interrelationship, nature does not provide full satisfaction. This conflict is the fundamental difficulty which faces humans in their relationship with nature. There is, however, a solution for this conflict. This solution is derived from a concrete law which represents one of the established historical norms. This law is known to us as the law of mutual influence between exercise (*al-mumārasah*) and perfection (*al-khubrah*) (1979, 202-3).

Human beings have relied on the method of trial and error to extend and modify their mastery over nature and the material world. They have manipulated something in nature, obtained a small piece of knowledge and have then improved their knowledge through new cycles of experience. Whenever they obtain more qualified knowledge, more plentiful and more effective technology, they obtain more control over natural resources.

If everything goes well and there is no natural or human intervention, this process enables human beings to extend their knowledge about natural norms, to utilize natural resources sustainably and more qualitatively. Exploiting these resources provides them with the requirements for a higher standard of living (Sadr 1979, 202-3). Qualitative access to natural resources has always been a major concern for humankind on earth.

Two Qur'ānic verses in particular (14:34 & 11:61) inform us about the norm which governs human relationships with nature. Q. 14:34-5 reveals:

And He has given you of all that you have asked for. But if you count the blessings of Allah, never will you be able to number them.

Commenting on this verse, Sadr argues that the full and comprehensive provision which has been mentioned in this verse refers to the provision of nature, natural resources and a rich environment on earth. It may also imply the necessary potentialities and capabilities that human beings are endowed with. It does not, however, refer to whatever it is that we pray for; only believers pray, whereas the verse addresses all human beings. Secondly we all know that human beings do not receive everything they pray to God for (Sadr 1979, 204). Therefore the full provision in this verse refers to all that ontologically surrounds us on this planet.

The verse Q.11:61 completes the definition of this norm and explains the necessity of knowledge, technology and a development model as prerequisites in this scheme. This verse reveals: "Worship Allah...He who has created you from the earth and (settled you therein) wanted you to develop it..." People can develop the earth only if they are equipped with the right tools and invest in the earth with themselves. An effective

human relationship with nature often leads to the accumulation of wealth and power. This line of relationships ends here but another line begins immediately afterwards.

As they do with nature, human beings also establish another relation, that is relationships with other individuals in society. People also interface in terms of the distribution of wealth and power because they are a social species. Social conflicts and clashes emerge at various levels. An important element in this challenge is the way that people distribute wealth and power. People cannot have the same access to these resources. The reason is that they do not enjoy the same type and amount of capabilities, qualifications or privileges.

A major facet of the prophetic mission is to establish social justice by improving social relationships in order to establish a just distribution of wealth and power. Societies are usually polarized by class distinctions based on power relationships and wealth. The poor and the rich are two major classes in this scenario. Each class strives for a greater access to wealth and power. The obstacle is usually the opposite class. The rich or the poor according to this classification could be individuals, groups, classes, races and even nations (Sadr 1979, 205).

The global challenge involves two or more nations in terms of power and wealth relationships. Two different explanations are traditionally provided for this phenomenon, each reflecting opposite points of view. One is capitalism, which sees this state of affairs as normal, the result of healthy competition for power and markets. The other is Marxism, which views the concentration of wealth and power as the root of social conflict. For Marx, economic organization and modes of production are the key elements

in historical epochs. The concept of class has emerged in Marxist theory as an explanation of the conflict over power and wealth (Grabb 1990, 20). Each class, or rather pole, in society fights to maintain its own interests.

Sadr observes that social conflicts and the contest over wealth and power are only what we see on the surface. The root is the inner structure of the human personality. Inner values and individual personalities shape social conflicts. The reason is that a wealthy and powerful person who is nevertheless without values usually tends to extend his/her authority to dominate other people (Sadr 1979, 205). Therefore, the major portion of educational investment should be in individual self-development. Values educators have not only to know inner human capabilities but also educational methods that can help people to develop their potentialities. This educational process should help people to establish a balanced and just values system, or what Sadr calls ideals.

In Islamic values education, the core value which must consciously be constructed is piety (*taqwā*). This model views piety as the key theme, representing the entire Islamic moral system. Piety, in other words, is the core and the criterion of the quality and value of any behavior. *Taqwā* (piety) is a state of self-control and self-abstinence in the face of a perceived moral danger. It derives from a true faith in God, faith in the hereafter and a realization that the final aim for human life is to reach the spiritual level of divine nearness. Any behavior which contradicts these ideals is deemed as dangerous and impious.

Self-development remains unaccomplished unless one can establish this core value in him/herself. Muslim moral educators maintain that piety implies an element of

God-fearing. They, nonetheless, point out that God is nothing to be afraid of. This fear, indeed, goes back to the negative consequences of our own behavior. Our personality, according to the Islamic point of view, is undeveloped if it lacks piety and self-control. Piety then includes two aspects. The first aspect is a cognitive concern of moral and spiritual collapse. The second dimension is a behavioral abstinence (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 77-83).

The Islamic value of piety and self-abstinence is characterized by the core element of belief in God (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 128). Self-abstinence may be attained when a person avoids the legal consequences of his/her behavior. To consider any behavior as valuable or invaluable, Muslim moral educators evaluate both behavior and the intentions behind it. Intentions or motivations must derive from the Islamic world-view. Intentions, in Islam, function as a bridge between our behavior and our world-view. If any behavior, even when it leads to positive consequences, lacks the element of being related to a divine world-view or to faith in God, it is valueless. This is a distinguishing element between the Islamic and non-Islamic values systems (Misbah 1997, vol. 1, 114).

The Qur'ān informs us that people are born with the capability of constructing morally both healthy and pathological personalities (see Q. 91:7-8). They have these two innate potentialities. Values education can help people develop along either of these lines. An inner conflict arises however when a person decides to construct his/her personality. Sadr pointed out that this conflict is an expression of the two aspects of our identity, namely, our earthly and heavenly dimensions. The former belongs to our body and the latter to our soul. This conflict will be resolved under the influence of prophetic values

education. Prophetic values instructions help people to overcome the negative aspects of inner conflict and side with piety. Unless a person can resolve this inner conflict, the social conflict remains unresolved (Sadr 1979, 205-6).

Sadr maintains that to solve this inner conflict it is not enough to make human beings aware of this conflict. To overcome it, people need to transcend their values and ideals. If they succeed in attaining the absolute ideal, they will feel a responsibility to side with that side of their nature which guided them to Allah. This requires first overcoming earthly and Satanic impulses (Sadr 1979, 188-89).

Sadr's idea regarding inner conflict is that prophetically illiterate individuals project unresolved inner conflicts on social contexts. Class conflict is only one example. If citizens suffer from unresolved inner conflicts, social conflicts reenter the social context again and again. Based on vulnerable circumstances and social crises the inner conflict reemerges each time in one domain. Conflicts over race, gender, politics, economics and class are only a few examples. Here I must emphasize the link between social change and individual values education. Values education serves as a tool to help individuals to form their values system from within. Values educators must help people to resolve their inner conflict and recognize transcendent ideals and values and learn to side with social justice. Social justice, for Sadr, is an expression of properly channeled inner conflict among the members of a society. Only a few people can follow prophetic instructions and resolve inner conflict. Most people however, and even many believers, are mired in inner conflict and manifest an impious personality.

Sadr's conclusion is that prophetic mission aims at resolving social conflicts and establishing social justice through two lines of minor and major campaigns. What prophets have performed at the social level is the minor and less important campaign. A greater and more fundamental challenge addresses the inner conflicts within citizens. Therefore, Islam calls the latter major striving (*al-jihād al-akbar*). This is because the resolution of inner conflict is not an immediate task. It represents a long process of self-development. Moreover, if citizens are valuably developed through the establishment of a God-centered values system and resolve their inner conflicts, society will enjoy social justice (Sadr 1979, 207).

Emphasis on the priority of the resolution of inner conflicts before any attempt at achieving the same at the social level distinguishes an Islamic approach from a non-Islamic one. Although Marx shows an instinctive understanding of this when he proposes his theory of social conflicts and social inequalities, he has missed individual inner conflicts. To explain social inequalities, he brings to the forefront of sociology the concept of class (Grabb 1990, 14-5). His theory was a reaction against the previous theories which missed the key point of existing class conflicts and social inequalities (Feinberg & Soltin 1992, 43). For Marx, human civilization has followed a common law: "No antagonism, no progress" (Grabb 1990, 21). He, nonetheless, remained narrow-minded by siding with European metanarratives. He could not interpret human social conflicts beyond the borders of European thought. One reason could be Marx's especial concern with European, especially English, capitalism in the 1800s (Grabb 1990, 15).

A common methodological problem in all modern, Western-European theories of social change is that they have all looked at societies from a European perspective. They see every corner of the planet as a copy of Europe with the same social pattern. From the Western perspective, a white middle and upper class are still the norm in theoretical frameworks.<sup>15</sup> This is the main target in postmodern critiques of modern thought. Since Marx's social context was involved with class conflict, he hypothesized that all societies suffered the same problems.

Refuting this one-sided method, Sadr offers a similar example from the Qur'ān regarding a community of Jews at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. They rejected the Prophet's invitation simply because his followers were regarded by the Jews as pagans. They considered themselves to be the only knowledgeable and qualified citizens (see Q. 3:75). "Others" were deemed as unqualified and ignorant. The same agenda stays hidden behind European and Western perspectives. They see the globe through Western eyes (Sadr 1979, 208).

Surrounded by a European social context, political upheaval, and intellectual debates, Marx provided the elements establishing a modern social conflict theory. This theory correlates all changes in human life to the development of the mode of production. The intensity of social conflicts depends on the quality and quantity of the tools of production. Struggles between the poor and the rich are a consequence of the polarization of wealth and power. This phenomenon is also the outcome of a huge and dramatic development in technology, which provides effective instruments leading to efficient

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<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Giroux 1988.



mass production. Quite often, however, human power, i. e., the workers, are replaced by machines (technology).

To Sadr, the roots of social struggle lie not in the building of better tools of production; rather, they lie inside human beings and the users of those tools. Technology and advanced tools never create oppression and colonization. What has happened in the Marxist social environment is not the consequence of the invention of modern tools and advanced technology. The existing unjust social structure, like improvements in technology, are the products of Western European citizens. A newly defined and embedded values system has led to a pattern of oppressive behavior. The Western-European lifestyle, particularly their social pattern, is the very outcome of their world-view and their specific values system. The seemingly new forms of capitalism and consumerism, and the exploitation of the environment, are the wish and product of Europeans which represent a particular values system and a pattern of correlated attitudes. Therefore, social thinkers must look somewhere within human beings if they are concerned with social change. Something is troubling such individuals, and it emerges in different forms at the social level (Sadr 1979, 209-11).

If the root, as Marx explains, is class conflict, which derives from advanced technology and modern tools, citizens in such countries as the United States, England, France, Germany, Japan and other industrialized developed societies must suffer from more complicated class conflicts. Historical records however do not support this idea. To strengthen his hypothesis about human inner conflict Sadr provides a new explanation for what has happened after Marx.

He argues that unlike Marx's predictions, new shocking events emerged in human history. Capitalism was welcomed wholeheartedly and went through a gradual, profound establishment. Surprisingly workers in highly developed countries enjoyed better welfare and higher standards of living. Instead of revolutionary movements, they preferred peaceful measures. New programs of care and support were proposed by the owners of wealth and power to improve the quality of life of those belonging to the lower classes. We are all witnesses to the fact that workers in North America and Europe's more developed countries attained a quality of life such that workers in socialist countries could never have dreamed of. How did this come about? The difference is that workers in North America and Europe and the unions representing them explicitly changed their approach to challenging the powerful. They preferred democratic measures and peaceful political campaigns in parliament and recognized political parties. It seems that they totally forgot the logic of revolution. Winning more seats in parliament or positions in political parties and unions was their choice instead of bloody confrontations in their workplaces and the streets.

What can ever, explain the root of this astonishing shift? There are several possibilities. Some may condemn Marx for being too suspicious of power and the holders of wealth. Others may propose that this shift was the result of a deep fear that capitalists felt from the emergence of Marxism and predicted proletarian revolutions. To prevent a greater risk of damaging revolution they agreed to share a small piece of their incomes.

Neither of these possibilities however explains the roots of this shift, Sadr asserts. For Sadr, even according to the most optimistic revolutionary thinkers, there will not be

any revolution in the United States or other developed nations seeking to alleviate capitalist oppression before at least a century. A religious analyst would predict that this will eventually come to pass through the intervention of an inner element such as piety, emerging from within the hearts of owners of wealth and power, and motivating them to share their possessions and influence. Sadr does not link so, however. Those who have sunk deep into the realms of unbounded pleasure never think of piety or fear. The remaining explanation, for Sadr, is what he calls the appearance of a global conflict (Sadr 1979, 213-6).

New forms of social and global conflict have arisen during the last two centuries. Western capitalists (owners of power and wealth) and workers both agreed at one time to channel their supposed class tensions into a new type of beneficial co-operation. The immediate result of this co-operation was the world's division into colonizing and colonized countries. The countries of the south, underdeveloped or undeveloped, were considered as the opposite pole. Marx's theory became redundant when the two competing classes of owners and workers decided to make common cause. The result of their discussions has resulted in a new campaign against Asian, African and Latin American countries (Sadr 1979, 212-16).

Previous class conflict was translated into a clash of civilizations. Western Europeans walked into poor countries and divided them between themselves, the owners and the workers. This conflict compromised the previous class conflict which was the major concern of Marx. For Sadr, the present qualified situation of developed, industrialized countries, is not the result of oppressive relationships between owners and

workers inside those societies. It is the result of colonial invasion of the countries of the south. Seizure of the oil of Asian countries, particularly those in the Persian Gulf, dominant access to raw materials, such as the diamonds of Tanzania, the iron, copper, uranium and lead of African countries, the cotton of Egypt, tobacco from Lebanon and wine from Algeria are only a few examples of the new form of global conflicts during the colonial period. Countless sums were lost to these poorer peoples as the interest on investments in these countries filled the pockets of both owners and workers in developed countries (Sadr 1979, 217-19).

Thus the national class conflicts of the West were replaced by global clashes. Still, the explanation behind such conflicts is hard to pinpoint. Sadr contests that there is something wrong within individuals' values system. When inner conflict is neglected, it reappears in new social domestic or international forms (Sadr 1979, 220). Educational investment should address that inner conflict. Human beings need to construct a values system, values which prepare individuals not only for a healthy citizenship but for the establishment of social justice. When there are dominant and subordinate, oppressed and oppressors, rich and poor in any society, something must still be wrong inside citizens. Individuals are suffering from a disease relating to self-development. Values educators must think up new theories of values education and conflicts. Social values in a secular society center on wealth and power. A God-centered society, on the other hand defines a values system which is centered on one God. The result is belief in one God, establishing one human family and aiming at one goal.

It is clear that, based on Sadr's theory, a considerable educational investment is needed in values education to change inner values and thereby help people to overcome their inner conflicts. As long as citizens are not educated in terms of values and self-construction, development and social change constantly fluctuate. The root of socio-economic development is culture and values development. If a society is composed of citizens who have internalized divine values, it will experience a stable social development. Social conflicts will disappear to the extent that individuals have resolved their inner conflicts.

Finally I would like to point out that despite Sadr's explanation of colonial and post-colonial challenges between capitalist developed nations and the so-called developing countries, it may be useful to include other perspectives which provide further clarifying elements. To me Sadr's theory of inner conflict like his approach in *Iqtisāduna* (*Our Economy*) to an overwhelming extent reflects circumstances in which communism, and more precisely Marx's theory of class conflict, were dominant. One must take into consideration other explanations in non-Marxist conflict theories which explain social inequalities based on conflicts that has nothing to do with class. Moreover Sadr in his conflict theory deals mostly with colonial events. Post-colonial challenges, tensions and the global politics of the period of Cold War and thereafter, international and domestic measures of globalization, the global village itself, and multiculturalism in an international non-melting pot are some other elements which must be considered. Nor have we determined what resolution can be found for the post-Cold War cultural and

civilizational conflicts, in Huntington's terms,<sup>16</sup> or humankind's identity crises if we want the planet to be a place of co-existence and mutual respect between both dominant and subordinate nations? What is the best way to preclude cultural collision? As C.M. Vargas (1998, 3) asks: In a time when democracies are emerging and economic power is becoming more polarized, how possible is it to reconcile traditional cultures with modern demands for global action?

#### ***4.4. Sadr's Typology of Social Classes***

To complete his theory of social change and cultural development within a Qur'ānic framework, Sadr collects data from various verses in the Qur'ān to provide an explanation of social classes and social inequalities. This part constitutes the pillar of his theory of social and individual conflict. The core element in Sadr's theory of social conflict is the unjust distribution of wealth and power among the citizens of a society. Social stratification is the characteristic of an unjust society which is established by the dominant. The Qur'ān quotes Pharaoh's policy in maintaining power relationships through social stratification. Q. 28:4 reveals: "Pharaoh elevated himself in the earth and broke up its people into groups, depressing a small group among them..." Sadr consults various verses in the Qur'ān to understand the people's feedback on the distribution of wealth and power in a stratified, unjust society. My understanding of this aspect of Sadr's theory is that stratified, unjust societies always function through a hegemonic system. Various sub-systems, e.g., classes and groups, facilitate the hegemony and oppression of one dominant group. My assumption will be more understandable if the reader

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<sup>16</sup>See Huntington 1996, 20.

approaches Sadr's model of social classes from this point of view that they all form sub-systems of one hegemonic system.

#### **4.4.1. Just and Pharaonic Societies**

Following up his explanation and typography of human relationships with society and nature, Sadr distinguishes between two types of societies. Citizens in just societies enjoy a just and balanced power relationship. This pattern of social relationship will lead to an improving relationship with nature. Human resources are unified and are comprehensively directed towards a fully creative access to natural resources. Unjust societies, on the contrary, suffer from unjust social patterns and poor and disintegrated human resources. In the Qur'ān this society, as Sadr explains, is portrayed as the Pharaonic society. It is characterized by unjust patterns of power relationships, social disintegration and poor or exploitative access to natural resources (Sadr 1979, 227-8). Pharaoh in the Qur'ān is a symbol for dominant-subordinate power relationships. When citizens in a society suffer from unjust and oppressive power relationships, it is Qur'ānically a Pharaonic society. Frustration and the disintegration of human resources endanger and weaken the ability of citizens to create inventions and develop nature. To explain the power relationship in an unjust society, Sadr proposes his own model of social class. This stratification is a characteristic of an unjust society, Sadr asserts (Sadr 1979, 229-30).

Although, at this point I prefer to follow David Smith's warning terminology of "peace education" and "de-militarizing language" in understanding socio-educational

changes,<sup>17</sup> I have examined Sadr's theory of conflict for a reason. In Smith's recent paper on " Militarization of Language: An Educational Perspective,"<sup>18</sup> Smith collects phrases from literature, the culture of business and marketing, curriculum, administrative literature, politics and other areas which propel, either consciously or unconsciously, humankind in general and educators and students in particular toward militarizing human vocal and behavioral links. His argument is that while military phraseology seems to be harmless, it deeply influences human thinking at the metacognitive level. This militarization is projected in their language and the way people communicate with one another. The key point is that this process, as suggested by a number of researchers (Fairclough, 1995; Schaffner and Wenden, 1996), interrelates discursive practices and texts with the social and cultural structures in which we live (Smith 1997a). Moreover it conveys the values of struggle, war, tensions and confrontations. Based on this attitude conflict theory is an item borrowed from military language. It intervenes in the peaceful educational attempts of the "Third Millennium." Militants in each society are the only citizens who are educated to engage in campaigns or in combat.

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<sup>17</sup> David Smith is presently the chairperson in the Department of Culture and Values in Education at McGill university. As an expert in the philosophy of education, he has recently focused on peace education. Peace education is, of course, the key theme he investigates in this department. He motivates his students to examine parts of Western literature, particularly in the English language, which subliminally fosters aggression, struggle and violence in human interrelationships. As well as aggressive messages in mass media, daily newspapers and even educational curriculum, he is sensitive to the impact of internet violence. Violent messages which appear on the World Wide Webs (www) with negative educational impact is given little consideration in the age of computers and information society. As a student in one of his courses on peace education, I have learnt that this subject deserves more educational attention, particularly in the age of internet communication.

<sup>18</sup> This research was presented at a conference in Ryerson Polytechnic University, Toronto, June 6-8, 1997, entitled as: "Language, Ideology and Peace." This occasion was an interdisciplinary conference on the "Evolution of World Order: Building a Foundation on Peace in the Third Millennium."



Militarization, as Smith argues, interrupts the human attempt and educational efforts to direct humankind toward a peaceful global village (Smith 1997a).<sup>19</sup> In his complementary article “Demilitarizing Language,” Smith comes up with an educational solution. He proposes critical language education as a way to enable us to recognize the power of military metaphors. This method, to him, must influence both educators and students to become more critical in order to see the hidden agenda behind metaphorical language and search for peaceful alternatives (Smith 1997b, 17-8).

My argument is that ideals must not be mixed with what happens in reality. Past and present realities in human life account for conflicts over wealth, power, legitimacy and recognition which have harmed human beings and their identities. In modern literature, Samuel Huntington (1996) predicts the beginning of a new era of “Clash of Civilizations” which is replacing the past period of “Cold War.” Although I disagree with Huntington’s military metaphor, I assume that both the individual and collective levels of human life are challenging domains. People need to strive to overcome inner and outer conflicts. At an individual level, as Sadr suggests in his theory, people must create a balanced state through combating Satanic wishes and desires. In society, the oppressed may require more power and must struggle to overcome oppression.

Social struggle can be both damaging and constructive. If a society aims at oppression, it is damaging. If, on the contrary, it aims at removing oppressive forces and removing the obstacles of having an effective voice it represents the first step towards social justice. Instead of clash of civilizations, I prefer to call it the dialogue of

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<sup>19</sup> Culture & Values Seminar Series, “The Militarization of Language,” Prof., David Smith (speaker), May,

civilization which seeks common ground. Dialogue, nonetheless, enhances a critical interface which requires tolerance and co-existence. To my understanding peace education must promote peace in a just society. Peace education, which creates a culture of silence within an unjust society by neglecting the existing power relationships, is not constructive. I will elaborate on this concept in the coming section.

Therefore, peace education must try to educate students to see the real pattern of power interrelationships. This knowledge will encourage them not to engage in top-down patterns. The just, peaceful social pattern will create another language which describes just and humane relationships. In a recent lecture in my department at McGill University Barbara Applebaum focused on another image. She spoke about "Raising Awareness of Dominance: Recognizing the Obstacles."<sup>20</sup> She attempted to illustrate the hidden agenda behind dominant-subordinate power relationships. Her publications also focus on the subtle link of military language and education with special emphasis on the myriad ways in which dominance affects moral education. Students then insert moral values which are the product of an oppressed pedagogy.

I presume that the existence of dominant-subordinate patterns of interrelationships may have directed Paulo Freire to invest in 'pedagogy of the oppressed'. Conscientization is an educational path offered by this revolutionary author to inform the poor of the essence of power relationships (Freire 1996, 17). This can lead the oppressed to establish of a new pedagogy of hope, if they are informed about the existing pattern of power relationships.

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08, 1997, Montreal, McGill University.

<sup>20</sup> Culture & Values Seminar Series, "Raising Awareness of Dominance: Recognizing the Obstacles," Prof., Barbara Applebaum (speaker), March 12, 1997, Montreal, McGill University.

#### **4.4.2. Redefinition of the Oppression**

Elaborating on his theory of social conflicts, Sadr maintains that the Qur'ān provides a new terminology for power relationships within an unjust society. The pedagogy of the oppressed must therefore investigate two competing groups: the oppressors and the oppressed. Oppressors themselves, according to the Qur'ān's logic, are divided into two groups. Some people oppress others but some oppress themselves. In the Qur'ān these two groups are both regarded as oppressors (see, e.g., Q. 4:97). The Qur'ān contains verses which condemn people simply for oppressing themselves. They have submitted to the existing dominant-subordinate power relationship. They have supported this pattern by remaining silent in their unjust society. They have participated in creating the 'culture of silence'. Although they were both powerless and voiceless, they are not, Qur'ānically, excused. The reason is that they have had the least choice in leaving the unjust society.

Self-oppression, in the Qur'ān, may also stem from a values-making problem. Those who are cognitively handicapped and thus impeded from going deeper to a metacognitive level and see the real value of their ideals and the key elements of their world-views they will sell themselves too cheap. I observe that one's consciously chosen values system is the price of one's submission to that system. Values system is the system that we consider it as valuable and we submit to it. Q. 2:54 quotes Moses who called his followers self-oppressors simply because they had distanced themselves from God and worshipped a golden calf which had a surprising voice. They were tricked into exchanging the real God for a god which had an amazing, unusual gift of speech. They were regarded as self-oppressors because they suffered from a values-making problem.

In the Qur'ān, those who oppress others perform two types of oppression. Some figures are located at the core and are supported by peripheral groups. The latter, sub-oppressors in Freire's word,<sup>21</sup> also facilitate oppression by conscious support of the owners of wealth and power. The root of oppression in an unjust society is the core group, the holders of power. Their unjust pattern of power relationship is reinforced by the peripheral groups who remain within the same domain (Sadr 1979, 229-30, also consulting Q. 34:31). The Qur'ān also includes verses about a wealthy, joyful and fully satisfied class which is not engaged in oppression directly but which advocates the oppression of the owners of power at the core. Q. 7:127 provides an example of this group which motivated Pharaoh to pursue the Prophet Moses and his followers. They asked Pharaoh not to leave Moses to refute the gods and to break the existing social pattern which gave them wealth and joy. (Sadr 1979, 230-31). These three classes make the greater contribution to creating dominant-subordinate patterns of power relationships in an unjust society.

#### 4.4.3. The Most Vulnerable Class

Another group in an unjust society is the most vulnerable and educationally the most needy class, Sadr states. It includes people who are powerless and voiceless without having a sense of oppression. The striking point about this group is that while it is oppressed, they are not made conscious about their situation. They are ignorant both about the oppressing class and about their own unhealthy and valuely problematic

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<sup>21</sup> See Freire 1996, 27. Sadr himself calls this group the helpers of the oppressors (*al-ʿawān al-ẓālamah*), an adjective he has borrowed from Shīʿī traditions. See Sadr 1979, 230. For Shīʿī traditions see, for instance, Noor software, Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. 33, p. 602, *bāb* 30, *riwāyah* 744; al-Kulaynī, *al-Kāfī*, vol. 5, p. 105, *riwāyah* 1 and p. 107, *riwāyah* 7.

situation (see, Q. 33:67). The ignorance inside them makes this group the most flexible against the oppressors. The unfortunate thing about this group is that they are unable to establish a stable and trustful values and ideals system. They have to look for ideals around themselves. Members of this group provide the least contribution in development and social change because they are consciously blocked. To provide supporting evidence for his class analysis, Sadr refers to a famous saying in the *Nahj al-Balāghah* of Imām ʿAlī (see Şālih 1967, *kalām* 147, p. 495). This passage explains the social and psychological status of this group.

Imām ʿAlī divides people in a society into three main classes. The first group comprises pious, thoughtful and knowledgeable educators who perform wisely and are capable of educating others. They are characterized, in Imam ʿAlī's words, by having a well-established, directing divine values system. They have been elevated to the highest social status because they have explored the path of dignity. Prophets, Imams and those who are inspired by the religious values system may be considered members of this group. The second group includes those who seek knowledge and the right way. They are the seekers and students of divine values who strive to find the path of prosperity. Although they lack the knowledge necessary to show them the way, they are aware of their needs and look for the right path. They have found out that they need to be educated in order to achieve a stable values system.

The third group usually encompasses a large population belonging neither to the class of informed educators nor to the students of divine values. They have lost their identity, and respond to any sound and run after any call. I have called this fluctuating

state as “values disease”. Members in this group are educationally disintegrated. People of this type suffer from a lack of a directing values system. Any values system may, therefore, attract them. They perform as inanimate tools, easily follow the dominant culture and suffer from an identity crisis.

The bulk of any educational investment must address this group. They have to be educated to move toward the second and first groups. These citizens are indeed the problem of a truly developed and just society. They have no sense of change and development. The dominant power prevents them from acquiring a critical attitude. Deficiencies resulting from the values disease in this group will influence not only the quality of social relationship but will also interrupt their link with nature. Members of this group usually lack the competence to invent ways of healthy and improving contact with natural resources (Sadr 1979, 232).

The gradual extension of this group leads to the cultural silence and death of the entire society. They neither perceive domestic obstacles to development and social change nor the effects of international monopolies. This is the reason that throughout this dissertation I have emphasized the significance of culture and values development in planning a just and sustainable development model. The concept of social death in the Qur’ān is linked to the unusual extension of this group, Sadr maintains. A society is culturally silent and developmentally blocked when the majority of its citizens are located in this group (Sadr 1979, 234). The majority of the population in a Pharaonic society belong to this group. The dominant holders of power usually attempt to extend this group.

