

The Examination of Human Nature from the Viewpoint of *Nahj al-Balagha*

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Abstract

The Muslim thinkers have offered different theories to specify the human nature. The disagreement that exists among them leads us to refer to the divine knowledge in order to achieve an accurate specification of the human nature. The divine knowledge, especially as manifested in *Nahj al-Balagha*, puts forth the notion that human nature has been created in two stages: first, his essence has been generated and then, his combined domains have been formed. Accordingly, human being is similar to other creatures with regard to essence, but is different from them concerning the combined domains. In the first step, human essence originates from the Eternal Divine Light, and in the second stage, he receives his various domains. Human domains can be generally divided into the physical and spiritual realms. Subsequently, his spiritual domain is divided into different dimensions such as life, passion, rationality, and faith (reason). As a result, from the viewpoint of the divine knowledge, especially *Nahj al –Balagha*, the human being can be defined as "a luminous essence constituted from the two domains of body and soul who has various dimensions such as life, passion, rationality, and faith."

Keywords: Human nature, human essence, human domains, dimensions of soul, *Nahj al-Balagha*.

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Thinking about Death and the Meaning of Life in Heidegger

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Abstract

According to Heidegger, thinking about death and its influence on the meaning of life arose from the relationship of man with his being and being to his death. Heidegger considers death to be original to Dasein and considers an authentic life as a meaningful life. He considers the thought of death as a force to break the absurdity of the daily routines of life. Facing