Undue extension of this group is, Qur'ānically, a characteristic of an unjust and culturally underdeveloped society.

A society suffers from a class and values disease when the majority of its citizens belong to this group. This social disease could lead to social death. Each society, Sadr argues, like each person, may experience two types of death. Natural death happens when a society includes large proportion of members of this group. Sudden and unusual death occurs when a divine, human or natural disaster strikes the entire population. The reason is that the society has by this time lost its divine culture and values identity. Citizens are divinely value-free or value-diseased (Sadr, 1979, 234).

Sadr points out that according to the Qur'ānic class typology, there is another group of oppressed who are voiceless and powerless but are nonetheless conscientized. They are aware of dominant groups and oppressive power relationships. They have realized that their situation is diseased in terms of values. The existing obstacles are, nonetheless, beyond their ability to change them. They look for improving opportunities but they are overwhelmed by the oppressors. Feelings of anxiety and frustration prevent this group from being creative or inventive. Therefore, their relationship with nature is dramatically poor. The Qur'ān calls these citizens self-oppressors (see Q. 4:97). Unlike the first group of oppressors, this group does not oppress others. Their self-oppression derives from their silent and passive reaction to the existing power relationships. The only thing they can do, according to the Qur'ān (see Q. 4:97), is to look for a new situation where they are free to be themselves or to at least to have a voice. Immigration

to another land may be their only option when faced with the frustration of oppression (Sadr 1979, 234-5).

Sadr eventually introduces another group which has a passive role. He adds that in any unjust society there is a small group that attempts to be outside the pattern of power relationships. They indeed escape from life's challenges. Although no one forces them to remain voiceless, they decide to be silent. The members of this group follow one behavioral pattern for two reasons. Some members are really afraid of being involved in an oppressive power relationship and prefer to avoid that trap. They choose to live via a monastic existence a lifestyle of withdrawal. The Qur'ān discredits this passive role and views it as opposed to human responsibility on this earth (see, Q. 57:27). Human beings are God's vicegerents on earth and therefore cannot be careless of or indifferent towards society, Sadr argues. Other members of this group follow the same behavioral pattern but their motives are different. Psychologically they are not rejecting power relationships. They are interested in enjoying a full and prosperous life. To reach their goal, they behave as if they give no credit to the life of this world, but, in fact, they are directing attention away from existing power relationships. They are justifiers of dominant power (Sadr 1979, 235-6) another obstacle to the establishment of social justice (see, Q. 9:34). To Sadr this social classification is characteristic of an unjust society which suffers from having citizens who cannot overcome their inner values conflicts.

The last group in Sadr's classification is the group of *mustaḍʿafīn* (the active, conscientized but oppressed group). *Mustaḍʿafīn* is a Qur'ānic term which has different implementations. Only this group is credited in the Qur'ān with attempting to change the



oppressive pattern of power relationships, and with being critical of the latter. They are true followers of prophets who are characterized by being oppressed, value-ly conscientized, and active. They are always deemed as problematic and even dangerous by dominant interests and opponents of divine prophecy. The oppression is essentially addressed to this group. The Qur'ān holds up the Pharaonic society as an example of one in which citizens are stratified. Only this group among all others is regarded as the target in social tyranny and oppression (see Q. 2:49). Since members of this group have experienced the most extreme oppressions of which society is capable, it is they who will enjoy the first and highest dignity in a just society which has overcome oppression (Sadr 1979, 236-7).

The Qur'ān promises that this class will have the final word and obtain dignity on earth if they retain their divine values while continuing to play active roles. A global village will be established by members of this group who are conscious, active and faithful. They can create a faithful global village or the city of God. Citizens of this village co-exist to establish God's rule on earth. They are prophetically educated. Q. 28:5 predicts the peaceful and honorable fate of this group on earth. This, to Sadr, is the translation of another Qur'ānic norm which will be explained (Sadr 1979, 236-7). An example of a just society which unifies all possibilities and human capabilities within a divinely balanced power relationship is, for Muslims, the society which will be established by Imām Mahdī (Sadr 1979, 238).

I sum up by saying that to remove dominant-subordinate power relationships, values educators must carry the heaviest burden. They need to know each of these

different groups to help their members become conscientized about their social position. Among all these groups only the active oppressed who are Qur'ānically entitled as *mustaḍʿafīn*, along with the first and the second group in Imām ʿAlī's classification, represent a model that can be followed. Educators must attempt to locate citizens in one of these groups. This will occur when citizens are conscientized about the divine values system and existing power relationships.

#### 4.4.4. Development, Social Change and Social Justice

The issue of justice has been one of the most controversial topics in the history of Islam. From the second half of the first century of the Islamic era, theological debates concerning the unity of God and His attributes, including justice, occupied many scholars. Muslims generally and theologians in particular were divided into two groups depending on whether they supported or rejected justice as an attribute of God (Mutahhari 1979, 26-7). The ramifications of this dichotomy appeared on many different socio-political levels. For Shīʿites- who were labeled as an *ʿadlīyah* (pro-justice) sect<sup>22</sup>- this item was so vital that it came to be considered one of the pillars of the Shīʿī creed.<sup>23</sup> Sadr (1979, 197) argues that although the attribute of justice (*al-ʿadl*), like other divine attributes such as knowledge, power and wisdom, is included in the ideology of the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*), it is in the Shīʿī creed considered to be an independent pillar. The reason perhaps is due to its social impact.<sup>24</sup> It plays the role of a directing element at

<sup>22</sup> See Mutahhari 1979, 27.

<sup>23</sup> According to Shīʿī belief, Islamic ideology includes five pillars: *Tawḥīd* (belief in oneness of God), *ʿAdl* (belief in justice as the main attribute of God), *Nubuwwat* (general and particular belief in the prophethood of divine prophets from Adam to Muhammad), *Imāmat* (belief in the leadership of the twelve infallible Imams after the prophet Muhammad) and *Maʿād* (belief in the Day of Resurrection). See Sadr 1979, 193-9 and al-Rufāʿī 1997, 86-7.

<sup>24</sup> In another article Sadr maintains that the principle of justice is closely related to the goals of the prophets' revolution in human life. Educating people to believe in the oneness of God means that there is no god but God. All other authorities are illegitimate. Belief in justice means that God is the only owner of

the social level. A believer who believes that God is the highest ideal characterized by justice attempts ontologically to move toward Him in his/her spiritual journey. This attempt leads to resemblance in characteristics. Believers, therefore, must behave justly at both the individual and collective levels. The citizens of a society who believe in this principle realize that unjust and tyrannical social relations will distance them from that ideal. The social context before any other thing, therefore, needs to be just. Therefore, in the Shīʿī creed justice is deemed as the second pillar. This independent concern has educational implications. Explaining this aspect, Sadr states:

I have maintained that Islam teaches us not to consider God's attributes and God's morals (moral values) as merely some metaphysical facts above us from which we are disconnected.<sup>25</sup> We have to interrelate with these attributes and morals as directing clues and enlightening signs on our path (throughout our lives). (1979, 197)

Due to its social and educational significance, justice is thus deemed one of the independent pillars of the Shīʿī creed. Shīʿites have never looked at it as merely a moral or theological topic. They have translated it into their social lives. In the Qurʾān as well, we can find several verses that deal with justice and social justice. In one verse (Q. 57:25),<sup>26</sup> social justice is declared to be as the main purpose of prophecy (Mutahhari 1979, 2-4). Prophets and their followers are invited to establish social justice and create a just society as a model. The Qurʾānic verses 4:135 "O you who believe! Be maintainers of justice," and 5:8 which bears a similar message, are only two examples of this emphasis.

The concept of social justice is the core element in the relationship of the individual to nature and society. As in other instance, the Qurʾān begins its theory

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the universe and has not discriminated between individuals and groups in bestowing His blessings. Humankind in its entirety, without discrimination, is His vicegerent (1982, 34).

<sup>25</sup> See section 4.2.4., chapter 4.

<sup>26</sup> "We sent aforetime Our apostles with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong) that people may stand forth in justice..."

concerning the establishment of social justice by emphasizing the value of *taqwā* (piety) and self-control. The Qur'ān teaches humankind that all people are equal before they acquire *taqwā*. The honesty of any group or individual is only due to *taqwā*. The significance of this trait is emphasized in Q. 49:13:

O humankind, surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may know one another; surely the most honored of you before Allah is the most pious...

We can understand from this verse that the categorization of humankind into nations and clans was merely a way to introduce distinctions that would encourage people to want to know one another. Two such categories are explicitly mentioned: men and women, nations and tribes. Both are at the core of the many of the present global challenges. Illusory superiority that men seem to have over women, blacks over white, or developed over developing nations, is, according to the Qur'ān, baseless. The criterion of the priority of individuals before God is piety and the capability of controlling oneself. This element of course functions as a controlling agent in the realms of both society and the individual. The keyword in all Qur'ānic values teachings is *taqwā*, a word which is difficult to define. The Qur'ānic emphasis on the element of *taqwā* in the social realm, as Rafsanjānī maintains, is a kind of revolution in the social values system. For him, *taqwā* is "the main and inherent element of humanity, the root of virtues and the basis of abstaining from errors, crimes and sins" (Rafsanjānī 1994, 232). In the Qur'ān, *taqwā* is looked upon as the center or the very foundation of justice. In Q. 5:8 we observe: "... Let not the hatred of others make you veer wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety..." In this verse, exercising piety and self-control against prejudices and

oppressive relationships, even toward those whom we hate, is regarded as the core of social justice.

Rafsanjānī elaborates on the Qur'ānic concept of social justice by taking a historical perspective. He observes that the reexamination of Qur'ānic social views, particularly *Sūrah Zukhruf* (Chapter on Adornment) reveals that the struggles between the prophets and their opponents in human history have always essentially been a fight between maintainers of *taqwā* (piety) on one hand and wealth and power on the other. The rich - called *mutrafīn* (those living in ease and plenty) in the Qur'ān - were the enemies of the prophets and their followers (Rafsanjānī 1991, 212-3). Holders of power and wealth could never tolerate social justice because they felt they were superior to others. The main criteria in their social values were power and wealth. Thus a struggle took place over contradictory claims as to what basis the legitimacy of power and sovereignty should be given.

It is interesting, Rafsanjānī adds, that at the present time and during the past few centuries the matter of privilege (wealth and power) has been one of the major problems facing humankind throughout the world. Industrialized Western countries practiced oppressive policies to obtain monopolies over the poor countries (Rafsanjānī 1994, 99-100). Holders of wealth and power who lack piety and prophetic training can never look upon the poor countries as equal counterparts. Their relationships convey a top-down message. Global clashes and unjust interrelationships are the result of this illusory dichotomy. This exploitative system of monopoly was not confined to the international domain. At the national level as well, the final word on socio-political decisions has often

been uttered by the owners of huge companies and trusts. An explanation of this crisis is profiled in the recent publication *“Who Runs Congress?”*<sup>27</sup> The author provides documents about the vital role of owners of gold reserves in the election campaigns for both the Senate and the House of Representatives in the United States (Rafsanjānī 1994, 192-3). Explaining the trend of prophetic history, the Qur’ān states:

And thus, We did not send before you any Warner in a town, unless its luxurious ones said: ‘Surely we found our ancestors following a life course, and we are followers of their footsteps.’(43:23)

The key message in this and other related verses which call our attention to the obstacles of social justice is that efforts should be focused on educating individuals piously. Individuals and nations strive to obtain wealth and power. In order to meet their daily needs they take over natural resources and develop them. This process will stop only at the point of satisfaction of desires. Human beings, however, like to extend their control to the outmost. This challenge, if not associated with piety and prophetic values education, will result in a particular hegemonic value system. Those who succeed in obtaining full access to the wealth and power are drawn into a stratifying values system. What they are missing, the Qur’ān tells us, is piety and prophetic education. Thus we find a sustainable form of development, according to the Qur’ān, associated with social justice. Social justice is the result of just distribution of wealth and power among nations and individuals. This utopian society will emerge when individuals are pious and prophetically educated.

In consideration of the underlying cause and outward effects, the Qur’ān maintains that any kind of change at the social level is rooted in an internal change at the individual level. In Q. 13:11 it is revealed: “Surely Allah does not change the condition of

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<sup>27</sup> Green, Mark J. et al. (1984), *Who Runs Congress?* (New York, N. Y.: Dell.)

a people until they change their own individual condition.” Commenting on this verse, Sadr deduces that changes at the social and individual levels are correlated. Change always begins from inside the individual; a change which emerges at the social level. However, he observes, the effective individual change should include all or at least the majority of the members in a society. Change in a few members does not entail social change (Sadr 1979, 141-42). Change from within includes various aspects such as change in one’s way of viewing the world and oneself with or without God and the way in which one acts or reacts to the world. It also includes the values and ideals system that people build based on this world-view.

All these inner, individual values and ideals changes should be effected through education. This is perhaps the reason why the Qur’ān (62:2) regards prophets as educators who help human beings to change themselves. This attitude towards social change indicates the central role of prophetic education from the Qur’ānic perspective. Prophets and divine Books are sent to inform human beings about themselves, the aim and the philosophy of life, and the rules which govern their lives in relation with Allah, society and nature. Through the instructions revealed in their Books, prophets show the secure highways in the desert of human life. They show humankind the starting point, the path and the destination of life. Therefore, the prophets’ main task in the Qur’ān is teaching and developing human beings (62:2). They do not teach science and technology, per se, but how to use them. Their attempts are concentrated in two main domains of teaching and training. They aim to teach and train humankind to live God-centeredly. The significance of their task will be more clear if we note that educators deal not only with minds but with hearts. The prophets also have touched the same domains.

For example, in the Qur'ān, the purification (*tazkīyah*) of human beings is regarded as one of the main purposes of prophecy for all nations (Q. 62:2). The Qur'ān observes:

He (Allah) is the One who sent among the unlettered a messenger from themselves to rehearse to them His signs, to purify them and to teach them the Book and Reasoning, although they had previously been in an explicit error.

According to this verse, notification, purification and the development of consciousness among the intellectually and values-oppressed are the early stages of prophetic education. This education provides the impetus for individual change. Interestingly, the development of consciousness through Scriptures and the internalization of the ability to distinguish the true way of life is regarded as the first step in the establishment of social justice in another verse. In Q. 57:25 we read:

We definitely sent our prophets with clarifying signs and sent down with them the Book and the Criterion (of Right and Wrong) that people may stand forth in justice, and We sent down iron in which is (material for) strong combat ...that may Allah test who will help Him and His prophets without seeing...

Social justice as indicated in this verse is something which derives from the efforts of a grassroots population, i.e., a religiously conscientized population that has received prophetic values teachings and internalized their instructions. The prophets teach the Scripture and give the criteria. The people themselves strive for social justice once they have mastered the content of the Scripture and reached the stage of discretion and analysis. As I understand from the language of the above-mentioned verse, this verse contains an educational message. Prophetic education, according to the last phrase of this verse, is not a top-down discourse. Prophets do not try to alternate people in the



establishment of social justice. Through their prophetic education, they attempt to relate with people in terms of values, make them aware of their present situation and their ultimate destiny and show them the way to stand for the establishment of social justice. This verse implies that it is more likely that the establishment of social justice will require force (holy war) if oppressors try to oppose the prophetically educated masses. This confrontation may also happen when prophets attempt to educate people according to received revelation. If people are prophetically educated, they will never be subordinated.

I think these two verses (Q. 62:2; 57:25) are complementary. The first one focuses on the necessity of purification and conscientization at the individual level. The second verse considers this individual change to be a step towards the establishment of social justice. Based on this point of view, social events are indeed expressions of internalized values and attitudes. The latter is the result of a successful prophetic education. The combination of these verses indicates the interrelationship of educational investment at an individual level and social change from a religious perspective. Prophetic education aims at a divine culture and values development, this will prepare individuals for the establishment of social justice. This is why I have called it an Islamic culture of development or cultural development.

To show the characteristics of the prophetic effort in establishing social justice, Sadr points out that revolutionary movements under tyrannical conditions could have various underlying motives. Some revolutionaries strive to eradicate the existing oppressing situation in order to take over this position for themselves. Their motive is to

seek power for themselves. Prophetic revolutions aim always at the establishment of social justice through faith and belief in God. This target is obtained only when the entire body of revolutionaries are valuely educated. Prophetic values education aims at developing citizens by eradicating the impulses of earthly desires such as oppression and uncontrolled wishes for wealth and power. This type of education never begins from within a corrupted society. An external divine element such as a prophet could carry out this responsibility (Sadr 1982, 156-8).

## **Chapter 5.**

### **An Overview of the Preceding Theoretical Discussion**

#### **5. 1. A Critical Review of Sadr's Theory**

An argument can be raised here regarding the reliability of the claimed correlation between faith, piety and social justice, on the one hand, and an overwhelming abundance of blessings (sustainable development) from all directions on the other. This was the key message in the four-fold theory extracted by Sadr from Q. 7:96. The opposite relationship can be observed, nonetheless, in some developed secular societies. Without performing faithfully and piously, many present industrialized societies are enjoying a high level of quality of life and an abundant amount of goods and provisions. Some developed countries are so overwhelmed by manufactured goods and food that they have to compensate by finding external markets. Therefore, an alternative relationship must be sought between two other elements.

To provide a possible answer, I have to divide my points into two parts. First, I evaluate the reliability of the claimed relationship between faith, piety and abundance of life requirements in developed secular countries. I then examine this relationship in countries with an apparent state of faith and piety among their people but faced with a lack of ease and quality in their lives. Despite an explicit disregard of faith and piety, some developed countries enjoy a high standard of living. This reality questions the reliability and functionality of Sadr's theory of the Qur'ānic social norms.

One has to take into consideration that the divine social norms, according to the Qur'ān, function interrelatedly (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 8, 195). Some norms are in fact precursors for the functionality of other norms. Norms reinforce or weaken one another's impact based on the changing conditions of individuals and societies. At first glance, we can observe that there are some developed societies with a high level of quality of life and access to natural resources. However, they do not carry the valued elements of faith and piety.

I have already mentioned that full access to natural resources may occur both before and after the internalization of divine values such as faith and piety. The first form, the Qur'ān predicts, will undoubtedly lead to oppression and hegemony by the owners of wealth and power. An inclusive access to wealth and power paves the way to social hegemony when the owner lacks faith and piety. This is perhaps the key obstacle for the present developed and developing countries in moving toward the construction of a global village. Power and wealth that are not associated with prophetic values education (due to a lack of religious culture of development) create a situation of top-down stratification and dominant-subordinate policy. To establish a non-oppressive global accessibility to natural resources citizens need first to be educated prophetically. Development, according to this point of view, must be religiously value-laden. I have explained that this situation occurs when the society enjoys stable social justice and is comprised of a pious population. This utopian generation, from an Islamic (Shī'ī) point of view, may emerge at the end of time when Imām Mahdī reappears to establish his global state (Sadr 1979, 238).

Another key point is that the concentration of wealth and power according to the Qur'ān is not always a sign of social compassion, development and well-being. Full accessibility in impious societies is indeed the reflection of a norm which implies the message of a gradual collapse and social disintegration.

Discussing the trend of social divine norms, Q. 7:95 reexamines the causes of the collapse of previous generations. It reveals that when people reject the invitation of the prophets, they will be left uneducated. They miss the opportunity of divine education. The social relationships will then be impious and unjust. This situation, along with a lack of prophetic education, will lead to the exclusive pursuit of power and wealth. The Qur'ān reveals that this stage will entail a state of damaging ease and abundance. Difficulties, fears, calamities are unexpectedly replaced with relaxation, social security and well-being. However, this situation is not sustainable, the Qur'ān reveals. This is indeed a divine trick and the translation of a divine norm. Q. 7:182-3 reveals:

To those who rejected our signs, We draw them near (to distraction) gradually (step by step) from where they perceive not. And I grant them respite, surely my scheme is effective (and strong).

The state of ease and relaxation among impious and unjust societies, as this verse reveals, is the starting point of a process of distraction. The translation of a divine norm takes a long period of time. People feel that everything is going well. Therefore, outsiders may not witness the impending collapse of an impious society. The reason for this is that the functionality of the divine norm is gradual. The Qur'ān mentions superpowers from the past who experienced the process of ruin. Q. 89:6-13 narrates the fate of three ruined civilizations. The 'Ād (the nation of the Prophet Hūd), the Thamūd (the nation of the

prophet Ṣāliḥ). and the nation of Pharaoh (the symbol of an unjust society in the Qur'ān), as the Qur'ān reveals. are examples of ruined civilizations. The 'Ād, according to the Qur'ān, was one of the most developed generations of the past. They built such lofty buildings that they were unique in that time. Human history also provides cases of civilizations that suffered unexpected collapse. Sadr observes that the hegemony of Hitler and Nazism in the early decades of present century, which contributed to the collapse of many European societies and a major part of humanity is another example of translation of divine norms (1979. 175).

The same norm applies to the present impious, wealthy societies. These latter find themselves in a situation where damaging elements and troublesome circumstances are replaced with ease and abundance. Since this state is exempt from faith and piety, it does not result in social justice. It is liable to collapse and disintegration. The disintegration occurs, nonetheless, gradually. When people are entirely involved with power and wealth and feel secure about their ownership, a sudden collapse will destroy everything. This trend does not function randomly. Nations are mentioned in the Qur'ān which were elevated to the highest levels of wealth and power. They left nothing but ruins. This collapse could be caused by humankind and the extension of an unjust social pattern or by a direct metaphysical element, as has happened in previous nations.

For Sadr, social disintegration and national collapse do not occur only through a metaphysical process. Although the generations referred to above experienced sudden ruin caused by a metaphysical punishment, there are examples in the Qur'ān (see e.g., Q. 17:76-7) which reflect social disintegration caused by people's unjust behavior.

Meccans, for instance, struggled with the Prophet Muhammad for years. They aimed to kill the prophet or at least silence him. All these attempts were futile. They decided to banish him from Mecca. Once they had done so, however, they were warned by the Qur'ān that they would taste divine punishment, such as had happened to previous generations. Historical records, nonetheless, have not recorded any sudden, heaven-sent punishment visited on the Meccans after they had forced the Prophet into exile. What happened to the Meccans was a form of a gradual social disintegration which resulted in the founding of an Islamic state in place of the previous unjust social order. Mecca, after a short time, became a part of the Islamic state established by the Prophet (Sadr 1978, 62).

Another point must be added here. Despite being secular on a societal level, many developed and rich countries like the United States remain religious but on an individual basis. The people are religious in their private lives, so that although the society is managed by a secular system, the people themselves have retained their faith. A major part of the southern United States forms the so-called "Bible Belt." Religious movements have been particularly active in the southeast and Western parts of the United States during the two past decades. More than 80% of the population in the United States defines itself as religious.<sup>1</sup> Even among the communist societies religion is still a key element in people's lives (Emāmī 1997, 13-14). We can, therefore, conclude that the wealthy secular societies are not entirely secular. The collapse will occur when the

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<sup>1</sup> Explaining the main differences between the American and the British approach to values education, Halstead maintains that values education in British schools as well as in much of Europe is strongly influenced by a close involvement with religion. Although Halstead's report describes the position of

society leaves behind religion in both individual and collective life. People in these countries still follow religious instructions on a private level. The remaining wealth and development may partly be due to their private religiosity. The sustaining element, in Sadr's theory, is the active role of religion if it leads to social justice.

Up to this point my argument has addressed the first category, namely the relationship between the elements within developed but secular societies. One can argue that the above-mentioned Qur'ānic norm does not work in those developing countries which seem to be faithful and pious. There are many countries with a population which believes in Qur'ānic norms and follows its instructions, yet they are undeveloped or even poor. Why do people's faith and piety not entail ease and blessings? The Qur'ānic norm may as a result be seen by some as futile in both religious and secular societies.

The answer is multifaceted. First, I argue that most religious societies are religious only in name. If we look at Muslim societies, for instance, we realize that they do not follow Islam inclusively or in its entirety. The social, economic and political systems in many of these countries are secular, imitating those in secular developed societies. Therefore, the social order is not the result of prophetic education and divine values. At an individual level also many of them are not practicing Muslims. The claimed correlationship emerges when the society is managed according to the prophetic standards. This will happen when the population is truly faithful and pious.

It is also important to realize that many seemingly pious societies are passing out of the postcolonial period. When developed countries were developing their potential,

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values education, it implies the active role of religion at socio-educational levels in Europe. (see Halstead



these societies were oppressed by colonizing powers. They need time to become conscientized, and more active. Educational systems in these countries needs improvements and reforms must take place in various aspects. They need to develop their natural and human resources. While piety and faith are necessary, they represent only one side of the coin. Development and the promised ease require knowledge, technology and self-realization in a pious society. If, nonetheless, a society is too handicapped to develop natural and human resources, the society suffers from poverty and backwardness. Moreover, many of these societies are at an early stage of development, experimenting with primary models of religiously value-laden plans and policies.

### ***5.2. Closing Remarks on the Sadr's Model***

This section provides an example of a possible approach to the Qur'ān as the major source for socio-educational and cultural change from an Islamic perspective. I have attempted to provide an Islamic theoretical foundation for socio-educational change as a complementary compartment to my comparative approach. Bearing this in mind, one can better understand both the similar and dissimilar theoretical foundations of both the Western and Islamic perspectives. My understanding is that we may consider the Qur'ān as more than a volume of moral and individual instruction. To me, the Qur'ān is a divine text which includes guidelines for various aspects of human life. This understanding should be evident now that I have presented Sadr's theory. This claim, nonetheless, should be evident to anyone who consults the Qur'ān while employing a productive and dialogical method. Sadr's new thematic approach as presented above is one example of this.

It seems to me that the root of the Qur'ānic social views among modern Shī'ī thinkers may be traced back to parts of Ṭabāṭabā'ī's *al-Mizān*. There, he has provided the foundation of a modern Shī'ī understanding of the Qur'ān in relation to various topics. Examples of Tabataba'ī's contribution have emerged in sections of my dissertation. However, to me, Sadr is more of a pioneer since he has provided his independent work with a theoretical framework. He has formulated a multifaceted theory of socio-educational change. This theory has the distinguishing elements of an Islamic culture of development. This culture, as I have explained, necessitates a particular process of culture and values development.

Sadr (1982) observes that the Islamic culture of development is characterized by the key concept of vicegerency (*al-istikhlāf*). This concept implies that the ownership of the whole universe goes back to God and human beings are merely trusted vicegerents. Two Qur'ānic verses (57:7 & 24:33)<sup>2</sup> convey this message. Two major elements may, nonetheless, intervene by preventing human beings from accomplishing this mission. Cruelty (*ẓulm*) and thanklessness (*kufran*) according to the last phrase of Q.33:72<sup>3</sup> are the major reasons for humanity's failure to accomplish its duties of ontological vicegerency, Sadr argues (1982, 30-2). For Sadr, unjust treatment (*ẓulm*) happens when the society follows a discriminative pattern in the distribution of wealth and power. The human

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<sup>2</sup> In 57:7 the Qur'an reveals: "Believe in Allah and His apostle, and spend out of what He has made you to be successor of...". In 24:33 the same message is repeated: "...and give them of the wealth of Allah which He has given you...". These two verses imply that the real ownership of human wealth goes back to Allah and He wants them to manipulate it according to His will.

<sup>3</sup> This verse reveals: "Surely We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to be unfaithful to it and feared from it, (but) humankind has beard that Trust (and he/she turned unfaithful to it), surely he/she is unjust and thankless." The Trust mentioned in this verse, as Sadr interprets it, is the ontological acceptance of responsibility of successorship (*al-istikhlāf*). See Sadr 1979, 132-5. The two above-mentioned intervening elements are emphasized again in Q. 14:34. See Sadr 1982, 31.

relationship with nature and society is tyrannical. Utilization of natural resources is damaging and social relations are oppressive. Thanklessness, according to the Qur'ān, occurs when the society cannot develop God's blessings comprehensively. Human and natural resources remain undeveloped. This unjust treatment influences the quality of human life. Humankind's spiritual journey will be accordingly deficient or deviant. This situation is what the Qur'ān regards as self-oppression.

If a society is going to accomplish its responsibility before God it should develop just models at two levels. Distribution of wealth and power must be fraternal and in harmony with God's will which is expressed in divine religions. Nature and natural resources must also be developed in a sustainable mode. Human resources must be comprehensively developed and incorporated in the development of natural resources. The society will enjoy a just level of well-being if these responsibilities are fully accomplished. This is the model of social justice which constituted the major task of the prophets and appears in the Shī'ī creed as the second pillar, *ʿadl* (justice) (Sadr 1982. 32-3).

The accomplishment of vicegerency is possible only when citizens are educated through a prophetic values education which brings about changes in world-views, attitudes and values system. Prophets carry out a particular pattern of education. This method must change human attitudes toward wealth. Prophets educate people to view wealth as only a tool which has no impact on extending the human life-span, and not as an individualistic and pleasure-seeking indulgence. Sadr supports this idea by citing some verses from the Qur'ān (104:1-5; 102:1-7; 9:34). These verses warn people not to view

wealth as a protecting and lengthening element of human life. An alternative element is instead provided. Believers will be educated to exchange religiously qualified actions (*aḥsan ʿamalan*) with wealth as something which can prolong and qualify human life in its entirety. Q. 67:1-2, for instance, reveals: "...Who (Allah) created death and life that He may try you, which of you is the best in deeds, and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving."

As we can see, this verse encourages the reader to view the examination of human behavior which distinguishes the best deeds from baser ones as the ultimate goal of creation. The "best deeds" replace wealth as the highest value in a divine values system. When the Qur'ān motivates believers to compete with one another it is fostering competition<sup>4</sup> in behaving more in accordance with God's rules (Sadr 1982, 35-6).

Changing attitudes through prophetic education involves other aspects. Prophetic education teaches believers to view the human life-span as inclusive of the hereafter, see the everlasting consequences of human conscious behavior and realize the permanent value of what one spends at the expense of one's faith<sup>5</sup> (Sadr 1982, 37).

To Sadr the idea of human vicegerency is a fundamental principle which entails important consequences in explaining the Islamic culture of development. Vicegerency lumps humanity together into one family, responsible to one owner, namely God. Since human beings are created, according to this concept, to perform their ontological mission, there must not be any top-down pattern in social relations. Social relations must be

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<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Q. 83:26 which, after it describes the high position of good-doers and the exceptional rewards that they will receive, it concludes: "The sealing of it is (with) musk, and for that let the aspirers rival".

<sup>5</sup> To support his argument regarding the last example, Sadr alludes to the key message contained in verses such as 34:39; 6:160; 64:17 and 2:261.

formed in a way that frees individuals from discriminative and slavery and places people on an equal footing as servants of one God. Fraternity and brotherhood, therefore, are the mainspring of all social relations. If superiority is due to a sound action (*ʿamal-i ṣāliḥ*),<sup>6</sup> no one has the authority to abuse people, when all are equal before God. Vicegerency is in fact the acceptance of a divine trust which make people responsible before God (Sadr 1982, 135-6).

It is crucial to note that in Sadr's theory of the Islamic culture of development two key concepts are intermingled. Divine vicegerency will be violated if it is not protected by the element of divine observation. Sadr's theory centers on two key concepts: the line of divine vicegerency (*khawṭ khilāfat al-insān*) and the line of divine observation (*khawṭ shahādat al-unbīyā'*). The second line is the provision of prophetic education in order to protect the first line from deviation. Without divine observation, the line of human vicegerency is corrupted. The reason for this is perhaps because if the resolution of human inner conflict is disconnected from divine guidance, it will lead to the flourishing of earthly desires. Sadr observes that one might suppose that the damaging consequences of disconnection from divine observation was the reason why the angels feared and questioned human creation when were they informed about it.<sup>7</sup> The dialogue included in this verse between God and the angels implies that human beings are educable. Narrating the story of how human beings descended to the earth, Q. 2:38 alludes to the role of prophetic observation in directing people toward the absolute perfection.

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<sup>6</sup> Some verses in the Qur'ān reveal that the only criterion of honor and superiority is a good action (*ʿamal-i ṣāliḥ*). See for example 53:39.

<sup>7</sup> See Q. 2:30.

Sadr concludes that self-development is possible only when divine attributes and values are established in human beings. This occurs when people are ontologically close to God and resemble him. Resemblance requires resemblance in divine characteristics. The spiritual journey that Sadr articulates<sup>8</sup> is indeed a movement toward the highest ideal, which is the source of all values. The realization of the divine vicegerency is due to the establishment of these divine values, which include justice, knowledge, power, compassion, generosity and rejection of oppression and tyranny. When the line of divine observation combines with the line of divine vicegerency, human beings are directed to the path which enable them to distance themselves from earthly pleasures and corrupting inner forces. This purification facilitates an effective movement towards the absolute perfection (Sadr 1982. 141-3).

I too have come to the conclusion that the Qur'ānic view of social justice always begins with individuals. Prophetic education is a way of changing attitudes and values systems at the individual level. The prophets instruct us that development of *taqwā* (piety) is the core of individual and social development. According to the Qur'ān, prophetic education could play the central role because it deals with the internalization of values and self-development. External agents, even the prophets as the educators of humankind, are instruments that motivate individuals to begin their own efforts. In Q. 7:96, for example, the establishment of social justice is regarded as the goal of prophecy but the task of the people.

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<sup>8</sup> See section 4.2.3., of the previous chapter.

Based on Sadr's theory, in Iran today; the Islamic state should be expected to function in terms of justice and *taqwā* (piety). This policy is clearly stated in the post-revolutionary constitution. The election of religious leaders to the highest positions, another characteristic of the present Islamic state, depends on their religious qualifications, including piety and justice. Lack of these standards excludes any individual from candidacy. The reason for this is perhaps that the leader is the designer and the maintainer of the social justice and the values educator of citizens. Even after his election, if the leader is discovered to lack the necessary credentials, he is automatically dismissed or must reestablish his legitimacy before the assembly of experts. Likewise textbooks on Persian literature and religious instruction in the formal educational system are designed in such a way that they convey the message of piety and social justice through both direct and indirect methods. Yet the gap between theory and practice remains a major problem. The country is still at an early stage of translating Islamic theories into practice. The Islamically value-laden theoretical foundations require feasible models. The realities of everyday existence urge continuous modifications to replacement of these models. The functioning model will be the one which guarantees that national development is combined with Islamic culture and values.

In addition to external interference - like its eight year war with Iraq - another consideration is the fact that the Islamic state in Iran is still young. The policies applied there need improvements and renewal to meet those ideals. Muslim scholars are at an early point in a long journey towards providing feasible models in each domain characterized by Islamic culture and values. The future will show whether or not the new

Islamic state in Iran can remain effective or even competitive, or whether it will be able to meet the challenges of a feasible Islamic model.

### **5.3. Comments & Comparative Conclusions**

Theorists in the West have offered various explanations of development, but none has proved comprehensive. An inclusive perspective would have to build a developmental policy by amalgamating different aspects of various theories. Muslim thinkers, however, believe that the Islamic theory is an alternative, if not globally, then at least for the Muslim world. They have to provide an effective model in the face of both modern and postmodern approaches. The Islamic model, as Sadr observes, is an organic system and a pyramidal entity with particular subsystems (ʿAbdullāwī 1997, 46& Saʿīd 1993, 166). The moral values, elements and pillars of the Islamic world-view, its rules, practical standards and applicable models based on fundamental theories, are all integrating elements of this system. The inclusion of non-Islamic components can never succeed in creating an Islamic system. Moreover, this system should be elaborated multifacetedly. Over-emphasis on certain aspects and negligence of other dimensions can lead to the fragmentation of the Islamic system. If a society aims at implementing the Islamic development model, it has to create a system which is characterized by an Islamic culture of development.

Providing an Islamic theory of socio-educational change, Sadr demonstrates the reliability and effectiveness of the Islamic approach in dealing with life's complexities. His theory is characterized by tracing the roots of social reconstruction to the individual inner values development. Here, he emphasizes the role of the ideals, values and



educational efforts provided by prophets. Sadr's new approach to understanding the Qur'ān and his theory of inner conflict and social classes in an unjust society deserve independent studies.

A critical review of non-Islamic models for socio-educational change, and particularly the Western model, indicate that these reflect the experience of Europeans and North Americans. The Western model has developed through a long process of colonialization of non-Western societies. An Islamic model cannot be structured based on this mentality. The Western models are characterized by a their culture. This culture reflects the conditions, social and psychological characteristics of one specific context. It contains as well implications for the Western philosophy of life. It explains the universe and human life in secular terms. Each model should, after all, accommodate the ideals, values and cultural identity of the citizens of its own society (Amīn 1996, 119-123).

The concept of post-modernism is new, vague and even slippery. Since it has emerged in the post-modern age, it, like other concepts in this age, encompasses a variety of forms and definitions. Yet any fixed meaning seems to be self-contradictory. Disintegration, eclecticism, marginality, discontinuity, fragmentation, cybernetics and critique of reason are some concerns of post-modern thought. This intellectual discipline was coined during the 1970s as a counterpoint to modernity. A critical evaluation of this approach is provided at the end of my section on postmodernism. A more important feature in the post-modern era has been the deliberate breaking down of traditional ideas and thought patterns. This critical look at concepts and phenomena includes the traditional method of approaching Islamic studies. Eclecticism and discontinuity have

urged Muslim thinkers to reexamine previous patterns of thinking. This has led to the question of how a post-modernist perspective will motivate Islamic studies, as well as how Muslims have responded to post-modernity (Ahmed & Donnan, 1994, 11-12). Yet Muslims continue to believe that Islamic thought is distinguished by its own particularities. To Muslims, Islam still has the ability and stability to provide answers to the needs of each new age. The question of how Muslim thinkers explore feasible models from revealed sources is partly dealt with in my literature review. An example of a functional attempt is provided by Sadr in the socio-educational and cultural domain. My understanding is that in their attempts at providing Islamic revivalism, Muslim scholars have relied more on the culture and values particularity (another postmodern concept) of Islamic thought, rather than on discontinuity and eclecticism.

## **Chapter 6.**

### **The Engendered Islamic Culture of Development**

#### **6.1. Women, Education, Cultural Development & Social Change**

Inspired by the central message of the 1995 Human Development Report<sup>1</sup>, which explicitly states: "Human development, if not engendered, is endangered," I assume that no discussion of the Islamic model of culture and values development can be undertaken in ignorance of gender issues. Despite his insistence on the necessity of rethinking women's issues in Islam (1982a, 203) and despite his vital impact in educating his sister Bint al-Hudā as a Muslim woman thinker, Sadr never really had a chance to deal with gender issue in his theory about culture and values development. Relying on my own understanding of Sadr's model and considering the practical challenges of post-revolutionary Iran, I have elaborated on cultural development and gender in this chapter from an Islamic point of view. Both theoretical and practical dimensions of an engendered Islamic model of cultural development are dealt with respectively.

Since the U.N. decade for women (1975-85) serious attention has been given to the active and multi-faceted role of women in development (Ghosh, in press, 1). The major concern in this movement has been the eradication of various pressures imposed on women and their empowerment. Empowerment aims at providing women with the feeling of a sense of control over their lives (Ghosh, in press, 4). To have an understanding of women's roles and interests in education and development within an

Islamic context, we should study the issue both from theoretical and practical vantage points. Post-revolutionary Iran provides a context where Islamic ideals are being translated into practice, and allows us to consider the issues from both these angles.

In this section, I first try to provide a general portrayal of the Islamic view of women, and then examine it in the current context of post-revolutionary Iran. From a general perspective, I aim to study the role and status of Iranian women in education and development within the framework of the Iranian Islamic state. I also intend to discover what Iranian women have done or can accomplish in education and development, and what they have gained in the process. I assume that issues affecting women cannot be studied in isolation from either the general process of social change or, particularly, the decisive role of men. Women's issues have always been investigated in sex-laden terms. They have been studied as a specific class of the society, and have been held largely responsible for gender shortcomings and social problems. To solve the problems faced by women we need to consider the complementary role of men.

Most of the scholars who have written about women in Iran during the post-revolutionary era (see e.g., Higgins & Ghaffari 1994, 20) believe that not only the female education system but the educational system by and large aims at educating citizens with an explicit emphasis on Islamic values. This, they argue, will compromise the possibility of developing highly skilled human resources. Other writers like Erika Friedl (1983) call the Iranian Islamic context a situation which exerts "extraordinary ideological pressure" on women (Moghadam 1988, 223). I argue that the emphasis on Islamic values is

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<sup>1</sup> See HDR 1995, "Overview," 1.

characteristic of an Islamic educational model. The reason behind it is to make the system Islamic-value-laden and protect those educated in this fashion from secular consequences. Another message from this commitment is to create a feeling of independence and self-efficiency in students. However, this does not mean that needed skills and expertise are compromised by a commitment to Islamic values. It is vital to build an educational system that encourages both knowledge and commitment. The secular system of education in Iran, like that in other colonized countries, is the legacy of Western colonization. It is reasonable to implement and examine the Islamic model as another alternative.

Western ideas about education entered Iran during the nineteenth century along with the colonial movements of the time. The Western cultural invasion encompassed a combination of positive and negative values. This mixture created pessimistic and optimistic reactions. The exploitation that accompanied these invasions prevented colonized populations from trusting even positive modern values like equality, freedom, human rights, development and social change (Afkhani 1994, 9). This schizophrenic and opaque environment persuaded Shiʿi scholars to oppose the modernizing efforts put forward by their own Western-oriented national governments. Women, like other segments of the population, had particular difficulty in keeping up with the modernizing process since it aimed at introducing a stereotyped Western model which was also anti-Islamic. The affordable Islamic model, however, could not be implemented since power was in the hands of those who were pro-West. The situation of women needed improvement in the sphere of Islamic values and sexuality education, in socio-political

participation, in family welfare and in other similar aspects. Steps towards improvement would have been had to be inclusive but Islamically value-laden, yet little immediate consideration was given to these matters.

In the political domain, Iranian women won the right to vote in 1963 as an element of the Shah's White Revolution (Afshami 1994, 11). To what extent this right was translated into practice is a matter of debate. Certainly it was no more effective than similar rights granted after the revolution. Women from higher levels of the society and the elite could exercise their rights. Women from middle and lower middle class urban backgrounds and those from rural areas could not. These rights were furthermore accompanied by other anti-Islamic values which created a negative attitude towards the whole package of reforms offered by the White Revolution. Not only women, but the entire population remained suppressed because of the tension between pre-revolutionary development plans and Islamic ideals. Iran, as a Muslim country, had experienced Islam for centuries. Shi'a scholars, as the protectors of Islam, had played a vital role in mobilizing the people to work for social change. Ignorance of this factor led to the failure of the pre-revolutionary regime and provided the background to the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Post-revolutionary Iran has attracted the attention of those who are looking to see what Islam can provide for women. This is indeed a situation where the Islamic view of women is put into practice. It is therefore important to evaluate the roots of the problems and assess future possibilities.

## **6.2. Reviewing the Islamic View of Women**

Before describing some aspects of the status of women in Islam, it must be noted that the Islamic approach towards women features a number of characteristics. One should remember that this approach may or may not be compatible with other approaches, particularly the Western. The feminist movement within Western culture has a different history altogether. This movement stands opposed even to the metanarratives of Western male-oriented culture, let alone Islamic standards. Although feminists are not in touch with Islamic standards, there would be tension if they confronted Islamic womanology with its distinctive value system. To investigate an important issue like women's status we need varying perspectives. Womanology will be more inclusive if we study it through a comparative perspective. In this section, I aim to provide a general picture of the Islamic approach in order to compare it later with other perspectives. We will be totally confused if we judge Islamic and other non-Western approaches in isolation from their cultural contexts. Islamic standards never function in a Western context as diversely. As I have mentioned in other chapters, Islamic ideology is a complete system. The functionality of each component depends on the functionality of other components of the whole system. However, it is worth bearing in mind various perspectives. In this section I have tried to review the Islamic approach within both theoretical and practical contexts. The perspective gained from a review of the subject will help us to contextualize and then evaluate it.

Women, who have made up more than half of the human population throughout history and in all nations have, solely on account of their gender, been oppressed, violated and discriminated against. Even within developed countries women have suffered from

explicit and hidden types of tyranny. They have not been able to enjoy their rights to education and socio-political participation, within the family, marriage and the like. Women are still victims of poverty, illiteracy, post-war crises, homelessness, social and sexual violence. Companies and commercial institutions in industrialized countries enlarge their interests through female exploitation. The existing discriminative status of women is more or less a norm in Muslim and non-Muslim societies. Aside from the type and form of discrimination, women are discriminated against in all societies. We need to revive or rebuild the status of women even in Islamic countries. One reason for the discriminatory treatment to women in Islamic societies is that Islamic instructions in these societies are misunderstood or mis-translated. Islamic standards usually are mingled with local cultural values and stereotyped expectations in Muslim nations (Fanaei 1998, 21-2).

It is not an easy task to provide even a general picture of the Islamic view of women in a chapter which must necessarily deal with only a few aspects of this topic. However, even a limited investigation can provide the cornerstone of future, more inclusive studies.

To understand fully the Islamic view of women we have always to keep in mind the explicit difference between the revealed doctrine of Islam and the actual practice in Muslim societies. Socio-political, economic, national and global elements often force Muslim societies to mingle pure Islamic tenets with local customs and beliefs. Before looking at the realities of Muslim life in any one aspect, particularly the issue of women, we must first refer to the main sources of Islamic knowledge. The reality is that neither in



theory nor in practice can Muslim women ever fully realize their potential, understand themselves or enjoy their rights. The Qur'ān and the prophetic tradition, along with the narrated tradition from the infallible Imams (in Shī'ī thought), constitute these sources. Although in referring to them we face the problem of conflicting interpretations, we may find a way to avoid misconceptions. As in understanding any text, the most reliable method is to turn to experts, in this case to Muslim scholars, who mostly agree upon the fundamental tenets. The reliance on experts in each branch of knowledge is a commonly accepted norm. Therefore, at the level of theoretical discussion I prefer to turn to the main Islamic references.

According to Islam, value-laden differences between men and women are merely based on the acquired level of piety.<sup>2</sup> Piety is the characteristic which shapes individual and collective behavior to be God-laden. Rejecting any type of superiority claimed by one group over another, the Qur'ān addresses all human beings:

O you people! surely We have created you of a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you may know one another; surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most pious... Q. 49:13

The core message in this verse is that the characteristics that distinguish one person from the next are only means of knowing one another. Race, sex, class, geographical differences, age and wealth should not provide the bases of superiority or power relationships. The only criterion of honor and superiority is piety, which eradicates any unjust and discriminative hierarchical relationship.

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<sup>2</sup> I have explained the nature and the importance of this core Islamic value in each chapter of this project, insofar as it affects each of the topics discussed. See, for example, in this chapter, pages 336-8 & chapter four, pages 228-9.

As the main source for the issue of women in Islam, the Qur'ān discusses twelve well-known women in religious history and describes their lifestyles. It is also interesting to note that one whole chapter in the Qur'ān is entitled the "chapter of women" (*Sūrat al-Nisā'*), which indicates the attention that the Qur'ān paid to women (Bāhunar 1990, 39).

### **6.3. The Ideal Woman in an Islamic Society**

I would like to quote Jane I. Smith's words on the complexity of the position of women in Islam at both the theoretical and practical levels. She, interestingly enough, maintains:

Like an intricate and complex geometric pattern on a Persian rug or a frieze decorating a mosque, the practices, roles, opportunities, prescriptions, hopes and frustrations of Islamic women are woven together in a whole. The colors are sometimes bold and striking, at other times mute and subtle. (Smith 1987, 248)

A reason for this interrelatedness and complexity is that on the one hand Muslims believe that Islamic law remains divine and immutable, while on the other, society has to find answers for the questions raised by women about their status, roles, and function in the context of a modern, but Islamic state (Haeri 1991, 182). The discussion of the ideal woman in Islam and attempts at defining her model behavior becomes crucial when an Islamic society, like post-revolutionary Iran, undergoes rapid development and encounters the problem of putting theories into practice. The contrast will be more explicit when, on the one hand, the society follows the Islamic values system, whereas on the other it is asked to follow the path towards the goals of development and modernization. Social change cannot be avoided. Muslim scholars therefore, are faced

with finding feasible Islamic patterns. These two tasks will cause challenges in developmental and educational plans and policies. It should also be mentioned that the issue of women, education and development in Iran is linked to Shi'ī ideology, which has had deep impact on social and individual lives. Since the central value in socio-educational change, as was pointed out earlier, is piety, the educational system aims at creating a pious and committed citizen, whether male or female. Piety, as a core characteristic, influences social and individual attitudes and behavior. The Qur'ānic educational teachings, therefore, are piety-centered. A key goal in formal education is accordingly to educate students for a pious life.

Educational teachings are more effective if they are accompanied with concrete, feasible models of piety. An important aspect of the Qur'ānic educational teachings, as in other effective educational methods, is that it always provides feasible models. These educational models and ideals are not only masculine. In providing models of good and bad characters, the Qur'ān offers examples of both male and female characters. In Q. 66:10 & 11, for instance, it is women who step forward on environmental issues and challenge the motives of those who would try to indoctrinate them. These female models are provided as concrete examples for both men and women. In verse 10, the Qur'ān reminds us of the wives of Prophets Lūṭ and Noah who rejected the prophetic instructions and became disbelievers. The Qur'ān says:

Allah sets forth an example to those who disbelieve, the wife of Noah and the wife of Lūṭ: they were both under (the teachings) of two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them so they availed them nothing from Allah....

The next verse in the same chapter, on the contrary, talks about Pharaoh's wife:

And Allah sets forth an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh when she said: My Lord! build for me a house with you in the garden and deliver me from Pharaoh and his doing and deliver me from the unjust people.

Hence in verse 10, the Qur'ān talks about two women who disregarded the prophetic teachings, who had access to prophetic instructions from within their family but decided instead to disbelieve in the religion of their times. Verse 11, on the contrary, provides the example of a woman who did not have direct access to the prophetic message. She was the wife of the emperor of ancient Egypt. However, she was able to reach a high level of piety. The Qur'ān offers her example as a champion of piety and belief in God (Mutahhari 1980, 117).

It is important to note that Pharaoh's wife and the other two models are provided for all believers, both men and women, as examples of those who acted against or along with the oppressing conditions of their times. Pharaoh's wife furthermore is a model of resistance to absolute power. Although she lived in one of the most secular and oppressive environments, she was faithful in following the prophetic instructions of Moses. The other two, who lived in the most un-secular of environments, nevertheless preferred to adapt a secular lifestyle. The message is that the final choice is in our hands, regardless of our gender.

In other verses, Mary (Jesus' mother) appears as a surprising model. She acts so piously that the prophet of her time is astonished. Verse 37 in the third chapter of the Qur'ān quotes the Prophet Zakarīyā:

Whenever he (the Prophet Zakarīyā ) entered the sanctuary to (see) her (Mary), he found with her food! He said: O Mary! whence comes this to you? She said it is from Allah” There, Zakarīyā asked Allah to grant him such a good offspring.

This and other corresponding verses provide an illustration of the Islamic understanding about the ability of women to reach the sacred levels of perfectness. The female, according to the Qur’ān, should be a model and champion of piety among males and other females.

In Islam, the ideal model in female education is Fāṭima, the daughter of Prophet Muḥammad, the wife of ʿAlī, (the first Shīʿī Imam), and the mother of the second and the third imams, (Ḥasan and Ḥusain), according to Shīʿī belief. This conception is the reason why Women’s Day in Iran is celebrated on the occasion of Fāṭima’s birthday (Mehran 1991,43). Although Fāṭima was neither a prophet nor an Imam, her spiritual position is higher than that of her eleven offspring who were imams and also higher than the other prophets with the exception of her father (Mutahhari 1980, 117-18). Khadija the prophet Muḥammad’s wife and Zaynab the Prophet’s granddaughter also played important roles in the socio-political events of their times, more so even than many Muslim men. Therefore, they are regarded as directing and encouraging models in Islam.

Based upon this model, the first and the most important task of women in an Islamic society is to fulfill the sacred role of motherhood in order to preserve the sanctity and stability of the family. This, of course, does not mean that all burdens in the family should be placed on the shoulders of women or that they should be prevented from fulfilling other roles. The above-mentioned examples though played a decisive role in the establishment of Islam. Their family roles never obliged them to disregard their socio-

political roles. Moreover, men are also expected to play a complementary role in domestic responsibilities. Pious mothers and fathers are both the first and the most effective educators in establishing the foundations of a life-long educational process. To play the role of a pious mother should not come at the expense of her socio-political and economic status. A mother, before being a mother or a wife, is herself. The elevated status of Fāṭima was not merely due to her relation to the Prophet Muḥammad or the imams. She was a champion in all aspects of life. Muslims should be proud of her because of her exemplary personality.

It is necessary to provide women with educational opportunities both before and after marriage. If a woman has access to education she is able to invest in herself. This will give her the ability to play a more complete role both in the family and in society. She will be a better educator and mother if she receives more and higher levels of education. Family and social roles will be better conducted if society were to invest more in the education of women. Uneducated mothers not only lose their own rights but also are less likely to be good mothers and wives, as well as being deficient in other complementary roles.

### **6.3.1. The Impact of Women's Role on the Stability of Family**

The family in an Islamic society is seen as the core and the key element of the society (Iranian Constitution, article 11). Efforts at an Islamic socialization should begin in the family. Both men and women are expected to play complementary roles based on their different abilities and varying capabilities. Both sexes are endowed with different biological and psychological capabilities which help them fulfill different participatory

needs. Explaining the importance of the family unit, the Qur'ān maintains that God created humankind as male and female. His wise creation of humankind provided the foundations of the family unit. The Qur'ān 30:21 reveals:

And among His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion.

The implication of this verse is that the Qur'ān views the family as a unit which includes both male and female. The Arabic term “*azwāj*” (mates) in this verse applies to both sexes, men and women. Units with two female or male components are not considered families nor do these entail the expected consequences. Moreover, the family is regarded as a center of love, compassion and relaxation. These strong psychological relationships are the background of a lifelong companionship. This refers to the creation of a human condition that provides interpersonal reliance. Reliance on others, as R. W. Morris states, is a part of the human condition and recognizes that people do rely on one another for understanding, comfort, and love (Morris 1994, 40).

Recent sociological and developmental findings also support the idea that the family unit is the core of the socialization process and of human development for the entire society. Human interrelationships, informal education and socialization begins and is constructed within the family (See e.g., Avison & Kundel 1991, 79 & Woolfolk 1995, 87). I personally never consider the sexual-biological differences between men and women and the consequent varying roles as discriminative; rather I see them as a way of natural cooperation which joins men to women and maintains the human race on the

earth. Sexual differences call men and women to play complementary roles within the extension of the family. Tensions, nonetheless, begin when we do not have a clear definition of “complementary roles”. The main task is to clarify the borderlines of “complementary roles” based on the fundamental differences.

My understanding of the above-mentioned verse is that the family unit begins with mutual love and affection between girls and boys. This key element along with the consequent sexual pleasure and attraction links both sexes, helping them to overcome the pressures of life cooperatively. Yet the sexual role of reproduction is different. While men play an instant role in the reproductive process, women undertake a long-lasting role, aside from their crucial role in the post-natal period, as they feed and rear their infants in their early years.

It is also crucial to understand that the reproductive process is usually preceded, accompanied and followed by pain, pressures and indisposition and possible side-effects. Women need time to pass through this process and regain their normal health (Misbah 1990, 6). In promoting any productive opportunity for women, we have to consider the more vital role of women in reproduction.<sup>3</sup> This is why in Islam men are urged to support

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<sup>3</sup> Our approach to the twenty-first century is associated with some previously inconceivable developments. The growth of the women's movement and the gay and lesbian movements in the 1960s and 1970s has proposed new types of families in which parents play less traditional roles. The introduction of new reproductive technologies means that women no longer have to experience pregnancy or have sex with a man to have a child. Laboratory fertilization of women's eggs with men's sperm and the implantation of the embryo in a host womb is regarded as an alternative (Golombok & Fivush 1995, chapter 9). My understanding from an Islamic point of view is that these technologies are, indeed, the result of human beings losing sight of divine instructions. I believe that the development of new reproductive technologies which dismiss women from their natural roles is nothing less than producing an artificial intelligence to have the same functions of human brain. It is, in my view, like swimming against a current. Family unit, as the Qur'ān suggests, is a male-female cooperation place “team” (Q. 30:21). Reproduction is the natural function of a woman's autonomy (Q. 31:40; 46:15). Eradication of socio-culturally constructed stereotypes must not lead us to ignore the trend and ultimate purpose of creation.



women financially and bear more of a burden in productive aspects. This, of course, does not mean to restrict the role of women to reproduction. Rather we have to take into consideration the fact that a long period of pregnancy, the side-effects of delivery and the post-natal recovery are reasons that women play the most essential roles in reproduction. They must therefore bear a lesser burden on the social level while they are dealing with human development. If within the new proposed concept of development people are located at the center of all development plans (UNDP, The State of Human development 1995, 11), then the reproductive role of women should not be compromised by the value attached to producing goods and commodities. I do not think that a productive role at any level can be compared with the value of women's crucial role in reproduction. I assume that a significant aspect of social justice is to give the primary value to reproduction for those women who decide to complete their role in this area. Reproduction or human development in its formative period requires experts in education and child psychology. It is therefore especially worthwhile to have skillful women who oversee the early stages of human development. To give more power to women and provide them with financial independence, we first need to reevaluate their reproductive value.

One more point should be added here, which is that the reproductive task is usually misperceived. People always categorize reproduction with the unpaid and invisible productive roles of women in the family. In Islam, the complementary role of the woman in a family is reproduction, which I call human development. Other invisible productive activities like housekeeping, laundry, cooking, cleaning and even child-rearing which are usually conducted by women are remunerable tasks. Women can charge their

husbands for performing these tasks. However the Islamic legal system is accompanied by a moral system which discourages disputes which may disturb the marriage. In its familial instructions, Islam directs Muslims toward mutual love, compassion and cooperation rather than mere economic competition. If, nonetheless, men and women decided to interpret strictly the legal nature of the marriage contract, claiming what each owes to the other, both have something to say about the economic value of their participation (Misbah 1990, 17).

My point is that if a society neglects the value of women's activities within the family then social planners have to find ways to engage them in productive roles. I observe that social change can be effected by women if we reevaluate their reproductive and invisible productive roles. Reformulation of social norms can provide women with a deserved and independent position. However, this emphasis does not mean that women should always stay at home. Reproduction, particularly in the present when societies are confronted with the problem of the exploitation of population, does not cover the whole scope of women's lives. Once the family's foundations have been established and the children provided with stability, both the wife and husband are free to continue their out-of-home activities.

To give a higher value to family stability and to insist on the crucial role of women does not necessarily mean that a woman's role should be confined to domestic responsibilities. Val Moghadam (1988) opposes what she calls "the ideology of domesticity" in post-revolutionary Iran, and provides statistics that reveal a growth trend in Iranian women's participation in various sectors of the work-force (Moghadam 1988).

Again she restricts herself to one specific understanding of a particular prophetic tradition. Moghadam quotes this tradition from the women's journal *Zan-i Rūz* where it was written that the Prophet Muḥammad said: "domesticity is the woman's holy war" to support her thesis of the ideology of domesticity (Moghadam 1988, 223). I would observe that although this prophetic tradition is reported in various Islamic primary sources (see e.g., Majlisī 1983, vol., 10, 99 & vol., 18, 106), it could have alternative interpretations.

This tradition, with its specific Arabic phrase (*ḥusn al-tabaʿa* / a well-established relationship with one's spouse) actually emphasizes the cooperative role that married women should play with their husbands. It never implies the ideology of domesticity that women should be prevented from taking on out-of-home responsibilities. Moreover, the late Ayatullāh Muḥammad Bihishtī, the former vice-president of the Assembly of Experts, who was in charge of establishing the Post-revolutionary constitution, has an interesting explanation for the role of women in the Muslim family. He has stated that the emphasis on the role of the woman at home in raising children and caring for the husband does not imply that women's work is 'maid's work'. The spirit of Islamic teachings, he points out, accords great importance to the mutual responsibilities of both parents within the family context (Esfandiari 1994, 67). It is incumbent on both of them to divide the responsibilities cooperatively. For me, "maid's work" is an example of wrong translation of a prophetic tradition. I have already mentioned that according to Islamic law domestic work is a kind of hidden productive and remunerable activity. They may be provided by women under the moral values of the marriage contract. Moreover, the cooperative and

complementary roles of men and women are not confined to the family unit. Wives and husbands agree upon cooperation in all aspects of their shared lives.

### **6.3.2. Women & Socio-Political Development**

To discuss the equality of men and women in social participation, we have to discover whether their respective social roles go back only to the socialization process or whether they depend sometimes on socialization and occasionally on biological and psychological differences. If we hold the first opinion, the existing labor division based on the male-female criterion will be entirely discriminatory. If we follow the second criterion, we may accept a kind of labor division at the social level between male and female.

It seems that both men and women are capable of performing many social responsibilities. Therefore, the differences do not refer to their potentialities. Social role playing then reflects the better compatibility of men or women for particular tasks. Men and women may have different degrees of ability to perform various social responsibilities (Fanaei 1998, 17-20).

Besides those activities that both men and women are equally able to perform, there are some that are more compatible with one of the sexes. In many societies, both past and present, the harder or more difficult tasks were assigned to men, such as hunting, fighting and mining. Women, on the contrary, were asked to take on softer and more secure social responsibilities. Despite this fact, exceptions can be found all over the world. In some societies women have been asked to perform hard and heavy work, such as construction. This, of course, does not mean that women did not suffer within their

own domain of responsibilities. The reproductive process, post-war hardship, drought crises and other examples hurt women more than men. Even when a nation is at war, while men serve on the front women have served as well by remaining at home to rear children and handle household duties. In cases where both men and women participated in national defense, women took care of nursing and support behind the lines. These examples of labor division are not discriminatory; rather they naturally fit with varying abilities of men and women.

I do not think that this labor division is unreasonable. What is most crucial is how and on the basis of which type of criteria we divide labor. Next most important is the way in which we evaluate men's and women's participation. Social credit and financial reward have admittedly always been discriminatory. A solution for such treatment is to reconsider men's and women's capabilities and reevaluate their shares. Although in post-revolutionary Iran women do not face impediments against working outside of their homes, in December 1983 a legislative measure was introduced ostensibly to ease the burdens on working mothers by encouraging part-time rather than full-time work (Moghadam 1988, 227). Such legislation maintains two sides of the coin. It not only provides an opportunity for women to work but also leaves them enough time to look after their families. They can of course work full time when they are free from family responsibilities.

In Islam, reproduction and human development during the early years is a priority task assigned to mothers. Mothers are regarded as the most compatible for this duty. They endure the pains of almost nine months of conception. In the post-natal period they also

are endowed with a source of natural nutrition. The Qur'ān reveals that these two tasks, bearing and nourishing, will last thirty months if mothers are willing to the fullest. To remind us of the importance of these responsibilities, Q. 31:40 maintains: "And We have charged humankind concerning his/her parents- his/her mother bore him/her in weakness upon weakness and his/her weaning occurs in two years..."

The verse in Q. 46:15 reemphasizes the same fact and asks people to treat their parents well, particularly their mothers. It reminds us of the difficulties that mothers suffer during pregnancy and delivery. Although men can also take part in post-natal responsibilities, mothers are regarded in the Qur'ān as the most compatible. They are the ones who naturally have the ability to conceive and provide breast-feeding. These responsibilities are not, however, forced upon them. It is, after all, possible to set up day-cares and send women immediately to work or to ask men to stay at home or take the children with them to work, but this makes things difficult if the parents wish to feed their child naturally. Needless to say, breast-feeding has a crucial psychological impact on a child.

Holding to the idea that the post-natal responsibilities of child-rearing require male-female cooperation, I cannot see how rearing by only one parent can result in healthy psychological development. Thus it is clear that post-natal responsibilities are addressed to both parents. Fathers should also look out for the child's need for education and affection during the post-natal period.

One might still however argue that Islam has restricted women to performing only reproductive tasks and that they are deprived of other social opportunities. The answer is

that reproduction never fills all of a woman's life-span. This is more understandable during the present age when the size of a family is much smaller than in the past. Moreover, women can still be engaged in productive tasks even within the reproductive period as long as they do not compromise the more important task of human development. Women have to participate in the work-force, not only to create economic independence for themselves but also to cope with the economic realities of every day life. This, however, adds to the burden faced by women who have to struggle with maintaining a home along with the pressures of a job.

A dramatic point in Islam is that division of roles and responsibilities between men and women is not a question of higher or lower value. The core of spiritual and social values are piety and full participation in compatible tasks. The social value of each person, male or female, depends on his/her level of cooperative participation and the intentions behind it.

If one returns to the post-revolutionary context, it is clear that teaching at various levels has been an important area for the socio-educational participation of women. Following the return to Islamic values, the Council of the Cultural Revolution encouraged (1989) women to fill all needed teaching positions in female education. Despite this emphasis, female teachers still constitute only one-eighth of the total work force in the educational sector (Fallahi 1995, 136).

Women also receive military training as members of the female paramilitary forces. Started during the Iraq-Iran war, this program mobilizes women to receive

military training on an extra-curricular basis<sup>4</sup>. Women are also allowed to run for Parliament. It is interesting to note that in the present Parliament Fā'izah Hāshimī, the previous president's daughter, has been elevated to the first rank among her peers.

### 6.3.3. Equality of Men & Women (Difference or Discrimination?)

The debate over the equality and freedom of human beings in social life has engaged minds for at least three centuries. The equality of men and women was however only recognized internationally for the first time with the passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948. As human beings, both men and women enjoy many in-born and undeniable rights. The issue has likewise been debated in post-revolutionary Iran from the outset. Theoretical and practical solutions have been proposed ever since.

In an informative lecture addressed to Iranian women, Ayatollah Khāmini'ī, the present leader of the Islamic Republic, maintains that women are not weaker than men in terms of mental and intellectual abilities, thinking and emotions. In some cases they are even stronger. However, throughout history men have oppressed women simply because they were taller and physically stronger and had louder voices. The roots of this oppression lie in the lack of a strong and supportive law or the lack of strong psychological parameters like intense love or the lack of a stable and clear religious faith.

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<sup>4</sup> According to the new intermediate education system (*niẓām-i jadīd-i āmūzesh-i mutvassīṭah*), female students, unlike males are exempt from military training. They have instead to take a course carrying equal credit. See *Āshnā'ī bā Barnāmerēz-i Taḥsīlī-Shughlī, Niẓām-i Jadīd-i āmūzish-i Mutavassīṭh, (Introduction to Vocational-Educational Planning, New Intermediate Education System)*, Islamic Republic of Iran, 1374s/1995, p. 57.



Male-female relationships in the Iranian context must therefore be improved, according to Khāmini'ī. These relationships must be reestablished on the basis of the Islamic standards of justice and love. For him, blind imitation of the Western model, even in support of women's rights, would be nothing more than falling into a new trap. He observes that the Islamic attitude toward women represents a more appropriate path. He states his belief that the majority of ill-treatment of women comes from husbands. What is needed is a change in interrelationship patterns in order to avoid this sort of oppression (Electronic Hamshahri 1996/1375, No. 1113). As a step towards women development in post-revolutionary Iran, new efforts should be made to reform family patterns. Women need more protection and immunity against spousal abuse. Out-of-family limitations, I believe, are partly rooted in family oppression. This explains Khāmini'ī's emphasis on family-pattern development.

To begin any reform we must have a clear understanding about men's and women's capabilities. Both sexes enjoy various capabilities due to femininity and masculinity. Sex differences dictate the respective potentials that men and women bring to collective life within the family and at the social level. Muslim thinkers insist that to eradicate pressures on and mis-treatment of women we should not place new burdens on women's shoulders in the name of equality. They assert that men and women are equal but not similar in their experience of human rights (Mutahhari 1980, 113). Similar treatment, they argue, is another kind of tyranny over men and women.

Muslim thinkers believe that Islam does not support the idea of a similarity between men and women, but that this does not lead to any discrimination against

women. They insist that Islam is opposed to discrimination both in terms of sex and similarity of the sexes. A woman's nature is not deemed to be inferior to a man's, but neither is it the same. The two complete and complement each other (Ferdows 1985, 18).

As men and women are born with different potentialities, they are different in deserving different rights (Mutahhari 1980, 11). Undeniable differences are, indeed, a tool for linking men to women in the demanding situation of shared and collective life. As women suffer from menstruation, a long period of conception, difficulties with delivering babies and breast-feeding then during the first two years, they need men's protection, fewer responsibilities and more rights (Mutahhari 1980, 167). According to the Qur'ān, men and women are looked upon as two complementary members of both the family and society. In an interesting statement, the Qur'ān refers to the mutual protective roles of men and women. The Qur'ān states: "They (women) are an apparel for you (men) and you are an apparel for them." (Q. 2:187) This statement comes in the context of a discussion of lawful sexual intercourse when the family is established under the religious law. As clothes protect us from hot and cold weather and give us beauty, male and female play the same role in a marriage in protecting each other from deviant sexual intercourse. Based on this understanding neither the male nor the female is subordinate in a relationship. They each have a complementary role to play. The Islamic human rights' system for men and women derives from an Islamic view about the creation of humankind. In rejecting all types of dominant-subordinate relationships between men and women, the Qur'ān reveals: "O People! be careful of (your duty to) your Lord, Who

created you from a single being (Adam) and created its mate of the same (kind) and spread from these two, many men and women..."(Q. 4:1)

In similar verses, the Qur'ān explains that men and women, wives and husbands are created from the same, unique being (Q. 16:72, 30:21, 42:11, 39:6). This sameness necessitates the equality of both sexes inasmuch as it maintains their complementary roles. An oversimplified understanding of this view is to replace equality with similarity and sameness in rights and responsibilities. In his book, *Women's Rights System in Islam* (1980, 113-15), Mutahhari observes that since men and women are the same in creation they have to be treated equally but not similarly. An insistence on similarity in rights and responsibilities fails to take into account the natural endowments of both sexes. This opposition results in the disintegration of their respective roles.

Mutahhari continues by pointing out that, aside from undeniable differences, men and women are similar in many other respects. To support this idea, he quotes a part of the story of Adam and Eve in the Qur'ān and concludes that the two were similarly influenced by Satan. Despite many Muslim interpreters who argue that the dismissal of this couple from paradise was the result of Eve's more flexible emotions, Mutahhari maintains that the Qur'ān charges the couple with the same responsibility (Mutahhari 1980, 116). In Q. 7:20-22 it is revealed:

But the Satan made an evil suggestion to them (both) that he might make manifest to them (both) what had been hidden from them (both) of their evil inclinations, and he said: Your Lord has not forbidden for you (both) this tree except that you may not (both) become two angels or that you may (not) become of the immortals. And he swore to them (both): Most surely I am a sincere advisor to you. Then he caused them (both) to fall by deceit....

The repeated use of the specific Arabic pronoun (*humā*) in the three above-mentioned verses, provides a clue. This pronoun in Arabic is usually employed in a context where two persons are involved. It indicates that Satan in his entire approach, including his suggestion, mis-guidance and oath-swearing, dealt with the couple simultaneously. This shows that both were equally misguided and equally responsible for their dismissal from paradise. To sum up, we may conclude that men and women, according to the Qur'ānic point of view, are endowed with the same type of motivational system. What usually separates men and women can generally be traced back to cultural contexts or varying educational environments.

An important aspect of the equality of men and women in Islam is the equal value of their participation. In our value judgments we always assign a higher value to social activities which are conducted by men. It is, nonetheless, narrated that once in the time of the Prophet Muḥammad the Muslim women in Medina sent a representative to the Prophet in order to ask him questions as to whether he was only the Prophet of men or of both men and women. They had in mind the fact that the Prophet had mostly handled social and political activities through men. Men participate easily in such matters. The representative of these women talked to the Prophet while he was surrounded by his companions. She reminded him of the significance of their complementary roles in sacred activities, including holy war which was usually waged by men. The Prophet looked around at his companions and stated that he appreciated her points. Then he replied to the woman, emphasizing the fact that value is never assigned to men because of sex differences or the type of activities. The Prophet stressed that value is always assigned

where there is full participation, and that women are honored because of their complementary roles. If women did not cooperate, men would not be able to accomplish their tasks in a holy war (Mutahhari 1988, 93-4).

Interestingly, Tabataba'i observes that this story (and other cases where women are said to have appealed directly to the Prophet) reveals that women deserve the right to have direct contact even with the Islamic leader in order to protect their rights (Tabataba'i 1970, Vol. 4, 351).

#### **6.3.4. Islamic Womanology according to the Logic of Nature**

To understand the roots of the responsibilities and rights of men and women in Islam, we have to study them in light of the logic of human nature (in Arabic, *fiṭrah*) (Misbah 1990, 4). As Mutahhari maintains, the discussion of *fiṭrah* is revealed for the first time in the Qur'ān (1995, 19). *Fiṭrah* in its particular form, is the foundation of the Islamic humanology (Mutahhari 1995, 13). Terminologically, *fiṭrah* stands for the particular form of human creation.<sup>5</sup> This implies a certain set of potentialities in human beings, potentialities which belong either to cognitive, emotional or motivational aspects (Mutahhari 1995, 47). For instance, the Qur'ān reveals that human beings are created in such a way that they tend to know their creator or to submit themselves to God. The Prophet's instructions were indeed a divine response to the natural and in-born needs of human beings (Mutahhari 1995, 244). Unless outside elements such as parents, educational environments, and peer groups intervene, people tend to admit to the truth of divine religions. This submission is valid for the common outline that all such religions share (Mutahhari 1995, 19-21).

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<sup>5</sup> See Mutahhari 1995, 21. He quotes from Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Nihāyah*, vol. 3, 457.

Islamic laws, norms and regulations are compatible with human nature, Misbah argues. Human nature, as revealed in the Qur'ān, (30:30), is an unchangeable structure which distinguishes humankind from other species. An overview of all species reveals that they are created differently. Human rights and responsibilities find their real meaning within the logic of humankind's specific nature. Humanity, in all its variety, encompasses different aspects and complexities of life. A comprehensive discussion of men's and women's rights must take into consideration the study of biology, psychology, sociology and other related branches which touch on these aspects (Misbah 1990, 4). Since we lack sufficient enough knowledge of humanology in its various aspects, it is too soon to formulate final judgment regarding men's and women's rights.

As human beings are distinguished from other species by virtue of their unique nature, men and women are naturally endowed with unique characteristics of femininity and masculinity. The question is, however, given that both men and women enjoy similar human characteristics and values, how are they different from one another? Do these differences stem from their natural disparities or from cultural constructions? There is indeed heated controversy over which differences truly derive from the respective *fiṭrahs* (typical natures) of men and women. Nature usually represents physiological and psychological aspects of human personality. Some Muslim scholars argue that women are naturally more emotional and less intelligent (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 18, 90; vol. 4, 343. Misbah 1990, 8; Bahonar 1990, 33; Ma'rifat 1997, 49-50).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In his comparative discussion of women and politics, Mīhrizī (1997) provides evidence from those writers who have touched on the issue of women's ability to participate in the socio-political sphere from an Islamic point of view. This discussion reflects three positions: absolute rejection, absolute affirmation and a

Misbah alludes to other differences between men and women in terms of sex, nervous system, emotions and anatomical structure and brain function.<sup>7</sup> These differences he attributes to women's typical nature. This typical nature determines her abilities to fulfill certain roles and duties on a social level (Misbah 1990, 5 & 8).

Due to these perceived differences, some Muslim thinkers argue that women are exempt from certain social responsibilities which require a stronger intellect and less emotion. Dangerous and exhausting positions in the armed forces, legal decision making and political leadership are just some examples of these excluded responsibilities (Tabataba'i 1970, vol. 4, 343 & 347; Ma'rifat 1997, 52-3).<sup>8</sup> In addition to Qur'ānic verses (such as Q. 4:34 & 43:18), prophetic traditions<sup>9</sup> are provided as evidence for women's exclusion from rendering judgment in court and serving as political leader (Ma'rifat 1997, 49-51 & Mihrizi 1997, 168-9).<sup>10</sup>

Other Muslim thinkers argue that there is sufficient evidence to prove the legitimacy of women's participation in socio-political activities. The Qur'ānic story of

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moderate approach. All sides provide references from the Qur'ān, the traditions and the consensus of Muslim thinkers.

<sup>7</sup> Anatomical differences between the male and female brains in humans have been identified in the area of the hypothalamus, which influences sex differences in reproductive function. Differences in cortical region account for sex differences in cognition (Golombok & Fivush 1995, 50, who quote from recent research on anatomical gender differences).

<sup>8</sup> In his jurisprudential discussion, Ma'rifat provides evidence from the Qur'ān, the tradition of the Prophet and imāms, and the consensus of the Shī'ī thinkers from Ṭūsī (d. 1067/460) up to the recent era. He examines the legal aspects of the capability of women for exercising judgment and political leadership from a Shī'ī legal point of view (Ma'rifat 1997).

<sup>9</sup> It is narrated, for instance, that the Prophet Muḥammad said: "Never will be prospered those who choose a woman to rule over them." See Mihrizi 1997, 169 & Ma'rifat 1997, 51. This remark was probably made by the Prophet Muḥammad in reference to the example of Pūrāndukht (the Iranian princess) who succeeded Khusrow Parviz the king of the old Persian empire (Ma'rifat 1997, 51). See also Majlisī, *Bihār al-Anwār* (Noor software), vol. 15, p. 212, *rawāyah*: 26.

<sup>10</sup> In quoting these traditions, Mihrizi refers to both Shī'ī and Sunni historical and traditional references while Ma'rifat quotes only from Sunni references (Ma'rifat 1997, 51 & 54 & Mihrizi 1997, 168 & 180).

Bilqīs,<sup>11</sup> the queen of Sabā,<sup>12</sup> which contains not a hint of disagreement, is considered a good indicator of divine acceptance of women's suitability for political leadership. The Qur'ān portrays this queen as a consulting (Q. 27:32), thoughtful and peace-seeking (Q. 27:33-5) and truth-seeking (Q. 27:44) leader on the occasion of her receiving a letter from Sulaymān, the prophet of her time (Mihriẓī 1997, 173-4).<sup>13</sup> This letter was addressed to her since she and her people worshipped the sun as a mediating god to the highest God (Q. 27:24 see also Tabataba'i 1970, vol., 15, 358). Some other scholars also argue that the form and nature of the political system in the present day is completely different from the individual tyrannical dictatorship of the past.<sup>14</sup> Both men and women in present democratic political systems play only the role of consultants. Real sovereignty lies in a ruling committee, not in individuals.<sup>15</sup> Women are furthermore better qualified to take on positions of political leadership, Mutahhari maintains (Mihriẓī 1997, 171-2).

Women's *bay'ah* (allegiance)<sup>16</sup> to the Prophet Muḥammad (Q. 60:12) and afterwards with Imām 'Alī after the Prophet, their immigration<sup>17</sup> as a political statement

<sup>11</sup> This story is explained by Tabataba'i in his *al-Mizān* as one of the examples which revealed the divine power of the Prophet Sulaymān in respect to the invitation of the princess Bilqīs to join his divine religion (Tabataba'i 1970, (Noor software), vol. 15, 355-66).

<sup>12</sup> Tabataba'i maintains that the city of Sabā was one of the most important cities of old Yemen, probably its capital. See Tabataba'i 1970, (Noor software), vol. 15, 355.

<sup>13</sup> Opposing a woman's right to occupy positions of civil responsibility, from an Islamic point of view, Tabataba'i maintains that one never find even a single case in which the Prophet Muḥammad chose a woman to render a court judgment, fill a military post on his campaigns or assume socio-political leadership (Tabataba'i 1970, (Noor software), vol., 4, 347).

<sup>14</sup> Mihriẓī quotes this argument from Mutahhari to show how he was opposed to interpretation of such exclusionary tradition in such a way as to keep women out of socio-political positions (Mihriẓī 1997, 171 quotes from Mutahhari, 1371s/1992, *Majallah-i Payām-i Zan* (*The Journal of Women's Message*), 1st year, no. 6, 17).

<sup>15</sup> Mihriẓī (1997, 172) quotes this argument from M.R. 'Uthmānī, 1409/1988, *Majallah al-Baḥth al-islāmī*, no., 3, vol., 34.

<sup>16</sup> Mihriẓī gives references to M.A. Quṭb's: *Bay'at al-Nisā'* and Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt*, vol., 8, pp. 5 & 222 for further information about women's allegiance to the Prophet Muḥammad (1997, 182).



against the oppressing conditions of the time when Islam emerged, their participation in the Prophet's campaigns (as nurses and health-care workers), and eventually the active participation of the pious and honored women of Islam such as Fāṭimah (the daughter of the Prophet), Umm-i Salamah (one of the Prophet Muḥammad's wives), and Zaynab (the daughter of Imām ʿAlī) in the socio-political events of their times provide further evidence of the legitimacy of women's involvement in the socio-political domains (Mihri 1997, 174).

In addition to these two opposing groups, some Muslim scholars take a middle way (Mihri attributes this idea to the Egyptian group known as the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn; see 1997, 174). They distinguish between women's legitimacy as candidates for political office such as the presidency and as candidates for other socio-political activities. They would deny only the former. This attitude is the accepted policy in the post-revolutionary Iranian constitution (article 115).

Yet the unsolved question is: How can one relate these legal discussions to the deeper dialogue revolving the natural differences between men and women. A comprehensive review of the literature regarding differences in terms of the physiological and psychological aspects of gender falls beyond this project. It is an argument that requires independent and narrowly defined studies. I have, nonetheless, consulted a few of them.

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<sup>17</sup> In the first years following the emergence of Islam in the Arabian peninsula the situation was so difficult that many new Muslims had to leave their homeland to take refuge elsewhere. The migrations to Ḥabashah (Ethiopia) and to Medina were two of the more important examples. Women like men migrated to other cities to be able to keep and practice their faith. Women's migration is mentioned in the Qur'an (60:10) as a faithful movement (Mihri 1997, 174).

Theories of human behavior concerning the natural gender differences go back to the theories of Charles Darwin who believed that “man is more courageous, pugnacious and energetic than woman and has more inventive genius” (Karlekar 1988, 147 quoting Warren, 1980, 104). Havelock Ellis’s (1859-1939) findings are the next commonly accepted. To him women are different from men in terms of conserving or consuming energy. He further maintained that women are more responsive to psychic stimuli, as well as more susceptible to neurosis. According to Ellis, biological differences between men and women lead to substantial variations in behavior and responses to situations (Karlekar 1988, 147 quotes from Warren, 1980, 132-4).

I argue that it is too difficult to determine which categories of differences between men and women stem from their varying built-in typical natures and which ones derive from socialization and socio-cultural elements or from a kind of predisposition (Strongman 1987, 224). Moreover, when one argues that women are emotionally more sensitive than men, the next step is to verify particular dimensions of emotion. Investigators have observed that emotionality is a multidimensional construct. The phenomenal experience of emotion may be expressed through verbal and nonverbal (behavioral) measures. The physiological reactions of males and females to emotional situations is another aspect of this (LaFrance & Banaji 1992, 179-80).

In a study on men’s and women’s responses to affect-laden materials it was observed that while adult females were more facially expressive and showed significantly less autonomic arousal, adult males expressed little facially but conveyed more

physiologically.<sup>18</sup> The major result was that men's suppression of external display (e.g., facial expressions) cause enhanced internal reactivity. Men accordingly show more physiological coincidents of emotion than do women. These two scholars concluded that when one focuses on experiential facet of emotion which is expressed through self-report measures, women appear to be more emotional if they are asked directly, if they are observed by other observers, and if they are reacting against others (interpersonal reactions). It is not, however, evident whether differences in overt expressivity reflect differences in fundamental emotionality (LaFrance & Banaji 1992 194-6).

Another study also demonstrated that women are emotionally more sensitive to other people's emotions than men. They tend to pay more attention to others' emotions and are more affected by them than men (Strongman 1987, 224). This study likewise showed that men and women are affected differently in emotion-evoking situations. Males primarily react through physiological responses but females respond through verbal/cognitive methods (1987, 225). In their studies: "Gender, Coping and Psychosomatic Symptoms," Vingerhoets and Van-Heck (1990) explored why men were more inclined to problem-focused coping, looking at the bright side of life, talking problems down. Women, on the other hand, preferred emotion-focused coping, seeking social support, expressing their emotions and self-blame. Their findings supported results in earlier studies and showed the consistency of some gender differences in emotion-focusing coping and seeking social support (Vingerhoets and Van-Heck 1990). It is also reported that a gender difference exists in terms of sympathy and personal distress. In

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<sup>18</sup> The authors quote from Buck R. et al., 1974.

their facial and self-report indexes of emotion females indicated greater responsivity. This gender differences appeared to increase with age (Eisenberg et al. 1989). Another study which examined the gender differences in some psychoanalytical states such as narcissism and depression revealed that males were more inclined to the former and females more prone to the latter (Wright et al. 1989).

Findings of another study which investigated gender differences in adjustment reactions in relation to interparental conflict indicated that the frequency of interparental conflict was the most important predictor of depression, externalizing behavior problems and negative views toward marriage on the part of women. Investigators did not find any significant relationship between these variables in men (Hanson, et al. 1992).

Despite these reported gender differences in various dimensions of emotionality, some scholars are still doubtful as to what constitutes the determining element. Some investigators insist that emotional differences derive from socio-cultural learning ((LaFrance & Banaji 1992, 196). To some scholars these differences might be the result of the degree to which men and women are stereotyped or socialized in terms of gender (Strongman 1987, 225). Scholars, therefore, argue that it is not difficult to identify where differences exist; what is crucial is understanding why they exist (Fennema 1984, 138).

In addition to the extensive literature that exists regarding the gender differences in emotional expression, there is another intense debate concerning gender differences in terms of intelligence and cognitive capabilities. The debate has shifted from structural and autonomical approaches to a functional approach. Scholars want to know the different functions and behaviors of men and women and actual reasons behind them.

This domain also incorporates various aspects and is associated with an independent literature. Access, choice, opportunity and achievement for men and women in mathematics and science are controversial issues of gender differences in intelligence and cognition. It is claimed that science, technology, and engineering education are areas in which inequality exists between males and females (Karlekar 1988, 156). The achievement differences in these domains must be evaluated based on this initial difference.

A study done in 1978 in California secondary schools to evaluate gender differences in math achievement came up with the conclusion that “girls scored higher in computational or lower cognitive levels tasks while boys tended to score higher on higher cognitive level tasks.” A similar survey was conducted internationally by the International Association for the Evaluation of Academic Achievement (IEA) and it concluded that a higher performance by boys over girls was found to be persistent internationally. The superiority of boys over girls at the 14-year-old and Grade 12 levels has been persistent since 1970 (Fagerlind & Saha 1995, 175).

The main conclusion, however, reached by those who have reviewed these studies is that differences in both selection and achievement are very school specific (Fennema 1984, 141). To gain a comprehensive understanding of the sex-related differences in mathematics and science, one has to be aware of the variables involved. In addition to the factor of cognitive acquisition ability in mathematics among females, there is the significant impact of attitudes or affective beliefs held by females themselves, their parents, male peers and educators regarding how well and to what extent they are capable

of learning mathematics. The implication is that cognitive and affective components must be studied in the social matrix (Fennema 1984, 142).

Variables such as the opportunity to learn, the support system (encouragement and actual assistance) for learning and the absence of appropriate role models are among the reasons given for gender differences in academic achievement (Fagerlind & Saha 1995, 176). It is also crucial to realize the impact that affective variables such as feelings, beliefs and attitudes of self-confidence have in learning math, and on perceptions of its usefulness.

Affective variables, unlike cognitive ones, are difficult to define, measure and understand. No one knows why most females report more anxiety and develop less confidence in math than males do (Fennema 1984, 148-9). Both internal (cognitive ability) and external factors along with the individual's effort are involved. Here, as in the case of emotion, society's stereotyping of math as a male domain is a partial cause (Fennema 1984, 150-52). The class environment may create a process of social interaction among male and female students and also between students and teachers to motivate students to become autonomous or dependent learners. While we see a better performance of males in more difficult and complex tasks we can hardly attribute the difference to one specific cause. Affective variables, classroom environment, schools' concern about enrollment and achievement are elements which should be considered along with individual ability (Fennema 1984, 160-1).

Although there is no doubt about the fundamental biological differences between women and men, there is controversy over whether these differences are related to some

metabolic differences that influence other behaviors and abilities (Fagerlind & Saha 1995, 168). Therefore, the ways in which biological differences between women and men are seen and evaluated do determine their roles in society.

Therefore, although a combination of natural and socio-cultural elements can explain the gender differences in cognition and emotion, one can hardly distinguish the borderlines. The ambiguity is more crucial if we note that many of the hypotheses and even theories about natural differences have been questioned or disproved in the late twentieth century (Karlekar 1988, 162). Recent studies have showed that gender-related characteristics are multidimensional in nature (Golombok & Fivush 1995, 8). Socio-cultural stereotypes, formal education and informal processes of socialization all definitely intervene in their formation. Sometimes the cultural matrix celebrates certain qualities and denigrates others. Some roles or spheres of knowledge are introduced as male-fitted domains. It is interesting to note that a British investigator in the mid-seventies worked out that if entry to engineering programs depended on special ability alone, then the ratio of women to men would have been 2:3. In actual fact it was more like 1:100 (Griffith and Saraga 1979).

Job selection may rely on social and cultural expectations and patriarchal labor division. Our definition of femininity is another factor. In an ideology where femininity is identical with non-assertiveness, obedience and submission, females will be directed to options that maintain that ideology (Karlekar 1988, 157-8). It is also crucial to be aware of the difference in masculinity-femininity scales of children and adults. While in the latter the focus is usually on personality traits, in children attention is paid to some

indicators of sex stereotyping such as toys, games and activities (Golombok & Fivush 1995, 9). Despite the explicit impact of socio-cultural elements, one must note that biology plays an important role in how cultures come to define gender.

In Islamic womanology, views and regulations which are derived from the Qur'ān and authentic traditions are claimed to be consistent with the typical nature of women. The reason is that this picture is provided by God, the Creator, who has the most precise and comprehensive knowledge about His creatures. An important parameter in Islamic womanology is the decisive impact of moral values. The Islamic moral system like an umbrella which encompasses the entire legal system, not only in gender issues but also in all other legal subsystems. It is understandable, therefore, that some attitudes, social roles or labor divisions, which are considered as the normal or necessary rights of women in other cultures, are challenged in Islam. This is partly due to the contradiction of some gender codes with the Islamic values of motherhood, wifedom, family values, Islamic modesty (*ʿiffat*) and the Islamic dress-code. Islamic methods of gender development, I believe, necessitate a solution which combines womanhood with Islamic values and moral codes.

The remaining factor is the impact of the process of *ijtihād*<sup>19</sup> (interpreting and applying God's rules) as a tool for uncovering the message of the traditional Islamic sources. The most trustworthy source of information and knowledge in the area of women's rights and roles in Islam is the holy Qur'ān. Rafsanjānī observes that to approach this source we have to keep in mind certain parameters. Since the Qur'ān,

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<sup>19</sup> An explanation of this term and its function is provided in the literature review, chapter. 1.



according to Muslims, is the word of God, its norms in any domain are the most inclusive. This is because it was revealed from God and hence contains absolute and comprehensive knowledge. Secondly, we must be aware that according to the Qur'ānic point of view men's and women's rights are related to their obligations and responsibilities. In an Islamic society women deserve a balanced level of domestic and social rights which is compatible with their responsibilities. Here, *ijtihād* (expertise in finding answers in the Islamic sources to newly emerging problems) plays a decisive role. It is not easy to understand the correlation between rights and obligations. A dynamic exercise of *ijtihād*<sup>20</sup> can help Muslim scholars extract the Islamic norms from major sources.

Thirdly, he points out, we must note that cultural and local customs are always mixed with pure Islamic standards. It is vital to distinguish between revealed laws and man-made customs. To help Muslim women obtain their just position in society, it will be necessary to change the customs and culturally created norms and rights. The changing conditions of every era demand that we change unfair and incompatible norms (Rafsanjānī 1996, 4). More challenging, in my view, is the task of interpreting the revealed law. Complexities appear when Muslim scholars try to refer the changing and demanding conditions of daily life to a correct understanding of revealed laws. To ensure the Islamic-ness of women's rights (such as the right to socio-political participation, rights within the family and marriage contract, the right to an education, and so on) the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes that all women's rights should correspond with the

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<sup>20</sup> The exercise of *ijtihād* in this crucial domain requires both a comprehensive knowledge of Islam and an

Islamic standards (Article 21). This is the responsibility of a group of Muslim scholars in the Iranian Assembly of Guardians (*shuvrāy-i nigahbān*).

#### **6.4. Women & Educational Development**

##### **6.4.1. Equal Accessibility to Education**

As in many other countries, in Iran female students have not enjoyed the same level of accessibility to education that men have. This has created a gap between the two sexes in terms of job opportunities. According to the Constitution of the Islamic Republic, the Islamic state is responsible for providing free education to all citizens up to the secondary level (Article 30). The Islamic state has attempted to provide this opportunity to both sexes. However, equal accessibility can bear two different meanings. Sometimes it means vertical access to the different levels of education, starting from basic literacy up to higher education. The other meaning is the horizontal availability of various domains of education.

There is no doubt that in an equal context both male and female must have vertical access to all levels of education. Equality in different domains is, however, not perceived as necessarily a good thing in post-revolutionary Iran. Based on the idea of complementary role playing, girls and boys are directed or guided towards different domains. This happens when students enter at the first period of secondary education level (called the guidance cycle level). At this age students decide upon their future careers. Besides the similar curriculum in many areas, the Ministry of Education provides different sets of professional textbooks for males and females. Females are encouraged to

study tailoring, textile making, knitting, cooking and nutrition,<sup>21</sup> nursing and teaching skills. Males are directed to other fields and professions.

At a higher level, the non-vocational schools follow the KAD project which was introduced in 1982. KAD stands for the policy of combining work (K:*kār*) with knowledge (D:*dānīsh*). Students at the secondary level leave their schools one day a week to gain experience in different fields. They are supervised by the educational authorities while they get a taste for various professions and decide upon their future careers. This policy links theoretical knowledge with practical. Males and females find themselves in different contexts, given that the Ministry of Education segregates males and females in accordance with Islamic culture and values. Females accordingly are encouraged to join fields involving health-care, nutrition, child-rearing, cooking, sewing, knitting and handicrafts. They are prepared to perform the role of family manager as wives or mothers (Mehran 1991, 45-6). This being said, it should also be pointed out that the policy is no more than an encouragement to prepare boys and girls for their future. If a girl is interested in pursuing math, or the physical sciences, or shows that she is accomplished in other branches of knowledge, there are no obstacles in her path. A decisive point, nonetheless, is that students, both male and female have to indicate a high level of capability in the midst of intense competition among millions of students.

This, however, does not imply that women should only be involved in domestic activities. All female-related professions and skills are opportunities that women can pursue to the highest level. As long as Islamic society suffers from lack of expertise in

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<sup>21</sup> See e.g., *Shinākh-i Ĥirfih va Fann: Dukhtarān (Professional Textbook for Girls)* guidance cycle level,

female-related domains, women are encouraged to fill these gaps. Some areas like obstetrics-gynecology are entirely closed to men because of its implications for Islamic values. As I will explain, Islam is particularly concerned to prevent men and women from touching or even observing one another's private parts outside of the bands of marriage. This limitation is based upon Qur'ānic teaching and is reflected in Iranian legislation (for a detailed explanation see Mutahhari 1990, 121-25, 181-2, 244).

#### **6.4.2. Explicit Female Participation in the Literacy Campaign**

Post-revolutionary Iran found itself confronted with a situation where the majority of women were illiterate. The 1976 statistics from the pre-revolutionary regime indicate that only 35.5 percent of females above the age of six had the basic ability to read and write. The situation was more crucial among women in rural areas who were three times as likely to be illiterate as women in urban areas. This literacy figure had risen by 1986 to 52 percent. Again rural women, although they had moved up from 17.3 to 36.3, were still behind women in urban areas (Mehran 1991, 46 quotes from Iran's statistical yearbook).

An important message from all figures in the literacy movement is that female participation is explicitly higher than the male's. The literacy development policy of the first national development plan was concurrent with the onset of the International Literacy Decade and created a promising situation for women. It is worth mentioning that not only students but instructors in the literacy movement have more often been female than male. This fact is first of all due to the higher illiteracy rate among women. Instructors have also been, for the most part, women, since the students are mainly women and the state encourages women to teach women.

The general conclusion when we compare pre- and post-revolutionary Iran is that illiterate women are provided a better opportunity to enjoy educational advancement at the basic level. One must, nonetheless, note that this basic educational opportunity is mostly for those women who, for any reason, have not had a chance to pursue an education at any level. Young girls are directed into the formal educational system. These educational attainments then disprove claims that the Islamic government reject any form of education for women (Mehran 1991, 47-8). This, of course, does not mean that the educational development of women should be restricted to the eradication of illiteracy at the basic level. Further steps are needed to facilitate women's educational opportunities at higher levels.

#### **6.4.3. Women in Higher Education**

Women do attend school at higher levels, sit for university entrance exams and follow post-graduate programs. They are mostly encouraged to enter branches of study that will lead to female-related professions. This is because of the ideological emphasis in Iran that women should be able to supply the required expertise in female-related domains. Rafsanjānī alludes to the necessity of women receiving education at higher levels when he says: "In the universities we have a shortage of women professors. In medicine we need women specialists" (*Iran Times*, March 28, 1986, 5). Due to the shortage of female medical personnel, female students have been more encouraged to study medicine. As Mehran reports, medicine and health-related sciences have become the first choice for female university students during the 1988-89 academic year (Mehran 1991, 50 quoting from Iran's statistical yearbook for 1988-89). This trend continued until

1991. Female enrollment in the social sciences exceeded that of medicine from 1991 onwards but these two fields as well as the basic science have remained the priority for female students during recent years (IRPHE 1995).

It should be noted also that an Islamic studies institute for women, *Jāmi'at al-Zahrā'* (the University of al-Zahrā') was established in post-revolutionary Iran which provides undergraduate and graduate levels of Islamic studies. This institution is located in Qum where traditionally only men have studied Islam. Female education in this area, when there was any, was traditionally private or limited to a small extent. This is in addition to female enrollment in theological schools in the universities. The, *Jāmi'at al-Zahrā'* is under the supervision of the Elmīyah Seminary of Qum<sup>22</sup>.

There is another entirely female university, namely al-Zahrā University<sup>23</sup> which was established in Tehran in 1964. It began as a private institution called the Iran Girl's College. Later it was renamed Farah Pahlavi University in 1975. Finally, in 1981, it was again renamed and reconstituted in its present form. This university includes four colleges<sup>24</sup> which offer associate diplomas and bachelor's degrees (both B.A and B.S.C) and master's degree in twenty fields of study (HEA 1994, 26 & 1997, 25). During the 1991-92 academic year this university included 4593 female students, and 362 instructors of whom 187 were female (HEA 1994, 37). There is also another institute for higher

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<sup>22</sup> This seminary is independent from the formal educational system, which is sponsored and supervised by the state.

<sup>23</sup> Despite the similar name, this educational center is different from the one located in Qum and provides only syllabus related to Islamic studies.

<sup>24</sup> These four faculties are as follows: college of sciences; college of theology, literature and humanities; college of social sciences and economics and college of arts.

education known as Women's Graduate School of Basic Sciences. This institution is not affiliated to any university but offers an MA program under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education. Several female students are studying in this institution (HEA 1997, 49). It is worth mentioning that in most other universities and colleges the students are both male and female.

The following table and charts illustrate, respectively the growth rate of the male and female students and teaching staff from a comparative perspective. Table 1 portrays the growth rate from 1974-75 to 1994-95. It also gives data about the male-female ratio of educational staff. Figures reveal that except for the academic year of 1982-83 (a turning point), which shows an explicit decline in university entrance and graduation for both males and females, the following years witnessed a growth. The post-revolutionary cultural revolution, which led to the closure of all universities, was the major cause of this decline. The same rate of decline can be seen in the numbers of educational staff. The current trend is, however, promising.

Clearly the wide gap between males and females has carried over from the pre-revolutionary period. By the time of the Islamic Revolution in 1979-80, this gap between male and female students was more than double. A much deeper gap existed between male and female teaching staff. Although almost the same gap remained in 1994-95, both groups had achieved a proportional development. Each sex has enjoyed growth in comparison with its previous numbers. And while obviously the only fair situation is for both males and females to participate equally, the fact remains that, due to their cultural background there are fewer female applicants for higher education.

Perhaps one reason for this situation is that since the responsibility for supporting the family is often a male-laden issue, the motivation to pursue higher education is stronger among male students. The above-mentioned gap will probably continue to exist unless both male and female students feel the same responsibility while having the same access to higher education opportunities. The rate of growth among male and female students in the last year of the table is, comparatively speaking, significant. A similar explanation may explain the wide gap between males and females among teaching staff. Since female teaching staff are usually among those who graduate from higher institutes, the gender gap is more explicit. The reason is that the previous gap among male and female students will become deeper when the two sex are graduated.

Different obstacles likewise interrupt the completion of higher education. Chart 1 reveals the growth rate of the student population during recent years (1988-95). The second chart portrays the growth rate among teaching staff comparing males and females occupying teaching positions. The gap between male and female staff is deeper in this chart, perhaps for the same reason mentioned above. Despite the existing gap, the trend is promising. I should, nonetheless, maintain that the following data only reflect figures from government-sponsored higher education institutions operated by either the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education (MCHE) or the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MHME). There are however other higher education institutes established by the private sector or other government agencies supervised by MCHE which include male and female populations. In addition to the above-mentioned higher education sectors, Dānishgāh-i Āzād-i Islāmī (the Islamic Open University) which was established and is

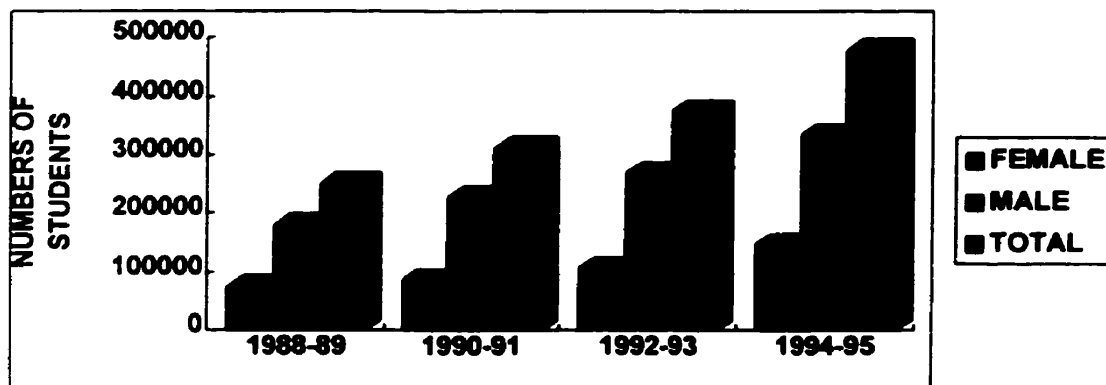


administered by the private sector with partial supervision from MCHE comprises another enormous institution of higher education. It has more than 100 branches all over the country and boasts on enrollment of about half a million male and female students (HEA 1997, 15, 21).

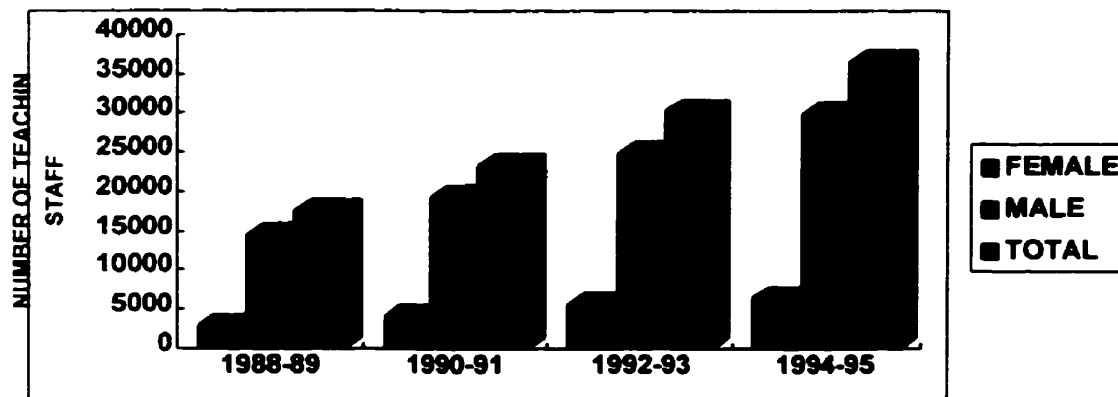
**Table 1.** Distribution of the university students and teaching staff based on gender from 1974-75 to 1994-95.

YEAR	STUDENTS			TEACHING STAFF		
	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
1974-75	38634	96720	135354	1682	10628	12310
1975-76	42789	109116	151905	1831	11661	13492
1976-77	46019	108196	154215	2058	11894	13952
1977-78	49510	110798	160308	2372	13081	15453
1978-79	54248	121427	175675	2214	14008	16222
1979-80	53571	120646	174217	2455	14422	16877
1982-83	36356	80792	117148	1424	7618	9042
1983-84	38643	82405	121048	1822	9672	11494
1984-85	45216	100593	145809	2141	11557	13698
1985-86	45402	106093	151495	2281	12409	14690
1986-87	49085	118886	167971	2293	12048	14341
1987-88	58929	145933	204862	2654	13926	15950
1988-89	71822	178887	250709	2937	14510	17447
1989-90	78573	202819	281392	3493	16918	20411
1990-91	85325	226751	312076	4050	19326	23376
1991-92	96969	247076	344045	4285	20923	25208
1992-93	105667	269067	374734	5539	24723	30262
1993-94	124350	312214	436564	5800	27137	32934
1994-95	145353	333102	478455	6490	29876	36366

(HEA 1994, 45 & 1997, 53)

**CHART 1. DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY GENDER**

(HEA 1997, 54)

**CHART 2. DISTRIBUTION OF TEACHING STAFF BY GENDER**

(HEA 1994, 45 &amp; 1997, 53 )

#### **6.4.4. Women's Social and Academic Status**

To give an idea of women's participation in the development process and assist in evaluating the emerging possibilities for women in post-revolutionary Iran, it helps to keep in mind some of the most recent statistical data. According to official statistics, 30 percent of government positions at various levels are presently occupied by women. Of these, 70 percent are to be found in the Ministry of Education, a further 11 percent in the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and the rest in other ministries. It is reported that 30 percent of the human resources engaged in the agricultural sector are women. More than 17 percent of university professors are female, of whom 35 percent teach in the medical field and a further 20 percent in other universities. According to a 1996 report by A. Marandī, Minister of Health and Medical Education, 35 percent of assistant professors, 28 percent of the scientific staff in the medical universities and more than 30 percent of those who run the Ministry of Health and Medical Education are women. Almost half of the students in the medical sciences are female.

In other areas of society women are finding more rooms for participation. There are presently 250 female lawyers, 100 women employees in the Ministry of Foreign affairs and 10 representatives in the Islamic Parliament. Compared to what should be the case, these figures are still not meaningful. Yet they promise a hopeful transition from an unsatisfactory situation to an improved and just one. In our analysis of the statistics of any country we have to consider the whole process of social transition under the impact of developmental, cultural and values elements. Although a third of the female population of Iran is still illiterate, there has been an improvement in literacy in comparison to the pre-revolutionary era. To see the difference, one must be aware that the gap between

literate men and women before the Revolution was 23% a figure which has decreased to 11% ( Electronic Hamshahri 1996/1375, No. 1119).

A review of the above-mentioned figures reveals that although there is still a considerable gap between men and women in terms of their access to employment opportunities in government, the development policies have been promising. One has to keep in mind that these policies are strongly influenced by Islamic values. The priority is given to those sections, such as education and medicine, which do not have sufficient numbers in terms of female expertise. Since the country suffers from a shortage of female-related skills, women are encouraged to fill those gaps. However, I assume that there is no barrier preventing women from pursuing other social, political and scientific goals provided they have the qualifications to do so. It is also important to know that the private and non-governmental sectors also employ a large proportion of the female work-force.

### ***6.5. Women & Values Education***

While my focus in this section is primarily on women, it must be remembered that it is not they alone who have the responsibility to inculcate values in the population. Both men and women are faced with the task of values education throughout their lives. However, a multifaceted discussion of values education falls beyond the scope of this section. What I am particularly concerned with is the impact that it has on women. I will touch briefly upon values education in order to show the importance of sexuality education as an aspect of values education. Sexuality education is again a male-female realm which incorporates intense debate over true-false, comprehensive-non-

comprehensive and directive-indirective approaches in sex/values-education. To see the specificity of the Islamic perspective, I will attempt to approach it in comparison with the Western perspective. One point, however, must be made here. The Western approach includes a wide range of schools of thought both in Europe and North America. In focusing on the latter, I will concentrate on aspects which distinguish this approach from the Islamic viewpoint. This approach is in many respects a postmodern critique.

I would like to begin with what R. W. Morris states about the overwhelming impact of values in education:

There is no area of deliberate human behavior that lacks a moral dimension. The value questions are everywhere - in politics, in sex, in business, in the rearing of children, and in the realm of what one owes to one's self. (Morris 1994, xv, quotes from D. Maguire 1978, xv)

To emphasize this fact, I also quote Theodore Roosevelt: "To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society" (Lickona 1993, 6, quotes from Theodore Roosevelt). In the West, the denial or negligence of values and the separation of the latter from the acquisition of facts has been, as Lickona argues, a result of logical positivism in the 20th century. Logical positivism considers values to be a mere expression of feelings. For him, intellectual forces like the evolutionary theory of Darwinism which sees all things, including morality, as being in flux undermine the moral values. This has resulted in a growing relativism and subjectivization of morality. The personalism of the 1960s has also delegitimized moral authority, eroded belief in objective moral norms, and weakened social commitment. Pluralism and secularization of the public arena have prevented schools from encouraging students to achieve moral consensus (Lickona 1993, 6). It is obvious to us today that education is more than a mere

exchange of information; it is, in fact, a value-laden process. Value-neutrality is neither possible nor desirable. If we follow the thesis that says values are personal and subjective, we will be led to a confusing relativity (Morris 1994, xvi-xvii).

First of all we need to have an understanding of the term “values” in general and particularly in the realm of sexuality education. The term “values”, as Morris observes, refers to moral values (Morris 1994, xix). Yet it is unclear what is meant by moral values. A useful definition is offered by Daniel Maguire who argues that “moral”, “means human in the ought or normative sense” (Morris 1994, xix, quotes from Maguire 1978, 114). Moral educationists maintain that moral values function at a deeper level than attitudes, in that they influence us ontologically. Moral values reflect “What one will be, instead of merely what one will have” (Morris 1994, xix, quotes from Maguire 1978, 94). They do direct and give meaning to human action (Morris 1994, xix, quotes from Desaulniers 1982). They do create the feelings of responsibility and care. They prevent human beings from wandering or remaining neutral. Moral values influence our intentions and the goals we choose to aim at.

We have also to be aware of the gap between proclaimed values and values embodied in the hidden curriculum. The possible difference between what schools intend to teach and what students actually learn because they are imposed on the whole school environment is worth examining. I would replace the term “hidden curriculum” with that of “hidden education,” and observe that the impact of value-laden elements is not restricted to the school environment. Although schools reflect and embody the values of society, society on a wider level and in various aspects influences individuals. Scholars

argue that “values are taught everywhere, learning occurs every moment of the day, the potential for healing is present everywhere people touch each others lives” (Oldfield 1994, 223).

Despite the above-mentioned passages regarding the decisive impact of values education, the issue is open to a diversity of interpretation. The concept of values, the determining element or elements in values education, and the method that the schools or the society employ in order to help students understand and internalize values have led to the formation of various approaches in values education. Lawrence Kohlberg’s theory of moral development (along with its revised versions), values clarification, liberal values and liberal education, character education, and the post-modern approach in values education are major new perspectives. Some of the older studies provide different lists. Douglas Superka and his colleagues, for instance, provide a typology in values education which includes inculcation theory, moral development, analysis, action learning and clarification approaches. She again leaves room for anticipated new approaches (Superka et al. 1975). This variation indicates the hardship of providing even an inclusive list of different approaches in values education. I however stress that the Islamic approach is closest to the ideals of character education. I assume that if we were to search for a religious and ideological element at the core of values education, it would be an Islamic approach.

Nonetheless it is crucial to know what type of character we have in mind to develop, and how to go about it. Character contains three parts: knowing, feeling and behavior (Lickona 1993, 10). We must have an adequate theory of what good character is.



This character should encompass the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of morality. Controversies emerge at this point. Each school of thought provides evidence for the effectiveness of its own tenets.

A very hot debate in values education is that of whether moral education is religious. There has been a dichotomy since the early of the 20th century between religious and moral education. The twentieth century is the century of the replacement of religious education with moral education, a sign of the prevailing distrust of religion. The idea is rooted in the philosophical background of the seventeenth century. The rise of secular morality was embraced by scholars such as Emile Durkheim, and insistence on a purely rationalistic education was advanced also by Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg (Moran 1989, 167-68). Moran however raises an objection to this trend:

Moral education's attempt to cut all ties with all religion is suicidal. It cuts itself off from most of the practical side of morality, leaving moral education to be the ethical discussion of hypothetical dilemmas or the clarifying subjective viewpoints. (Moran 1989, 189)

I am doubtful whether except through revealed instruction and prophetic teachings, we can reach common moral principles acceptable to all people with distinctive personal and cultural backgrounds. The reason for this is that despite the apparent diversity of God's prophets they all called for adherence to the same moral values. Although reason can contribute to the elaboration of common revealed moral teachings, its independent use could lead to moral subjectivity and practical relativity.

Having provided a general portrait of values education, I now switch to the topic of sexuality education. Sexuality education is a realm in which both males and females are involved. Values in sexuality education create another point of departure. Ideals or

standards of goodness or rightness in sexuality, references in evaluation, decision-making or action are identical with sexual-moral-values. My concern is to explain the Islamic approach in sexuality education.

#### **6.5.1. Women & Sexuality Education**

Astonished by the alarming statistics about sexual disfunctionality, Western educationists have been paying increasing attention to sexuality education. This astonishment has been reinforced by the recorded explosion in the number of sexually transmitted diseases. These facts explain why Islamic sexuality education focuses on various constraining and protecting strategies.

Sexuality education is an area where value systems inevitably clash. Unlike those scholars who follow a positivistic and merely scientific paradigm<sup>25</sup>(see Morris 1994, 7-8 quotes from Karmel 1970, 95) and view it as a value-free domain, I argue that it is value-laden. To support this idea I quote a passage from a description of the sexuality education program of the Ministry of Education in Quebec: “because it is linked with the person and with human behavior, because it is the subject of a moral position in every society, because it holds the attention of all religions, sex education may not be given without reference to values” (Morris 1994, 9).

As in values education, sexuality education is a battleground of conflicting models and perspectives. Scholars have debated the methods and content of this area of instruction. It is their concern to verify the roles, attitudes, values and behavior that

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<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that proponents of the idea that sexuality education should remain value-free were active in the North American context during sixties and early seventies. Louis Karmel was a prominent figure in this period (see Morris 1994, 7-8).

should be taught in sexuality education. Religious, scientific culture (Morris 1994, 3-7), chastity education (abstinence, no buts),<sup>26</sup> comprehensive sex education and “abstinence, but” model,<sup>27</sup> are a few examples of the approaches taken in European and North American. These perspectives, I believe, are ultimately influenced by the accepted attitudes in values education. A review of the major approaches mentioned in the previous section<sup>28</sup> will help us to understand the orientations that have motivated educationists to propose a distinctive approach to sexuality education.

Advocates of the chastity model in sexual education observe that unless society provides a sex education to help the younger generation acquire self-control and apply core ethical values, sexual problems will remain unsolved. These two bases are the fundamental elements of a model which opposes a comprehensive and abstinence sex education approach (Lickona 1993, 84). The same advocates argue that one of the best ways to avoid AIDS and other STDs is to refrain from sexual activity until the establishment of a mutually faithful relationship through marriage. This requires a strong and comprehensive mobilization of sexual morality in the whole society by using schools, families, religious institutions, government and media.

A good summary of the history of this intellectual challenge may be found in the first chapter of R. W. Morris's 1994 work. This chapter outlines major trends in the

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<sup>26</sup> See Lickona 1993, p. 87. Lickona equates the chastity approach with directive sex education.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 85. An opposite explanation of the comprehensive approach is provided by Brick and Roffman (1993, 90-2) in their article which critically reviews Lickona's discussion reflected to above on models of sexuality education.

<sup>28</sup> These approaches are known as: Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development (along with its revised versions); values clarification; analysis; inculcation; action learning approaches; liberal values and liberal education; character education, and the post-modern approach in values education (see i.e., Superka, et. al. 1975; Halstead 1996; Hersh & Miller 1980).

history of North American views on sexuality education. It covers the time between the late 19th century and the present. His survey is divided into three periods.

The first period (the late 19th and early 20th centuries) was characterized by the proliferation of medical advice literature, which was produced by two major movements: the scientific social hygiene (1905) and the theological purity movements (1890s). They both aimed at curbing the rate of sexually transmitted diseases and advocated love and reproductive responsibility within the family structure. Prevention of sexual “pollution” was the major good of educators of this period. The second period (the 1960s and early 70s) witnessed the introduction of a value-free and scientific framework, where the focus was on sexual facts without value judgments. The third period (from the 1970s to the present) has seen an attempt to relate sexuality education to values. The common perspective supports the necessity of value-laden programs in schools. Proponents of values clarification, however, were committed to value-neutrality through the 1980s. In the end human sexuality came to be viewed as a system which encompasses sexual knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviors.

Yet proponents of values clarification, and of sexuality education in general, fail to see that these topics have a significance that extends beyond the walls of a classroom. As Morris points out, a more inclusive definition can be drawn from Kegan’s theory of cultural embeddedness which suggests that sexual-values education includes schools, mothering culture,<sup>29</sup> play and game atmosphere, the family, peer groups, one-to-one relationships and the work-place (Morris 1994, 83).

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<sup>29</sup> According to R.W. Morris (1994) the impact of “mothering culture” is more particular than what one

Another key point both in education as a whole and in sexuality education is to see the learner as she or he is. Although sexuality education can be a concern for people at all ages, it is, nevertheless a crucial one for male and female adolescents. A fundamental stage before any values education is to deal with adolescents themselves and their natural concerns, not what we see as desirable or necessary. They want to be themselves, not someone else's fantasy. Every one wants to be authentic (Oldfield 1994, 221-22). To understand someone else, we have to go beyond our own barriers and see him/her from below. We have to see the needs of young people as they are. Usually adults project their anxieties and fears onto adolescents. This occurs because adults tend to see young people's needs from above (Morris 1997, 356-8).

Seeing adolescent needs from below as opposed to from above is a paradigm which is well elaborated by R.W. Morris (1997) in his article entitled the "Myths of Sexuality Education." Morris quotes the story related by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber (1959) which tells of an angel who came down from heaven to rescue people from suffering. Basing himself on Parker Palmer's (1990) insightful interpretation of this tale dating from the Talmudic era, Morris observes that despite having the noblest of intentions, the angel became confused and behaved problematically since he tried to understand the events of this world and people's needs based on his own fears and desires. The same may happen to any educator who wants to solve the problems of others

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usually attributes to family. Mothering culture refers to an incorporating stage which provides the first educational response to child's efforts in understanding and humanizing his/her sexuality. This process of moral development occurs despite the Piagetian paradigm which views this stage as pre-moral. The moral richness of this stage shows itself in child's capacity for being nurtured for intimacy, independence and peaceful interpersonal relations. Mothering culture is then replaced with "parenting culture" which influences sexual values through the celebration of child's capacity for fantasy. Basic emotions and values

as he/she perceives them with his/her own eyes. The above-mentioned paradigm suggests that educators can address any issue effectively if only they can see it from below (Morris 1997).

The approach from below can be both pragmatic or religious. Pragmatism is, to my understanding, a sense-based method which depends ultimately on trial and error. Educators communicate with students, observe their problems, propose various resolutions and finally side with the one which proves to be more effective. The aim in this method is to build a functioning model or models in dealing with each problem. Religiosity, on the other hand, proposes the same path in communicating with students and understanding their problems (i.e., from below) but it nonetheless demands an exploratory approach in relation to the scriptures and religious sources as the sources for the answers provided. The presumption is that effective answers are located in these sources and that these can be discovered with the requisite effort. In the end it is God the creator of humankind who can provide the most effective solutions.

My concern here is to emphasize the necessity of an appropriate starting point. Values educators can treat students based on their own constructed standards or according to the discovered real possibilities and limitations of adolescents. If values educators could pass the barriers of their own images, and see the values needs of adolescents as they are, they could then search for answers either through human rationalization and dialogue or through a religious approach. Even in a religious approach, it is necessary to start from realities and then ask for appropriate answers within the religious sources.

Therefore, the difference between a pragmatic and a religious approach is the source of the answers while the common appropriate starting point is to begin from below.

Adolescents are full of tremendous energy resembling in many ways the energy of a fire. This energy needs to be controlled and supervised in order for an adolescent to be able to actualize his/her potentialities. Adolescents normally experience an ontological journey which is primarily heroic. This process includes two types of movements: outward, toward mastery and self-sufficiency in the world; and inward, to awaken the deep-seated attributes of the soul. The rituals and rites involved in this passage resemble a psychological “container” which gives shape to the volatile energy of youth. Although supervision requires us to provide the next generation with the opportunities and the structure they need to awaken their newly discovered souls and to express their yearnings, adolescents also need freedom to move and to discover the new and to be authentic (Oldfield 1994, 218-22). The passage of adolescence must inevitably be made. We must facilitate this process if we want adolescents to be the healthy and secure architects of the future. The completion of this journey of the soul requires celebration and affirmation, which usually takes the form of ceremonies of passage; these can be seen even as spiritual supermarkets (Oldfield 1994, 228-30).

Bearing in mind this brief report on the different schools of thought in Western sexuality education, one can easily compare it with the Islamic point of view. There are many differences and similarities between the two. Above I have called the Islamic approach a chastity-comprehensive model. This model sets forth internal and external constraints but it is also multi-faceted. It functions in a context where other social and

cultural elements are provided. Islamic sexuality education begins with the establishment of the moral state of self-control (*taqwā*/piety) through moral education. This is due to the emphasis on values in moral and sexuality education. Piety is the core in the Islamic value system.

The essential emphasis on piety and self-control as a key element derives from a philosophical foundation in Islamic moral education. This is clearly explained in the Qur'ānic narrative. The Qur'ān relates that the Prophet Joseph (*Yūsif*) found himself in a sexually compromising situation. He was about to be trapped but he faced down the crisis. Afterwards, Joseph is said to have declared that the human soul is apt to command him/her to do evil. The Qur'ān quotes him as using the term “*ammārah*” (strongly and permanently commanding), to show the decisive impact of uncontrolled psychological desires. Mutahhari maintains that the term “command” implies the critical influence of some internal impulses on human cognition and the decision-making process (Mutahhari 1990, 56-57). Human beings in some cases are under the command of these impulses. Sexual crises, as in the above-mentioned anecdote, are definitely included. To cope these impulses properly people need first of all a strong internal agent known in the Qur'ān as (piety/*taqwā*).

Therefore, the establishment of self-control and piety is considered to be the core of Islamic sexuality education as a part of moral education. It is crucial for a learner, particularly an adolescent, to acquire a state of God-centered self-control. The revised religious textbooks *Bānīsh-i Islāmī* (*Islamic Insight*) used in senior high schools in post-revolutionary Iran include a particular section regarding moral education. To meet the



psychological needs of adolescents of this age, this section begins with elements of sexuality education. The very foundation of this part is the emphasis on the establishment of piety, self control and the application of core ethical values.<sup>30</sup> However, this cannot be obtained from one single academic course or even during an academic year. It is the result of faith in God and the religious corresponding practices, established and reinforced by moral education over several years.

The Qur'ān itself is full of verses which refer to piety as both the starting point (Q. 2:2) and the purpose (Q. 2:63 & 183) of Islamic rituals and moral education. The nucleus of this internalized value element is belief in God and the hereafter. This nucleus will be nourished through behavioral instruction. Fasting, for instance, is regarded in the Qur'ān as one of the reinforcing factors (Q. 2:183). A reason behind it is perhaps that fasting is a type of self-control exercise. The Arabic term "*taqwā*" stands for piety and self-control. The purpose of moral education in Islam is to establish and strengthen piety. Moral instructions are centered on piety. As I have explained in the first chapter, piety is the core of social and individual development. The only criterion of Godly honor in the Qur'ān is piety (Q. 49:13). The only thing that can protect individuals and society from sexual abnormality is piety and God-centered self-control. The application of core ethical values protects and reinforces piety.

In the Iranian context the school curriculum includes textbooks about moral and religious instruction. Extra-curricular activities are designed to be ethically encouraging.

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<sup>30</sup> See *Binish-i Islāmī (Islamic Insight)* (textbook), Islamic Republic of Iran, Ministry of Education, 1375s/1992, pp. 62-66.

This is in addition to the role of the media, Friday sermons and the family and parenting culture in encouraging youth to be sexually abstinent.

Sexuality education is futile if the social environment is misleading. Therefore, the next step is the prohibition of sexually meaningful stares by both men and women (Q. 24:30-31). The mandatory veiling and the policy of sexual segregation are other protective and preventive elements. It is also emphasized that commercial advertisements and the media should not be sexually arousing. The Islamic model on this point is an abstinence model. The suppression of sexual motives is not, however, the final and effective solution. It is the beginning of psychological frustration. Therefore, the Islamic model features certain compensations or what is known in some theories of sexuality education as “buts.” Since having premarital sex is prohibited, boys and girls are encouraged to marry at an age when they feel biological impulses. A delay of intercourse 10 or more years beyond biological maturity intensifies sexual abnormalities. Furthermore, the non-marital sexual but protected intercourse as proposed in the “abstinence, but” model,<sup>31</sup> encourages young males and females to escape from a responsible marriage. When youth have an easy way to obtain sexual gratification, this

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<sup>31</sup> The key instruction given to unmarried youth in this model is as follows: “Don’t have sex, but there is a way to do it fairly safely.” This mixed message, as Lickona observes, amounts to a green light for sexual activity (Lickona 1993, 84). According to the “abstinence, but” approach, students should follow two instructions. Abstinence is the only secure and effective way to avoid pregnancy, AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases. If students are sexually active, they can reduce these risks through the consistent, correct use of condoms. The dilemma in this approach is due to its double-sided solution. Abstinence, on the one hand, is presented as the safest contraceptive option. A “protected sex” is offered as a “responsible” second option, on the other hand. The emphasis, as Lickona concludes, is on “making your own decision” rather than on making the right decision. The distribution of condoms among students and teaching them how to use it will weaken the abstinence message. Condoms will motivate unmarried young students to refuse the compelling ethical reasons to abstain from pre-marital sexual intercourse (Lickona 1993, 85-6).

normally undermines family values. They do not see any reason to carry the burden of reproduction or child rearing.

Encouragement of temporary marriage<sup>32</sup> under fixed conditions, such as when permanent marriage is especially difficult, is another alternative to protect young men and women from sexual crises. Although these and other related components are theoretically comprehensive, various cultural, economic, and political elements intervene in Muslim societies. If reasonable early permanent marriage, temporary marriage, emphasis on single sex environments and veiling are connected together in this context, they are not regarded as fundamentalist parameters. These interrelated elements guarantee the social modesty and purity of a society.

I would argue that sexual values are included in a moral values system. For me, moral values which function as a behavioral road map derive from our world-views or our ideology. "Shoulds" and "shouldn'ts" are based on how we see and interpret the human position in the universe. Whether we adopt a religious, a materialistic or a neutral world-view, we still tend to judge or behave in accordance with how we view ourselves in relation to the whole universe. If we see ourselves as the creatures of God with a destiny in the hereafter, we will have a God-centered value system. If, on the other hand, we hold a materialistic or a secular perspective, we usually tend to give value only to those facts that provide the happiest form of life in this world. This is due to the fact that secularism essentially focuses on the worldly rather than the spiritual or religious aspects

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<sup>32</sup> Temporary marriage is a preventive and supporting method which lasts for an agreed upon period of time. It is recommended in some crucial socio-economic conditions when boys and girls are not able to exercise the permanent model. This model is also associated with specific conditions in order to protect society from legal and health problems. These conditions are carefully defined in Islamic legal texts.

of existence. Materialism can also connote an excessive regard for worldly and material concerns.<sup>33</sup> Both secularism and materialism entail a serious concern with life in this world disconnected from any religious or metaphysical observation.<sup>34</sup> A neutral outlook also refers the value judgments to individuals. I argue then that behavioral “musts” and “mustn’ts” in moral education derive from the way that we interpret the “is” and “isn’t” (how we see and interpret the universe, the direction of the universe and our connection with the universe and our destiny). It means that moral attitudes refer to ontological perspectives. Nonetheless, we have to be aware that we are for the most part unaware of impact of our world-views although we construct them consciously.

#### **6.5.2. Islamic Dress Code (*Hijāb*)**

Many questions and critiques are raised in discussions of women’s participation in education and development in an Islamic context. Why should Muslim women follow the Islamic dress code? Is it not a kind of extra restriction to force women to conform to rules on Islamic dress? Doesn’t veiling prevent women from having full participation in education, development and social activities? (Moghadam 1988, 224) After all, is it not a sort of violation of women’s freedom to narrow their choices to wear what they want and how they like? Our varying perspectives affect our response to these questions. My concern here is to look at this issue from an Islamic point of view.

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<sup>33</sup> These definitions are based upon the entries for these terms in the American Heritage Dictionary. For a detailed discussion about these themes see Pannenberg 1996, Keane 1998, Mitchell 1995 and Tiemstra 1996.

<sup>34</sup> See Sadr 1991, 18-9.

To appreciate the Islamic understanding of this issue, we first have to determine the philosophy behind the Islamic dress code. It is also necessary to understand the spirit of Islamic norms regarding male-female relationships.

As I have mentioned earlier, marriage and the legal family unit according to the Qur'ānic point of view is a center of relaxation, love and compassion. The Qur'ān 30:21 maintains that male and female are created to release their tensions mutually. Life is full of pressures and tensions, but a refuge from all these is to be found in the opposite sex. If the world were full only of one sex, men or women, it would be disastrous. Interestingly, the above-mentioned verse includes two Arabic verbs, *khalaqa* (God created) and *ja'ala* (God set up or established). The first verb refers to the wise construction of creation while the second alludes to what emerges within marital relationships. The philosophy behind the creation of males and females according to this verse is to achieve relaxation. The core of marriage is love and compassion. I assume that the love and compassion included in the marital pattern is the nucleus of mutual relaxation. Human beings tend to take refuge in those whom they love.

In another verse where the Qur'ān discusses the importance of legal sexual intercourse, it is revealed: “ They (women ) are a vestment for you, and you (men) are a vestment for them...” This verse describes the sexual relationship between a wife and a husband as a garment. Like a garment that keeps us secure against the biting cold and heat and gives us a more beautiful appearance, the intimacy between a man and a women protects and enhances each member of the couple. Sexual demands can frustrate a person to the point of wrong behavior or even violence. Legal sexual intercourse releases these

tensions and delivers both sexes from biting sexual demands. Men and women function as vestments for one another, guarding each other from sin interchangeably. The central message of this verse is that a society without legal sexual intercourse is like a naked person who is at the mercy of an all-consuming sexual drive.

When men and women step beyond the family unit and engage in social activities, they need norms and standards. Social norms function as boundaries which secure individual rights. Socio-developmental plans call upon both men and women to take part in social activities. Within the social context there are always possible tensions and clashes between men and men, women and women and men and women. Tensions between men and women can be sexual or non-sexual. What can we do to relieve the sexual tensions?

There are usually two possibilities. We can either prevent social abnormalities before they become uncontrollable, or cure them after they have happened. It is difficult to control sexual tensions when there are reinforcing and motivating social elements.

Islam, I assume, takes the first or the preventive alternative. While both men and women are encouraged to take part in social activities, they are advised to observe the boundaries. Preventive policies do not mean that Islam deprives men or women of social participation. It addresses both men and women. In verses 30-31 of chapter 24 it is revealed:

Say to the believing men, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts (sexual organs); that is purer for them... and say to the believing women, that they cast down their eyes and guard their private parts...

In the first point both sexes are encouraged to control their sexually meaningful stares and guard their private parts. At a higher level women are asked to take care of one more thing. Women's bodies are biologically softer and are possessed of more beauty. Their beauty is a factor in their frequent appearance in advertising, entertainment, sports and circuses. As well as their natural beauty and softness, women usually put on make-up and wear ornaments. These two elements increase their beauty and attractiveness. Therefore, the Qur'ān gives them one more piece of advice. In the remaining lines of the previous verse it is revealed that except what (normally) appears, women should not display their beauty and ornaments. They are also required to let their head-coverings extend over their bosoms in order to hide their ornaments and beauties from male strangers. The verse however exempts in this case husbands, and close relatives with whom marriage is prohibited.

Since the philosophy behind this Islamic tenet is to eliminate illegal sexual motivations and signals, the wearing of sexually stimulating clothing or showing provocative behavior from men also breaks these norms and boundaries. These are instructions designed to shut the gate of corruption and provide a secure social context for men and women.

These behavioral instructions are effective only if they are preceded with moral self-development. Obviously, if men and women are morally corrupt, these behavioral counsels will have no effect. The main element of purification, according to the Qur'ān, is piety which is something in our heart and our mind. However, that internal element is

acquired through cognition and faith and is reinforced through daily actions. If internal piety does not lead to outward behavior then it is not in the heart. It is only superficial.

Besides the social philosophy of Islamic veiling, some scholars contend that this practice is a reaction to the Western drive for women's liberation. They observe that women in many parts of the Islamic world self-consciously adopt forms of dress which give them an Islamic identification against what they consider the imperialist West (Smith 1987, 241-42). Therefore, it would be difficult for Western feminists to acquire a clear understanding of what Muslim women mean by "liberation." Broken marriages, insecure social contexts, deteriorating relations between men and women and sexual immorality are fruits of Western-style liberation movements (Smith 1987, 249). This emphasis, of course, must not be taken as a one-sided value judgment. No one doubts that women's liberation in the West has led to great achievements in terms of their active participation in various aspects of society. Nevertheless merits must be weighed against the cost of demerits. I assume that the Islamic method of development and liberation can and does result in a value-laden achievement without having negative values consequences.

One may argue that in Islamic contexts also, we observe some of these social ills, whether they are due to socio-economic breakdown or to the lack of full implementation of Islamic sexual norms. An explicit difference however between the Islamic model and the Western model is that the latter has been fully implemented. The reported social outcomes, therefore, are the genuine products of the latter model. To show the difference clearly, I must repeat a differentiation I have made in this dissertation between "Islamic"



and “Islamicate” models. To me the Western model is a secular, human-made model which has been developing since the Enlightenment. There has been no obstacle to its full implementation. The Islamic model, on the contrary, takes on its true form only when it is implemented as a complete system, in accordance with the revealed instructions. Except for a short period early in its history, Islamic civilization has since been Islamicate, intermingled with the local cultures and customs of Muslim societies in different regions or at various times. Therefore, Muslims have never experienced a comprehensive implementation of an Islamic model in its entirety. The observed disorders and instances of immorality are the consequences of the failed or incomplete implementation of the Islamic model.

When explaining the Islamic perspective and philosophy of dress code and male-female relationship, I encounter a variety of arguments. Some people may argue that this particular covering puts an extra economic burden on women. Women in poor families are not able to buy such clothing. Moreover, it is nuisance for women to enclose themselves within a type of dress which leads to suffering from heat and exhaustion.

I argue in reply that one must distinguish between what Islam advises as a securing element in the male-female relationship and what is locally or culturally granted as an Islamicate custom. The philosophy behind the Islamic dress code is to secure individual and collective rights and to ensure the modesty of men and women. The Islamic dress code protects women and prevents men from impious consequences. How a society can help poor families have access to this dress, what kind of color women should choose for their veiling, which form of dress they should choose all depend on changing

contexts. Local customs and cultural elements sometimes make the Islamic dress boring and confining. What Islam seeks in proposing this dress code is to guard the persons and the personality of women, eliminating the social elements of corruption, and preventing men from violating women's rights.

Some scholars have asserted that the post-revolutionary Iranian context under Imam Khomeini reemphasized the *chādūr* as the legal veiling (Smith 1987, 242). However, there is no single Islamic tenet or piece of legislation that necessarily requires wearing of the *chādūr*. Instead many Iranians in practice opt for other styles of legal veiling. There is simply a widespread belief that the Islamic philosophy of *hijāb* can only be ensured perfectly if a woman practices *chādūr*. Nonetheless, socio-cultural, economic and environmental elements have determining impacts. Beginning in the 1980-81 academic year, the Ministry of Education required its female employees and students to wear special Islamic uniforms (Mehran 1991, 44).

One may still argue that a reason for the disfunctionality of the Islamic dress code is that in practice it has not worked. Despite the fact that Muslim societies enjoy an environment within which women and men are apparently separated, and women follow for the most part the Islamic dress code, there are still instances of assault, rape and sexual immorality. My response is that Islamic tenets always function systematically, for which Islamic regulations constitute a network. I assume from this that the expected or claimed social and individual modesty will emerge when all subsystems function interrelatedly. If Islamic norms are observed in the economic, political, educational and cultural aspects of society, we will see the expected outcomes. If some subsystems fail to

function, the functions of the others are compromised. Corruption may derive from financial problems, political pressures or values and moral illiteracy. These failures cannot therefore be regarded as a consequence of observing the Islamic tenets about dress.

Another argument against the claimed impact of the Islamic dress code is that in some non-Western societies where the Islamic dress code is not observed one never witnesses the social ills of Western societies. While the female dress in these societies is almost like that of Western societies, women's safety and morality is no less than what is claimed to exist in Islamic societies. A response to this argument could be that the comparative judgment in this example requires precise statistics from both Islamic and non-Western societies about the extent of corruption. Moreover, these statistics must be collected from non-Western societies on the one hand and from true practicing Muslim societies on the other. There are Muslim societies which believe in the Islamic dress code but do not practice it. Ultimately, I assume, the Islamic dress code in any society creates a safer situation. Although we hardly see the same corruption in non-Western societies as in Western societies, the comparison will only be complete when we have examined the implementation of Islamic and non-Islamic dress codes in one single situation.

### **6.5.3. The Policy of Segregating the Sexes at Work & in Schools**

Barely three months after the victory of the Islamic Revolution the policy of male-female segregation in schools was implemented i.e., in May 1979. The authorities banned all co-educational institutions. Only universities and remote rural schools were exceptions (Mehran 1991, 44). What were the reasons behind this immediate policy? I

will try to explain its rationale based on Islamic standards. This policy might be interpreted as either discriminatory and exclusionary or liberating and protective depending on one's outlook.

Reviewing the philosophy of the Islamic dress code and other sexual codes regarding male-female interrelationships, we realize that an important principle in Islam is the security of public chastity (*ʿiffat-i ʿumūmī*). The ideal standard in Islam is to create a secure environment within which both men and women can operate freely. Just as the Islamic dress code is designed to protect public chastity and prevent men and women from illegal contacts, the single-sex policy also reinforces the same philosophy. The latter is a way of extending the freedom of women.

To guarantee this principle, Islam proposes some restrictions. Since the Islamic codes are not always compatible with non-Islamic standards, particularly Western ones, they are occasionally interpreted as discriminatory. The Islamic dress code and the emphasis on single-sex educational and sporting institutions are examples. To obtain a non-discriminatory understanding of a religious dress code and single-sex environments we may observe what still exists of the practice in Western countries.

One would hardly assume for instance that the nun's dress code in Christianity or the uniforms required in religious single-sex schools are reflections of discrimination against women. The security of a nun's chastity and piety and the provision of better suited environments for learning are justifiable explanations for these practices.<sup>35</sup> In Islam

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<sup>35</sup> While writing this section, I came across a survey done in some Montreal high schools regarding the quality of performance of girls in physical education. Is it similar to that of boys in a co-educational environment? The title of the survey gives the answer: "Boys are boys; girls lose out." The major question

as well the emphasis on single-sex environments is based on the same explanation. This philosophy is more concrete in situations where women need complete bodily freedom. Swimming pools, playing-fields and gymnasiums are places where, according to Islam, the sexes must be separated. A dogmatic understanding of this emphasis is that women should not participate in these activities and that they have to abandon such facilities to men. The alternative however is to separate men from these places. What is essential in Islam is to prevent situations where there is intermingling. However, this does not mean that women should be deprived of the right to enjoy social opportunities.<sup>36</sup>

Two extreme reactions, nonetheless, have emerged in Muslim societies. People with secular attitudes will easily put aside religious standards and propose a completely free context where people can behave in a secular fashion. Extreme traditionalists, on the contrary, deprive women and enforce exaggerated religious instructions. A middle way is to guarantee women's rights through religiously-managed situations. I believe that a truly Islamic approach removes discriminations between men and women in social opportunities. Women, like men, should have full participation in education, sport and productive opportunities at all levels. However there are ways of avoiding religious breakdown. Interestingly, Islam considers education and the search for knowledge not

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was: "Does co-educational physical education offer gender equity and equal opportunity? It does not look like it." A quality participation in sport, fun with friends and self-esteem are absent from co-educational physical education, students believe. See Barker, J. *The Gazette*, Montreal, Monday, May 25, 1998. Section F, page F7 (Woman News).

<sup>36</sup> The post-revolutionary context is an example within which the Islamic norms are being translated into practice. In reality the situation of women in all aspects of society need to see dramatic improvement. Various aspects are addressed in the national development plan to fill the huge existing gaps between men and women. The results so far, although not ideal, are hopeful. In physical education, for instance, by the beginning of the Islamic revolution (1979) women were explicitly deprived. Since then physical educators and referees who comprised only 9 and 12 figures at one time in the country have been increased to 5000 and 13000, respectively at present time (*Zan-i Rûz*, 1376s/1997, no. 1644, 8).

only as a right but as a religious obligation. According to a prophetic tradition both men and women are encouraged to seek knowledge (Majlisī, 1983, Vol. 1, PP. 177, 179, 180, 183). The language of this tradition is the same as that used in reference to mandatory rituals.

I do not think that there is any contradiction between development at an extended level, which includes both men and women, and exercising religious standards regarding male-female relationships. If women's participation in co-educational schools and universities are against Islamic values, then national development plans should give priority to the establishment of single-sex alternatives which compensate women for being deprived of the former. These priorities steer the society toward a social context where, although on the surface we see differences between men and women, they will both enjoy the same opportunities at a deeper level. Warning against the temptations inherent in a co-educational situation, Mutahhari writes: "Where would a man be more effective, where he is studying in all-male institutions or where he is sitting next to a girl whose skirt reveals her thighs? Which man can produce more, he who is constantly exposed to the arousing and exciting faces of made-up women in the street, bazaar, office, or factory, or he who does not have to face such sights?" (quoted in Nashat 1983, 204). I may add that a segregated environment provides a more secure situation for women themselves. This, however, does not mean that if Muslims lack the resources to provide segregated educational institutions particularly in universities or in remote rural schools, they have to deprive one sex and necessarily females. In such circumstances the Islamic

dress code would suffice to allow boys and girls to enjoy co-educational opportunities. The fundamental philosophy as I have noted is to ensure public modesty.

Beyond all this, I have noted that social modesty is not something that emerges when only women are following Islamic standards. Men, who form the other half of society, bear the same responsibilities. Public chastity can only result when both show willingness to participate.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

One theme that preoccupies any scholar discussing women in education and development is that if we are to improve the position of women in society, we have to perceive the issue as one of gender not merely that of womanhood. This perspective calls for the willing and active participation of both men and women. It is impossible to solve the problem of one half of the population without the involvement of other. Complementary efforts, as the core issue in the male-female debate, depend on mutual participation. This is true in both Islamic and non-Islamic societies. Another point is that post-revolutionary Iran is faced with two dilemmas. First, scholars and officials see a deep gap between Islamic ideology and concrete practices. On one level they seek to discover a reliable explanation of Islamic standards. The major concern of Islamologists is to reach a reliable interpretation of Islamic resources. The substantial and more difficult task is to explore real but feasible gender rules on the basis of Islamic sources. Variables of nature (sex-typing characteristics) and nurture-based (socio-culturally constructed elements) biases and realities are impediments on the theoretical level. Yet Muslim scholars witness that in cases where the society observes Islamic norms, it is not easy to

translate then into practice. National and global concerns intervene in this process. To cite some examples, I can allude to the discussion about the minimum level of the Islamic dress code, equal educational opportunities, the legitimate forms of socio-political participation, clear definitions of men's and women's roles within the family and the society and a feasible list of women's rights in an Islamic context.

Another dilemma is the challenge to combine modernity and development with Islamic culture and values. The question is: How can society translate Islamic values into development plans? Mere modern-secular and traditional-conservative reactions are futile. One should realize that liberating movements and development plans based on Islamic values have different meanings. While Muslims do not want to be and actually cannot be left behind in terms of global changes, they still want to preserve Islamic values. This will be more problematic in Islam, a religion which is deemed to be a way of life. It is claimed that Islam goes beyond a marginal God-remembrance, which consists remembering God as our supporter once in a while and establishing a lifestyle based on a secular foundation. Post-revolutionary Iran has a long way to go to be able to implement Islamic standards in various areas, particularly that of gender issue. To arrive at an Islamic value-laden development model, the state has to utilize the educational system. This in turn will lead to rebuilding the education system. Engendering development based on a pattern of Islamic culture and values implies the above-mentioned complexities.

The Iraq-Iran war, post-war crises, reconstruction policies and plans and beyond all this acting as the pioneer in implementing Islam in its totality, have all intensified complexities and difficulties for Iran. We may observe other Muslim countries which



follow Islam partly, and see that problems emerge when a country claims to have established an Islamic state which seeks Islamic standards in various aspects of life. The orientation and trend, as I have discussed, have been promising. The emergence of an assembly of determining the good of the country (*Majmaʿ-i Tashkhīṣ-i Maṣlaḥat-i Nizām*) at the time of the late leader and its revival at the present time indicate that the country continues to seek feasible and reliable models of Islamic standards. Serious complexities in various aspects call for the Islamic state to reconsider and reformulate Islamic standards. Gender issues are among those which require not only immediate but serious attention. Women at all levels are still behind men. Reforms at the family level, as the present leader emphasizes, is more vital. More precise laws are needed to stabilize the family and protect women (Electronic Hamshahri, No. 1113, 1996). The Iranian context suffers from a lack of Islamic standards which determine men's and women's rights within the family and lacks also a clear picture of complementary roles for men and women.

The country needs more policies designed to exploit her human resources fully and efficiently. So far the fact that goals have practically been achieved indicate that Islamic development plans are not impossible to implement.

## **Chapter 7.**

### **Contextual Challenges of Cultural Development in Iran**

#### ***7.1. The Dawn of the Islamic Revolution***

The Iranian Islamic revolution began in 1963/1342s., when the Ayatullah Rūhullāh Khumeinī (known as Imam Khomeini) protested against the White Revolution and the so-called socio-economic reform programs of Muhammad Reza Pahlavi, calling these a hidden form of American neocolonialism. Their American nature became evident when it was revealed that the White Revolution had been planned and implemented under pressure from the Kennedy administration (Ashraf 1995, 21). This top-down policy, which essentially had the character of a land-reform measure, was justified by the growing fear of an “impending peasant revolution” from below. The Islamic movement reacted negatively to parliament’s passage of the law of capitulation which permitted American military advisers in Persia diplomatic immunity even if they committed crimes. The Islamic movement was subsequently suppressed for a number of years and Imam Khomeini driven into exile for fifteen years. The Pahlavi dynasty also devalued religion, especially Islam, and emphasized Western secular ideals in the educational system. The role of Imam Khomeini as a religious leader who awakened the Iranian people to the need to reject the non or anti-Islamic policies of the government was so decisive that it led to a nation-wide revolution in 1979.

Imam Khomeini’s opposition was not merely anti-establishment tactic; he hoped ultimately to establish an Islamic political system which would avoid all of the illnesses

of monarchy. Inspired by Shi'ī political doctrine, Imam Khomeini (1979) proposed an Islamic state controlled by a sophisticated *faqih* (an specialist in the Islamic divine law/*Sharī'a*). The Shah began to lose foreign support after the victory of Jimmy Carter in the American presidential campaign of November 1976 and the ensuing pressure for human rights exerted by the new Democratic administration in Washington (Ashraf 1995, 39). This marked a new initiative in American politics to restrain the exploitation of the oppressed and developing nations, including Iran. Muhammad Reza Pahlavi went into exile on January 16, 1979. On February 2, 1979 Imam Khomeini returned to Iran after 15 years in exile. Nine days later he succeeded in taking control of the Iranian government. Almost two months after the victory of the Islamic movement over the Pahlavi regime, more than 98% percent of Iranians voted for the Islamic Republic as a new political system. It is important for us to examine the Islamic model of education and cultural development in the socio-political atmosphere that existed both during and after the Khomeini period.

Iran is a developing nation trying to reform her educational system as the main engine of her developmental program but without adopting a Western-oriented model. This does not mean that Iran cannot or should not benefit from any aspect of Western knowledge. The characteristics of an Islamic model of cultural development and social change in connection with the role of education has formed the central theme of this dissertation. The successes and failures of socio-cultural reform within the context of post-Revolutionary Iran render it a virtual social laboratory where we can see theory being transformed into practice. Structural and ideological problems have urged

revolutionary leaders to attempt to form a new Islamic system characterized by Islamic paradigms. They hope that ideological problems can be solved by purging the educational system of the “westoxication” implemented during the previous regime.

The Iranian Islamic movement underwent a number of experiences that affected the nature and the direction of the movement. The most outstanding influences include the Islamic resurgence and the revival of political Islam, a closer cooperation between members of the universities and the *hawzahs* (centers for Islamic studies) and the decline of nationalist trends. Instead of opting for world capitalism, which Wallerstein (1979) claimed must be the ultimate model for all developing countries, Iran has moved towards an Islamic model of development based on Islamic culture and values. The impact of the implementation of Islamic values and the consequences of a disassociation from Western and Eastern models has been another aspect of culture and values interface when theories are turned into practice. By focusing mainly on culture and values development and social change in relation to education, this project joins other studies in trying to define an Islamic theory of development.

### ***7.2. Modernization and Islamicization (Cohesion or Contrast)***

Attempts to implement both of these approaches have been experienced in post-Revolutionary Iran. Although various groups with different goals and attitudes participated in the Islamic Revolution, the role of Imam Khomeini has been the most influential in creating an Islamic culture of development. Through his familiarity with the ideological and cultural background of the majority of the Iranian population, he was able

to direct the Revolution towards Islamicization or Islamic revival. Islam was at the root of all changes occurring in the country.

Like other aspects of society, the educational system in pre-revolutionary Iran featured dependency on Western models, a characteristic of the Pahlavi regime. The post-revolutionary regime thus aimed at a comprehensive change centered on policies like religiosity versus secularism, economic justice versus economic growth, non-alliance versus alliance and Islamic popularism versus monarchism (Siavashi 1995, 204). These policies were indeed a reformist reaction to the pre-revolutionary legacy. The pre-revolutionary experience indicated that a duplication of the Western-type of modernization in Iran would not fit the Islamic cultural background of the society.

Moreover, Islamic and Western modes of modernization seem to be essentially different. "The Western modernization school" sees modern societies as ones characterized by:

A commitment to scientific rationality; the widespread use of inanimate sources of energy; significant levels of industrialization; abundant food and material goods; bureaucratic and political structures run in an impersonal and meritocratic way; people "freed" from kin and community obligations; and secular and rational religion. (Allahar 1989, 63)

This kind of modernization, having the above-mentioned consequences is essentially incompatible with an Islamic culture and values system. This is why developing Muslim societies are interested in looking for an Islamic modernity.

The Islamic pattern of development is characterized by an insistence on Islamic cultural independence. This characteristic has overwhelmingly emerged in the statements of leaders, the media, text-books, Islamic sermons, and in national and international

policies. How though does a Muslim nation that emphasizes Islamic identity and interdependence embark on the developmental processes? Does Islamic independence contradict the necessity of international interdependence and co-operation for the development of all nations? These questions are the first challenges that arise when development occurs in an Islamic context. The experience of two decades of Islamic revival in post-revolutionary Iran may provide the clues for a Muslim nation looking for a feasible Islamic model of development and social change. This is not to ignore the difficulty of the task that Muslims set themselves when they attempt to translate Islamic culture and values into realistic models of development.

### ***7.3. Islamicization of Education as a tool for Islamic Cultural Development***

Islamicization in all aspects was the main concern of the revolutionary regime. In his speeches, written announcements and advice, Imam Khomeini insisted on the Islamicization and purification of the educational system. Since the educational system then in place was the legacy of the previous regime it could not provide national independence and Islamic identity. Imam Khomeini believed that Iran-West relations had always been a one-sided relationship, the West colonizing Iran and Iran being colonized.

In one of his speeches in Paris he maintained:

Nowadays we have a subordinate culture, not an independent one. This culture subordinates us to colonizing states. They want us to be always backward and subordinate... they have made the younger generation of the country careless...they consider the corruption and backwardness in Iran to be a part of our culture...each country is evaluated based on its manpower but they have abolished Iranian human resources.(Imam Khomeini 1982, 114).

In another speech addressing a group of physicians he said:

One of the great disasters that they created for this nation is that they made them pessimistic about themselves. ... we lost ourselves before them (Westerners). It is not the case that their (Westerners) physicians do miracles and our physicians nothing. This is a belief that they propagated among us and made us feel negative about to ourselves, then we lost ourselves and were alienated. During a long period of time they tried to make us empty-minded. We are so westernized that we even look pessimistically at our good things . (Imam Khomeini 1982, 115-16).

On most occasions, the leader of the Revolution emphasized the necessity of a bipolar education in which both teaching and Islamic training share equally. In one of his speeches to teachers involved in the literacy campaign he stated:

Value... as in the holy Book (the Qur'ān) and according to the prophet Muhammad is given to (a connected form of) knowledge and piety. Knowledge without piety is valueless or has little value and the same is true of piety. (Imam Khomeini 1982, 91)

He sometimes observed that in an Islamic model of education, priority should be given to purification. Stressing the importance of Islamic purification, he once said:

Single teaching may be harmful to a country. ... most of the disasters to humankind came from teaching without (moral) training. All tools which are used in wars, those destructive instruments are all made by the hands of those who received teaching but did not receive the direction of (moral) training. Therefore, they used their knowledge to destroy their brothers and other human beings. (Imam Khomeini 1982, 298)

In another speech (1982), he used a Qur'ānic metaphor according to which knowledgeable people who lack purification are viewed as animals which carry around a load of books without benefiting from them!<sup>1</sup> The main purpose of all these speeches was

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 62, verse 5 from the Qur'ān where it condemns the holders of the divine knowledge without translating it into practice: "The example of those who were charged with the Taurat, then they did not observe it, is as the likeliness of the ass bearing books,..." Disassociation of any type of knowledge, even if it is a divine one, from piety and submission to God is, according to this verse, nothing more than bearing a heavier burden on one's shoulders.

to clarify the necessity of a process of Islamization and cultural development in the educational system, both formal and informal.

To implement development policies in an Islamic context, Muslims are faced with the dilemma of conjunction between commitment to Islamic ideology and the acquisition of scientific and technological expertise. I do not see any conflict between these two elements. The Islamic society has to find a way to link these two elements consistently, however. Islamic moral values system should influence the way in which Muslims educate the younger generation to obtain science and technology. Therefore, the resulting expertise is always value-laden. The value is that science and technology should not consume human beings in a destructive fashion. Unlike some writers, who see these two elements as an either-or dichotomy (Mehran 1994, 135), I argue that we lack a method to combine these two elements. The remaining task is to make educational content and context value-laden.

The supremacy of ideology during the past two decades in post-Revolutionary Iran, for instance, is a direct reaction to the de-Islamization policy of the pre-revolutionary years. To resurrect this long-neglected element may sometimes be regarded as placing extra emphasis on ideology. Furthermore, to develop into a developed society undoubtedly requires highly skilled human resources. This can only happen when the society enjoys a high-quality educational system. However, the Islamic context urges us to leave room for the other side of the coin, ideological commitment.

Since the Iranian Revolution was Islamic in nature, all systems in the country underwent revolutionary change. This movement was overwhelmed with Islamic



ideology. The educational system, therefore, could not remain secular. Goals and principles of educational system were explicitly influenced by Islamic ideology. Texts and their contents could not in any way contradict Islamic faith of students. Yet the new anti-secular educational system does not necessitate the eradication of other belief systems. Non-Muslim students are expected to follow their own religion. Therefore the moral and religious instructions of minorities within the educational system are based on their own faith. Students are discouraged only from believing in atheistic ideologies.

In their explanation of women's education in post-revolutionary Iran, Higgins and Ghaffari (1994, 36-43) divide the implemented changes into two main areas. They argue that the content of textbooks and context of education have been changed in accordance with Islamic ideals. Content reforms have affected mainly religion, social studies, language and literature texts more than science and mathematics. The first group of texts was targeted first to facilitate the Islamic socialization of young students. Policy-makers aimed at providing texts which would lead students to be both knowledgeable and committed to Islamic ideology and moral values. The major concern in this reform was to portray women so as to reflect Muslim ideals.

#### ***7.4. Post- and Pre-Revolutionary Education (Comparison)***

As a secular regime, the Pahlavis followed a policy of separating religion and state. Religion, therefore, was considered a private matter, a relationship between an individual and God. Pre-revolutionary textbooks treated religion in a way that marginalized religion, separating it from sociopolitical affairs. This policy was limited to religion but it affected the social and economic realms. Secular and materialistic points of

view were regarded as providing the only solutions for all problems. To reinforce this doctrine of secularism, it was natural for the regime to introduce Kemal Ataturk as a heroic Third-World leader in the third year general history book. Ataturk was a Western-oriented leader of modern Turkey in the 1920s and 1930s who played an important role in the aggressive elimination of many traditional institutions and religious customs. His role was rooted in a secularizing polity (Siavoshi 1995, 204). It is not surprising that the post-Revolutionary regime was religion-centered, implementing Islamic values in all public and personal aspects of life. The religious leadership attempted to neutralize the secular forces from the socio-political scene. The integration of politics and religion has been one of the repeated themes in every grade in all social science and history books (Siavoshi 1995, 205).

It is striking to note that even in 1960 Iranian national literacy was only 16% (Najafizadeh & Mennerick 1989). Nonetheless, world events and the rise of oil prices provided a reasonable amount of resources that could have been used for developmental policies. The sudden escalation of oil prices in the 1970s certainly benefited educational development. Yet the outcomes were not promising. For the government, modernization meant Westernization. Therefore, the educational system was a tool to Westernize Iran while suppressing Islam. Despite post-Revolutionary attempts at educational modification and development, in 1986 (UNESCO) 50% of the total population was still illiterate. Recent statistics indicate more progress in literacy investment. In 1997, officials reported that national literacy has elevated from 61.78% in 1987 to 79.5% in 1997.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> It is worth mentioning that this report depends on national statistics which may differ slightly from those of UNESCO See *Electronic Hamshahri*, 1997, no. 1266.

The pre-revolutionary educational system was built on a basic policy of Westernization in schools and a resulting elitism emphasized in private schools which were mainly run by foreign interests. The educational system also promoted hidden goals such as weakening religious beliefs, advocating capitalism as the best economic system and monarchy as a plausible political system (Mohsenpour 1988, 76-77).

The initial step the post-Revolutionary government took to improve national literacy was the incorporation of new policies in the new Iranian constitution. The 1979 Iranian Revolutionary constitution guarantees free education for all citizens through high school (Article 36) and the equality of people regardless of their ethnicity, family background or tribal origin (Article 14).

Despite this constitutional emphasis, the country could not overcome the problem of inequality in providing equal access to a qualified education for students from different groups. Explaining the characteristics of a standard school, Majdfar (1997) provides a list of various types of schools which emerged in post-revolutionary Iran. In addition to free public schools there are other types of schools such as non-profit private schools (*ghair-i intifāʿī*), special public schools (*nimūnah-i mardumī*), *shāhid*,<sup>3</sup> special governmental schools (*nimūnah-i dovlatī*), twenty-four hours schools (*shabānah rūzī*), schools for talented students (*tāzhūshān*), local schools (*ʿashāyirī*),<sup>4</sup> teacher training schools (*tarbīyat muʿallim*), schools for health-keepers and nurses (*bihyārī*) and schools for physical training (*tarbīyat badanī*). Although there is a wide range of difference between these

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<sup>3</sup> The Iranian government has set up special schools for children of those who have been martyred for the sake of Islamic revolution. These schools are known as *shāhid* schools, from the Persian word *shahīd* (martyred).

<sup>4</sup> This type of school is especially for students from nomadic ethnic groups who normally migrate from one area of the country to the other in search of a suitable pasturage for their animals such as lambs and beefs.

schools in providing a standard level of teaching and training, none of them enjoys an inclusive level of educational qualification. The existing differences, nonetheless, have produced a new problem. As well as equal accessibility for all students a country requires a standard model of qualification for all types of schools. A new type of stratification emerges when schools do not provide the same level of education. Students from lower levels of society who cannot afford the required tuition become marginalized as students in lower quality public schools. The country therefore suffers from having standard and high-quality school-system. Although one may find both public and private schools in developed countries such as Canada, the big difference emerges when one takes into consideration the problem of university entrance exams. Iranian students in these schools are not on an equal footing when competing for places in higher education.

Further steps toward post-revolutionary educational reforms in the 1980's included programs for rural development, the building of more than 1700 new schools throughout the country, a literacy movement which promoted education among the poor, parents, ethnic groups, and government workers. Cultural development continued to be carried out even in private schools and colleges through courses on Islamic values and a national curriculum.

Reform policies have slowed down because of the complicated problems affecting the educational system, however. The most important factors were the high population growth rate<sup>5</sup> and the decisive impact of the Iran-Iraq war. Both ideological and structural problems necessitated deep and long-term changes. A structural problem held over from the pre-revolutionary era was the limited number of university positions in comparison to

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They usually live in wool tents, and are famous in the country for their typical bravery and for keeping the borders secure. See *Ta'limāt-i Ijtimā'ī* (Social Studies), elementary level, grade three, 1375s./1996.

the number of volunteer applicants. In 1976, 300,000 high school students took the university entrance examinations (*cuncūr*), competing for only 34,000 University seats.

In 1980, 500,000 high school students took university entrance examination (*cuncūrs*) but only 50,000 university seats were available. Of the 752,343 applicants in the academic year 1989-90, only 61,000 or one twelfth were admitted to various post-secondary institutions. To solve the problem of overcrowded universities and to enable applicants to continue their higher education an Islamic Āzād (open) university was established in 1981. This new model quickly expanded all over the country without putting financial pressure on the government because students paid full tuition. Until 1988-89, about 180,000 students in 80 towns and cities enrolled in this university either part-time or full-time (HEA 1994, 13).

Another long-term measure for the educational crisis was a new plan proposed by the "Assembly of Fundamental Changes in Educational System" established in 1986/1365s. The Assembly came up with a new plan in 1989 (Zamīrī 1994, 174) which helps students in directing them towards an appropriate field, not necessarily involving a university education,<sup>6</sup> before they finish high school. Meanwhile, each individual retains

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<sup>5</sup> Though a process of self-conscientization, which results from informal educational investments, the country has been able to control the growth of population. As national statistics reveal, the high population growth of 2/70 in 1976 declined to 1/96 in 1996. See *Electronic Hamshahri*, 1997, no. 1266.

<sup>6</sup> I assume that one of the major problems in the current post-revolutionary educational system is the superstitious value which is attached to university education. It is astonishing that more than one million high school graduates take the annual, national university entrance exam each year (HEA 1997b). The creation of the Open University (*Dānishgāh-i Āzād*), besides the government universities, was indeed another attempt to provide enough university space for this fierce competition. It is unclear however what percent of the students entering are able to complete their studies at universities. After graduation they have sometimes to look for jobs for several years. The reason is that university sectors and fields are not planned in accordance with the real needs of the society. Educational policy-makers have realized that the creation of more university space will never solve the problem. The Ministry of Education proposed a new plan in 1990 according to which high school graduates will choose either employment or secondary education

the chance to continue his/her studies or change the interested field. This new system is founded on the basis of Islamic values and ideology (see Zamīrī 1994, 174-80). The new pre-university system starts at the age of 5 and runs through a 2-5-2-3 years cycle. A comparative and comprehensive look at developing countries throughout the world indicates that Iran reveals the strong influence of Islamic cultural background and religious control in its attempt to establish a non-Western educational model.

New moral educators (*murabbī parvareshī*) are in charge of some moral modifications and ethical problems. They encourage students nine years of age and above to participate in daily prayers. All females, including students and staff educators, are asked to follow the unifying policy of Islamic dress. In almost all levels boys and girls, men and women have separate classrooms. Women and girls are asked to participate in sports in single sex places. Segregated pools were set aside for females to avoid mixed public swimming.

Ideological differences between the pre- and post-revolution eras emerged in new thinking about the ideal outcome of the educational system. The ideal citizen as reflected in textbooks (Islamic attitude series/*bīmish-i dīnī*) from the lowest level to the highest one is an individual thoroughly committed to one God. Islamicization was conducted in the educational system in an attempt to give people a chance to form their own personality in terms of an "Islamic person". An "Islamic person" is one who can

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(HEA 1997a, 13). This program will help students to acquire a particular skill during their secondary education through vocational training and can find an immediate job in the market without waiting for several years. This policy may not only solve the problem of intensive competition for university entrance but also meet the existing needs of the society. For further information see HEA 1997a, 13-14. The above-mentioned educational problem is well explained in Husaini 1997, 4-9.

combine in him/herself piety (*taqwā*), learning (*ʿilm*), and bravery (*shujāʿat*) (Shorish 1988, 59-60).

To develop an Islamic cultural context in schools I believe that there must be further steps taken. On this point I side with Majdfar (1997) in proposing the following steps. In addition to information transmission, students need to be familiarized with the Islamic ideology particularly the Shīʿī doctrine. They need to be taught about Qurʾānic concepts and a better approach to the Qurʾān.<sup>7</sup> Their relation with the Qurʾān should enable them to apply Qurʾānic concepts in their real life. Students also require to be familiar with the culture of prayer (*farhang-i namāz*) and the culture of Islamic leadership (*farhang-i vilāyat-i faqīh*). An Islamic educational context should create a feeling of responsibility among both teachers and students. They need to apply effectively the principle of encouraging themselves and others towards good values or behavioral patterns (*amr-i bi maʿrūf*) and distancing themselves and others from bad values or behavior (*nahy az munkar*). Development of faith in God and piety as the core value of moral values and an intimate relationship with infallible imāms (*Ahl al-Bayt*/the progeny of the Prophet Muḥammad) as typical models are some positive principles which can improve the cultural context in schools.

As discussed above, a main part of reform is related to ideological differences. According to Islamic pedagogy, priority is always given to purification and Islamic training (acquisition of Islamic attitudes and characteristics) in comparison to learning. Following this policy, the Ministry of Education produced proper religious texts for

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<sup>7</sup> I have explained Sadr's proposal in this regard in section 3.1.2., chapter three.

minorities such as Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians at the primary school level. This policy is based on the idea that it is more important to insist on the values that Islam and other religions share than focus on their differences (Shorish 1988, 61-65). For policy-makers it is evident that irreligiousness is equal to irresponsibility. They believe that the prophets of Allah struggled for a just distribution of power and wealth. The message of the prophets of all ages has been universal; all preached against oppression and arrogance.

The prophetic revolution is a revolution against oppression, discrimination, racism, colonialism and imperialism, on the one hand, and a revolution against the self-ignorance and mischief that reside within individuals, on the other. The latter could be labeled conscientization, the process needed to develop nations, with the difference that in prophetic conscientization the central concern is "self."

Although educational reforms should begin with the formal educational system, but it needs to be accompanied by changes in other social aspects. Policy-makers in post-revolutionary Iran have tried to create consistency between what is taught through religious textbooks and the message of other social agencies like family, the media and the mosques. The policy of Islamicization was easily implemented since it built upon a long-lasting Islamic historical foundation.

### ***7.5. A Glance at Iranian Cultural Revolution***

One example of cultural development in the educational sector has emerged in Post-revolutionary Iran. This provides an example of the translation of an Islamic perspective into practice. Almost two years after the victory of the Islamic Republic of



Iran in 1981, Ayatollah Khomeini appointed a council (the Council of Cultural Revolution) to provide a new program for a cultural revolution in the educational system, particularly in higher education. This movement was not only considered as a second revolution but as the core of the revolution of 1979.

Another council named the Council for Fundamental Changes in the Educational System emerged to propose new administrative policies in education. A version of the proposed recommendations by this council emerged in the spring of 1989 (Fallahi 1995, 84). Unlike in China and the former Soviet Union, where the Cultural Revolution was a political tool to stabilize the dominant communist regimes, in Iran this movement was mainly cultural and ideological. The Islamic state aimed at Islamization of culture and education. In addition to political purification it aimed at providing an Islamic educational ideal for the intimate followers of the Revolution.

The existing educational system of the time was considered as the legacy of pre-revolutionary period designed and based on Western models and influenced mainly by France and the United States (Arasteh 1969). Immediately after the Islamic Revolution universities and colleges were dominated by a confusing brand of political activism. The situation became more problematic when various religious or Marxist groups occupied offices in the universities in attempts to assert their own agendas. The system had to be matched with Islamic standards of culture and ideology.

To assist in this revolution all universities were closed from 1980 until 1983. By this time universities reopened but efforts were concentrated on revising texts from humanities and social sciences which carried ideological and values aspects. A cultural

revolution was set in motion to change morals and values throughout the whole system. The humanities were at the core in where conflict with Islamic humanology was more problematic.

An office consisting of members from both universities and the *Hawzah* (The *ʿIlmiyah* Seminary of Qum, the primary center of Islamic studies)<sup>8</sup> was established in 1982 to continue the cultural revolution in humanities by implementing both short and a long term reforms. Values and cultural revival, methodological reconstruction (giving value to revelation along with other sources/methods in the humanities), and formulating Islamic theories, concepts and standards in the humanities were the early goals pursued by this office (SAMT 1995, 6).

During the cultural revolution, the country faced some administrative problems at the university level. Many professors and instructors who felt uncertain about their future or had cooperated with the opposition had to leave their jobs. They either left the country or went into business. Graduated students who had been sent abroad on national scholarships by the previous regime remained abroad when they felt that the socio-political condition of the country, especially during the war with Iraq was not secure. This created problems for some universities in that they did not have sufficient qualified staff (Fallahi 1995, 128).

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<sup>8</sup> The Iranian educational system is made up of two main sectors, the *Hawzah* and the University. The former represents a system of traditional schooling outside of governmental control where the ultimate goal is attendance at the *Hawzah-i ʿIlmiyah* in Qum or at other *Hawzahs* elsewhere in Iran for studying Islam. This system enjoyed a history of more than ten centuries as the main educational institution in Iran and Iraq. The universities on the other hand fall under government supervision and are the culmination of the public school system, even though there is crossover between both systems. The term university stands for the non-*Hawzawi* educational system.

As far as changes in the curricula were concerned, the main investment centered on the humanities and social sciences where Islam could play a central role. This policy was pursued on the basis of an idea that these fields had been infiltrated with Western values. A major attempt at Islamicizing the textbooks of these fields was undertaken with the establishment of the "Office of the *Hawzah* and University Cooperation" (*Daftar-i Hamkāri-i Hawzeh va Dāneshgāh*). This office called experts from both universities and Islamic centers to create proper Islamic texts for the humanities and social sciences.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike the Chinese experience, the cultural revolution of Iran did not discourage graduate and post-graduate studies. As long as these kinds of studies did not contradict Islamic values they were welcomed. After the cultural revolution, the emphasis has been on both knowledge and commitment to Islam. This policy is applied to both students and faculty members. In addition to teaching, it was very important to pay attention to research and service. In this as well the Iranian Cultural Revolution differed from the Chinese cultural revolution which de-emphasized research (Sobhe 1982).

Although reconstruction of the humanities was one of the most important policies in the Iranian Cultural Revolution, the main concern of the officials has been to expand and strengthen those fields which could facilitate the modernizing and developing policies. As recent statistics reveal, "the highest number of students, 25.5% was found in engineering fields. This figure is followed by 24.2% for medical and health fields, 13.4%

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<sup>9</sup> The progress of this office in producing Islamic texts has been very slow due to the shortage of capable persons in both the *Hawzah* and University. Many *Hawzah*-based thinkers have had to become involved in socio-political affairs. The remaining members were either engaged in internal challenges or are incapable in some way of carrying out the task of producing new Islamic texts.

for pedagogic and teachers' training, and 8.2% for literature, humanities and academic theology (HEA 1994, 12).

The Cultural Revolution in fact presented a way to reform education. Islamic cultural values, according to post-Revolutionary textbooks, are more influential than economic and political tools. This is because culture deals with the soul of a community. The ultimate goals of the revolution were to change the westoxicated educational system by replacing course materials that were either not Islamic or anti-Islamic. The Western model of education was rejected for its secularizing nature. From the early 1960s, a trend of anti-Westernization emerged in the writings of scholars such as Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad, who referred to this foreign influence as *gharbzadigī* (being struck by the West, Occidentosis). For him, modernization was nothing more than a Western lifestyle which prolonged underdevelopment and brought social alienation. The only solution for this disease was a return to the true "self" and a celebration of Islamic traditional values (Rahnema & Behdad 1995, 6).

The Islamic Revolution of Iran has been described as "one of the most stunning political reverses of the century" (Graham 1980). For many Iranian revolutionary leaders, the strong relationships forged with Western societies during the previous regime had absorbed Iran into an international system of imperialism. The authoritarian political system under the two Pahlavi Shahs affected the structure of the educational system. In the post-revolutionary period, Western influences and past American interventions have been largely rejected based on Islamic values and the influence of Imam Khomeini.

Courses in social sciences and humanities have been modified according to Islamic values.

The implementation of Islamic ideals and a disassociation from Western and Eastern models slowed the developmental process during the 1980s. Islamic revolutionary reforms included the Islamicization of the whole educational system and led to cooperation between the universities and the traditional system (*Hawzah*) as steps towards an Islamic state. Islamization of education, particularly, change at higher levels remain unaccomplished. New committed professors who were sent abroad by the Islamic regime are functioning in the system. Values and cultural changes in the content and context of education practiced repeatedly. Search for clearly defined paradigms in culture and values development and practically compatible is on the way. As my closing statement, I may conclude that differences between pre- and post-revolutionary regimes lie in the role of cultural values and the impact of religious leadership in running the country.

Nationalism, socialism and capitalism are regarded as barriers to the implementation of Islamic policies by the Islamic regime. These ideological pitfalls are introduced in the textbooks as contrary to Islamic ideals. The textbooks teach students that rebelling against oppressive forces and repenting for their individual shortcomings are the duties of a Muslim. The introduction of the Islamic political system in textbooks, the revising of history textbooks, and the requirement of Islamic dress for female students and teachers are just some of the changes that have been made in the post-Revolutionary system.

## ***Concluding Observations***

In explaining the shifts in the formulation of the concept of development, I have concentrated on investigating the Islamic view of culture and values development. To me culture and values have a decisive impact on our definition of development and on what we regard as quality in human life. Although developmentalists have had a considerable impact in diverting attention from economic to human development, the parameters which determine the latter are still ambiguous. This is mainly due to the humanology and values definitions that each theory provides. Human development from an Islamic perspective must consider the development of human relationships with the self, with God, with society and with nature (natural resources).

To elaborate on the Islamicity of cultural development, social change and education, I began with a discussion of whether Islam, as a religious system, is adapted to providing answers to the various aspects of ever-changing human life. This discussion has tried to answer the basic question of whether Islamic laws and values can still function in modern life. For me, Mutahhari's and Sadr's explanations are the most convincing. They have been the most successful in bringing out the dynamic mechanisms that exist in Islam. Islam is a religion that was revealed fourteen hundred years ago; therefore, it is most likely to be put to the test in terms of its functionality in ever-changing circumstances. I have, thus, focused on the mechanisms that have allowed it to remain effective and alive up to the present age. This discussion has facilitated my main discussion about the impact of Islamic culture and values on the connection between

education and social change. An Islamic alternative in development and social change is possible only if Islam remains effective in confronting modern, non-Islamic theories.

Using a theoretical and analytical methodology, I have then attempted to discover the differences between Western and Islamic perspectives on socio-educational change, emphasizing their cultural and values aspects. Development, social change and education have been investigated in the light of various concerns. In this dissertation, I have focused on these themes in order to determine the impact of culture and values on their evolution. I believe that the interrelationships between these themes are always dictated by a given culture and values system. Thus, social change, cultural development and educational efforts in an Islamic society are characterized by a specific pattern of Islamic culture and values.

I have relied for the most part on the pioneering ideas of S. M. B. Sadr in elaborating the Islamic perspective on cultural development and the Qur'ānic social norms. At the same time I have examined other themes related to the foundation of this model, employing an analytical method.

For Sadr an Islamic culture of development is characterized by the following factors:<sup>1</sup>

1. Qualification of life's goals: Through ideological development people are educated to believe in an Islamic ideological system which directs them toward God as the ultimate goal of life. This belief requires them to build in themselves characteristics that resemble those of God. They are also required ethically to cultivate a correct

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed explanation see Sadr 1982a, "*Manābi' al-Qudrah fi al-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah (The Major Sources of Power in the Islamic State)*", 180-205.

understanding of wealth and what Islam regards as *dunyā* (the entire life of this world). To reinforce a feeling of responsibility among human beings and to motivate people's feeling of responsibility regarding their mission of vicegerency on the earth, they need to be informed about the finite and temporary nature of this world. Based on this Islamic perspective the entire life of this world is a path toward the everlasting life of the hereafter and a tool for self-development and strengthening one's relation with God. Therefore instead of being a scene of competition over wealth and power, this world will be a realm of self-development.

2. Any Islamic development model must rely on an Islamic historical background. A model can effectively motivate Muslim citizens if they consider it as a part of their own Islamic heritage. The most appropriate model has always been considered to consist in the social order founded by the Prophet Muhammad and his early successors, who strove for the application of a complete but pure form of Islam.

3. Muslims have a negative perception of all non-Islamic models, particularly those which duplicate the experience of the colonialist states. Western models usually evoke feelings of fear and hostility against those who colonized the Islamic lands for several centuries. An Islamic model of development, therefore, must be disconnected from experiences which recall these feelings. Nationalism in many Muslim countries was indeed a post-colonial and distancing reaction against colonization. Nevertheless, for Sadr, nationalism represented nothing more than a historical and linguistic relation with a particular nation's heritage. It does not provide a world-view which offers an alternative when a nation is faced with choosing between various schools of thought.



4. There is also a crucial need to separate pure Islamic ideas from local customs and misinterpretations. The intermingling of local customs with original Islamic concepts has created obstacles to real development in Islamic societies. An example of this intermingling has shown itself in the oppressive conditions imposed on Muslim women. If Muslim thinkers cannot provide an emancipating model of development which can free Muslim women from this oppression in the name of Islamic rules, women will exchange Islamic instructions for Western ones and will thus challenge any Islamic model.<sup>2</sup>

5. There must be a reconnection of Muslim society with God and divinity. Muslims need to involve themselves in the development process as a religious obligation. This can be obtained when people realize that their daily actions are all part of their human vicegerency over the earth. In this way any step towards development will be regarded as a religious obligation. This understanding will provide a psychological motivation for the effective participation of Muslim citizens in the process of development.

I must also maintain that the Western approach to the examination of culture and values development and social change, as another part of my theoretical comparison, includes two lines of thought, i.e., North American and European. These two lines encompass pre-modern, modern and postmodern perspectives. Each in turn includes various schools of thought and prominent figures. My approach in this area has been holistic, and has aimed at exploring the chief values and cultural emphases.

Western developmentalists and social thinkers rarely adhere to a single theory. Present scholarship suggests a heterogeneous and synthetic approach. This approach unites the elements of different theories in proposing an inclusive theoretical pattern. I

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<sup>2</sup> See Sadr 1982a, 203.

have reviewed this variety of approaches in order to distinguish the common elements. This method has enabled me to develop a complementary dialogue between these theories.

The Western approach encompasses a variety of theoretical challenges, including a give-and-take process. This approach begins with classical Hellenistic culture and philosophy, which preceded the emergence of the Roman Catholic perspective. The religious and philosophical synthesis of these two perspectives dominated Western culture for centuries. It was the scientific revolution, however, which facilitated the emergence of the Enlightenment. The accomplishments of the Enlightenment in the humanities and social sciences were in turn strongly influenced by evolutionary theory in the natural sciences. The major paradigm in evolutionary theory was its explanation of social change, which it viewed as a transformation from a primitive state to a modern complex mode. A sociological analysis may link evolutionary theories to colonialism. The founders of evolutionary theory assumed that human societies are bipolar: developed and undeveloped (developing). It was widely assumed that the path to success for the latter lay in duplicating the experience of developed nations. This attitude, along with the policy of aid offered by developed nations, facilitated the colonial invasion of undeveloped countries.

Explaining the characteristics of an Islamic culture of development, Sadr (1982, 204-5) maintains that connection to the divine or metaphysical world is one of the major distinctions. Western thought, Sadr argues, lacks this characteristic. Even in Christianity, one of the major religions of the West, the gods or God provided are earthly and materialistic. Christians look for a God disconnected from divinity and visible on the

earth. Major scientific theories such as evolutionary theory follow the same path. The search for an animal origin of the human species is in fact a reflection of disconnection from divinity and confining humanity to the earth and the earthly environment. Marx's theory, on the other hand, which explains social evolution as being based on the evolution of the tools of production is another attempt to make God descend from heaven to the earth. These theories have resulted in the emergence of a materialistic values system regarding wealth, power and property. Sadr assumes that the rise of certain schools of moral thought in the West which focus mainly on seeking more pleasure and self-interest is the normal consequence of this materialistic values system (1982, 204-5).

Sadr (1991, 18-9) eventually concludes that Europeans' disconnection from divinity and their alliance with materialism has had some philosophical consequences. Rejection of any type of divine supervision, rejection of all religious obligations, refutation of any sort of external limitation, serious affiliation to absolute freedom and individualism and the development of the school of existentialism in Europe are, to Sadr, the normal outcomes of the disconnection of humankind from God and heaven. Absolute individual freedom has facilitated the emergence of destructive social conflicts. Anyone who believes in absolute individual freedom will not tolerate the efforts of others to further their own self-interest. The emergence of conflict is also regarded by Sadr as the other side of the same coin. Conflict theory and evolutionary thought in the natural sciences, which explain that the survival of all living organisms is based on a natural struggle, and Marx's theory of social conflict which views social conflict as an inevitable norm for human social relationships, are two more consequences of materialism and the

disconnection from divinity. These culture and values characteristics are aspects which distinguish an Islamic model of development from a non-Islamic model.

The events of the two World Wars furthermore resulted in a more pessimistic attitude among Western thinkers towards the future of social change. This trend gave birth to a new trend of theoretical framework, known as structural functionalism. This latter explains how social change is based on the functions of existing social structures.

These intellectual challenges polarized the theories of socio-educational change into harmonious and conflict theories. The former were challenged for their negligence of disharmonies in social change. Proponents of harmonious theories were condemned for being static and for viewing schools as pattern-maintainers of society. Up to that point the key element in theories of social and educational change had been economic development. This over-emphasis in socio-educational thought gave birth to neo-evolutionary and modernization theory which provides more room for modern values. Still the terms developed and undeveloped, among other terms proposed by theorists, are based on economic criteria. Modernization theory is a synthetic mode of evolutionary and structural functionalist theories. Adherents of modernization theory ask educators to promote desire for achievement in a nation's citizens.

A major question raised at this stage was whether it was reasonable for undeveloped countries to pursue the same path that followed by developed nations. Human capital theory (as representative of capitalist thought) and Marx's ideas both emerged on the scene during the nineteenth century with the difference that the latter proposed a revolutionary method. Dependency theory then emerged and suggested a "dividing line," according to which nations must be divided into core and periphery.

Development and social change, to adherents of this theory, are correlated processes which link regions and societies both in the domestic and international domains. This theory views development as a process happening among and between societies. Liberation theory was the next to receive attention, especially as it showed, more concern for educational investments.

A general overview of these theories indicates that evolutionary and revolutionary paradigms have had the most impact on modern Western theories of development and social change. These two theoretical frameworks imply cultural and values connotations. They reflect the dominant cultural atmosphere of modern times in the establishment of social theories.

Despite its long period of influence, however, modern thought could not face up to the critiques of postmodernists. Postmodernism has challenged modern politics, even though it doesn't provide any modified alternative. This new trend began with the language of criticism. Postmodernists have discredited the structure of human knowledge and have asserted discovered truths. The problem, according to postmodernism, is that modern thought is one-sidedly Eurocentric. Present scholarship needs to withdraw from the dominant authority of Western culture. It reflects only the culture and language of the white upper-middle class of Western societies. Postmodern thinkers advocate an interdisciplinary approach to the study of society and culture. To postmodernists, there is no single clear theory allowing us to study society and culture inclusively. They have proposed the necessity of a critical theory in education. Critical pedagogy, liberating pedagogy, awareness about the political nature of education, and the impact of hidden curriculum are some themes which are investigated by postmodern educationalists.

Postmodern thinkers, nonetheless, should realize the necessity for a language of hope besides the promotion of a language of critique.

Postmodernists have also called attention to the politics of power relationships, and have reccredited the subjective value of human knowledge, called for empowering pedagogical models and insisted on the impossibility of acquiring value-free facts. Postmodern educationalists argue that schools are not and cannot function as factories. Teaching-learning relationships must develop as mutual cooperation rather than top-down authoritative transfer. Yet this trend is untested and has neglected self-critique.

In the Islamic section I have focused on the elaboration of Sadr's model of the Islamic culture of development. Before any critical comment, I have attempted to portray a complete picture of this model. I hope my efforts will contribute to the formulation of an Islamic model of education and social, cultural and values change, which could provide clues and elements for more comprehensive theoretical frameworks.

A brief study of Sadr's writings indicates that he divided his intellectual energy along two major lines. On the one hand, he has attempted to review major non-Islamic theories critically. In this connection he has used a comparative approach to show the points of distance between Islamic and non-Islamic models. On the other hand, he has devoted many of his writings to explaining what he considers a pure Islamic model, using a multidimensional approach. His writings naturally reflect the intellectual atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s. Theories which were unknown in Sadr's day, such as postmodern thought, multiculturalism, globalization and the idea of a global village are obviously not touched upon by Sadr. Fundamental elements of his thought however can be used by his disciples to provide a Sadrian methodology in investigating new theories and explaining

an Islamic alternative. Sadr's multidimensional concerns, which, to my understanding, accurately reflected the concerns of all Muslim societies during Sadr's period, prevented him from moving beyond the pioneering stage to provide deeper and more narrowly-focused answers in each field that he touched on.

A distinctive point in Sadr's theory, to me, is that he always approaches issues systematically. "Systematic" to Sadr means a lot. He looks at Islam as a complete system of belief and action. A researcher who wants to study Islam must be aware that any methodology dealing with any aspect of Islamic thought that is disconnected from the entire system and other subsystems can lead to prejudice and misunderstanding, Sadr argues (1989,44-5). In his theory of socio-educational change and culture and values development, Sadr pursues the same methodology. Although his socio-educational theory is only a subsystem of the entire Islamic system that he was exploring, he again investigates it systematically. Therefore, he touches on various subjects and discusses them briefly in order to provide complementary elements of his theory of social, cultural and values change.

A clear understanding of these complementary elements is critical to a precise appreciation of his essential theory. It is not surprising then that in this dissertation I have included those complementary elements that I have deemed to be necessary for an understanding of his essential theory.

Sadr's theory begins with a proposal regarding the necessity of dialogical inquiry in Qur'ānology. His theory reflects a Qur'ānic view which is discovered through this method. Sadr (1991, 17-22) then explains that his socio-educational theory is based on an

Islamic humanological concept. Since human beings according to this view are God's vicegerents, their responsibility to superintend the earth and to co-operate responsibly precedes their human rights. To elaborate on human vicegerency, Sadr formulates his fourfold theory of the relationship between divinity and humanity. This relationship begins with God as both the Creator and the first Teacher of human beings through prophetic education.

An important feature of Sadr's theory is his emphasis on the normativity of human social life. He categorizes social norms into three types and maintains that education can prepare human beings for active participation in social change if it informs them about the structure of these norms and how they relate to human behavior. Consciousness of social norms widens human choice as does consciousness of natural norms. A significant difference between a religious and a secular educational approach in understanding and transmitting these norms to citizens is that in the former norms are always regarded as divine in nature. This understanding links normativity to divinity and wisdom to faith. The secular approach views the discovery of norms as an avenue which facilitates a greater mastery of one's world. There is no need, in secularism, to look for the influence of divinity.

Another key point is Sadr's understanding of religion. To Sadr, religion, before being a combination of divine rules which were revealed to prophets at various periods in human history, is an ontological aspect of human identity. Religion is existentially intermingled with human identity. The consequence, therefore, is that human beings cannot disregard it for ever or even for a long period of time. Secular societies which disregard religion's impact on their individual and collective lives, are distancing



themselves from an ontological fact. Social disorder may appear at various levels if this negligence is permanent. In the language of the Qur'ān, this ontological entity is referred to as *fiṭrah* (the sort of human existence).

Sadr hypothesizes that development and social change may be best explained if one can see human beings at the intersection of two lines of relationships: one with society and the other with nature (natural resources). The quality of human relationships in each of these lines depends on the quality of human links with the other line. The influential elements are the presence or the absence of Islamic culture and values. Although at first glance these two lines may seem to be disconnected, they are Qur'ānically, for Sadr, correlated. A qualified and a sustainable access to nature (natural resources) strongly depends on a just pattern of social relationships. Societies with a just distribution of wealth and power will enjoy an integration of human resources and, normally, a more creative access to natural resources. I call this situation a just and pious human condition which usually results from the implementation of Islamic culture and values through prophetic education. The establishment of a qualified human condition in social relations, according to Sadr, requires values reconstruction at the individual level.

A value-free or a value-laden access to natural resources will lead to two different sorts of social relationships. The determining variable is the human values system which stems from his/her world-view and his/her philosophy of life. A God-centered or a secular world-view results in a certain values system which dramatically influences human interaction with society and nature. The difference relates to the impact of belief in God and the type of our relationship (presence or absence of the element of

vicegerency) with nature and society. These elements will determine whether our values system is religious or secular. Except in the pre-modern era, when Saint Augustine provided a Christian theory, Western theories of socio-educational change have been overwhelmingly secular. They have paid little attention to human relationships with nature and society from a religious perspective. A religious perspective interprets the human relationships with nature, on the one hand, as a link between God's vicegerents and nature, and human relationships with other people, on the other, as co-operation among those who share the responsibility for wielding this vicegerency. This attitude motivates people to look for duties and limitations that shape their relationships with society and nature.

To encourage conscious but responsible actions in human beings, Sadr maintains that human relationships with nature and society are divinely normative. Just as in natural science we attempt to increase our control over nature through our discovery of natural norms, human relationships with nature and within the social context are themselves normative. Exploration of these norms informs human beings of the link between human social behavior and its inevitable consequences.

In my section on women, I have shown that the first step in cultural development is to look at women and their problems not only as a female issue but rather as one of gender. This perspective suggests that problems involving men and women are interrelated. Contributions to their improvement must come from both men and women. Providing a general picture of an Islamic womanology, I have stated that in post-revolutionary Iran two challenges remain problematic: the lack of just paradigms which reflect a true picture of a Muslim woman, and the practical dilemmas of everyday social

intervention. The major concern is to determine how the country can translate Islamic values into development plans in an inclusive way. Another dilemma is the lack of a just pattern which defines the complementary but not discriminatory roles that men and women perform in the family and in society. In the final chapter, I have briefly touched on the possibilities and dilemmas of translating an Islamic theory of culture and values change into practice. I assume that, in today's Iran, development challenges are due to the unsolved tensions between three major elements: Islamicity, modernity and Iranianness. The country will move smoothly toward a sustainable model of development only if its development model includes these three elements simultaneously. Culture and values tensions are located within a feasible conjunction of these three elements. Disregard of any of these elements will lead to a problematic situation. Modernization plans must accordingly include both Islamic and Iranian values and cultural characteristics.

### ***Educational Implications***

Unlike Marx, Sadr develops a conflict theory which traces all sorts of social tensions back to an inner conflict. He argues that social conflicts are, indeed, expressions of inner, unresolved conflicts. For Sadr (1984, 93), inner conflicts happen between two types of values and desires which then construct the foundations of the human psychological and values structure. It is unlikely that human beings can ever overcome this inner conflict without the help of prophetic education. Prophets instruct human beings in internal and external guiding signs, and in the nature and the method of constructing inner values and desires (self-notification). They aim to help human beings to overcome their inner conflict by lining up on the side of divine values (self-

purification). For Sadr (1979, 188) two types of values, Satanic and divine, interface within human beings. One stems from their corporeal dimension while the other has its source in their incorporeality.

Unless one can overcome this inner conflict in favor of the divine side, one's behavior at the social level will be problematic. Sadr proposes that the establishment of social justice begins with self-values-construction. He asserts that human beings, according to a Qur'anic point of view, are created with a twofold inner structure (Q. 91:8). This structure usually leads to an inner conflict. Human values construction dramatically depends on the way that one solves this conflict. False processes of values-making will lead human beings to absolutize limited ideals and values. The process of values making, for Sadr, will be healthy and stable if it originates from a religious world-view which places God at the center. If this values construction happens consciously, it meets the human psychological need to have absolute values and ideals.

If this inner conflict remains unresolved, the values system will be confusing or unstable. It will entail identity crisis and values disease. Prophetic teachings are the complementary element which helps individuals to overcome this inner conflict and construct a stable religious values system. For Sadr, prophetic education is a way of developing attitudes and religious values system to help citizens to participate actively in social justice.

My understanding is that Sadr's theory relates the establishment of social justice to self-values-construction. The stages that link individual values construction to social justice are the following. The starting point is the construction of an Islamic world-view.

The successful outcome of this stage will usually result in piety and self-abstinence. Piety is the core value which can lead to the establishment of the Islamic moral values system. An established moral values system, furthermore, leads to self-control. In other words, Sadr proposes a model which illustrates the impact of prophetic education on social change. He maintains that prophets are sent to educate individuals and citizens in order that they may build a just society. To do so they begin with individuals. Through divine books, they attempt to educate people self-conscientized of their inner potentialities and inner challenges. This conscientization will result in personal efforts to construct the core element of piety. Pious citizens will behave justly when they interface with other individuals at a social level. A citizen who successfully passes these stages willingly participates in the establishment of social justice.

From an Islamic viewpoint, therefore, any just form of social construction must begin from individual values development. This is why the latter is regarded in Islamic moral education as the greater campaign (*al-jihād al-akbar*).

Social tensions, in Sadr's theory, stem from problems related to the individual's values system. Unresolved inner conflict leads to the construction of a diseased values system. A citizen with this characteristic will have a problematic relationship with society and nature. This problematic relationship will promote diseased values among citizens. It will then inaugurate an even more damaging cycle of events. Unrestricted access to wealth and power without a divinely constructed values system will lead to the construction of a new values system which is centered around wealth and power. This diseased values system facilitates social oppression. The next step is a Pharaonic social

stratification (to borrow the language of the Qur'ān) which results in social frustration and the disintegration of human resources. These oppressive power relationships eventually lead to what Sadr calls social death. Therefore, values illiteracy, associated with a state of wealth and power, fosters a feeling of wealth and privilege. This psychological background motivates people to project their inner conflict onto a dominant-subordinate power relationship. Sadr, accordingly, concludes that impious use of wealth and power will change the pattern of power relationships. The establishment of social justice should thus focus on individual values construction.

Yet there remain untouched questions. I am still uncertain as to what Sadr might have proposed in explaining the particular method of prophetic moral education. How can this method help individuals to solve their inner conflict? How do prophets enable individuals to build the core value of piety? What are the supporting elements when intervening factors jeopardize piety or create new inner conflicts? The answer must involve a process of educational investment which is distinguished by a religious approach. Nor have I explored in full the characteristics of how a constructive or destructive values system results from individual attempts to overcome inner conflicts.

Another key educational point in Sadr's theory of social change is his emphasis on the necessity of educational investment in the most vulnerable classes in society. Those who suffer from values poverty or a diseased values system and cannot construct a stable values system must receive a better values education. In Sadr's terminology they are the self-oppressors. I assume that in Sadr's model, values poverty is as crucial as

problems in other aspects. We may consider a group as poor or problematic in a society when it suffers from poverty, sickness, lack of income or political oppression.

The most vulnerable group for Sadr is the one which suffers from values poverty. Instability and values fluctuation create frustrating circumstances for this group. Members of this group are handicapped in their relationships with society and nature. The root of the problem is that they are value-ly diseased. His theory of social classification in an unjust society proposes a new terminology for social class. Oppressors, sub-oppressors, holders of power and wealth, self-oppressors, the oppressed the retiring and the indifferent are all classes that fit within Sadr's theory. I have explained how an unbalanced density of each of these classes leads to social inequality and social death.

Based on the quality of their power relationships, Sadr divides societies into Pharaonic and just communities. Self-oppression, in Sadr's model, derives from remaining silent within a Pharaonic social context. A healthy values education educates citizens to live in a just society. For Sadr, social life and death depend on just or unjust social classification. The root lies in the quality of values education. The possibility of one global nation will increase when the world moves from a Pharaonic to a just power relationship. This movement essentially depends on the construction of a God-centered values system among human beings. As long as we suffer from inner conflict and values disease, social justice will remain merely a dream.

I believe that my contribution in elaborating on Sadr's theory of culture and values development sheds light on an untouched aspect of his thought. Previous studies<sup>1</sup> of Sadr focus primarily on his contributions in the fields of Shī'ī jurisprudence and its

foundations (*fiqh* and *'uṣūl*), the renewal of the Islamic law, Islamic economy, comparative philosophy, Qur'ān exegesis, politics and educational reform in the 'Ilmiyah Seminary of Najaf. I have highlighted Sadr's idea of shifting the concept of development from a macro-social and economic basis to one of micro-individual values. To me this new understanding involves restoring culture and values to development models. To establish this new conceptualization Sadr proposes the foundations of his own theory regarding the human inner conflict in constructing values and ideals. He holds up prophetic education as the solution to this conflict. I have also reconstructed Sadr's typology of human values-making, his model of class structure within a stratified Pharaonic society, and his explanation of social life and death from a Qur'ānic point of view. Elements of Sadr's theory on culture and values development are collected from his own writings and the writings of other scholars who have studied his thought in this respect. I have endeavored to collect and combine various theoretical components in order to construct an Islamic theory of culture and values development.

### ***Implications for Further Research***

In this project I have touched upon various aspects of Sadr's theory on culture and values development. Many questions have been raised but only some of them have been dealt with in any detail. Therefore there remain many challenges. The following issues are among those which require further investigation.

1. In light of my discussion regarding the characteristics of an Islamic model of cultural development, is there any possibility of having a universal model of culture and

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<sup>3</sup> See my introductory section, p. 15-6 and chapter 3., section 3.1.1. for a detailed report of these studies.



values development?

2. Is it feasible, considering the trend of globalization, for a nation to preserve her own cultural identity while developing herself as a full partner in the global economy?

3. What could be the non-Islamic alternative in resolving the problems arising from the inner conflict of human nature? Is there any way to avoid the formation of hierarchy and dominance? What are the cultural determinants of creating a just human condition in this planet?

4. What can Muslim countries and other nations learn from one another? What could be the contribution of Sadr's model in its dialogue with other non-Islamic models of culture and values development? Is there any correlation, as Sadr argues, between macro-social and micro-individual culture and values development?

5. What can do to create an environment of mutual respect and understanding in the post-modern era where individuals not only recognize each other but learn to co-exist?

6. What will be the role of religion in our quest for a global values development and cultural integration, and how will it function? How, ultimately can we maintain our beliefs while attempting to arrive at an inclusive culture in a diverse world?

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<sup>1</sup> To the best of my knowledge these lectures were not published by the date of completion of this study. I have therefore had to rely on the audio-visual tapes available to me in Montreal.

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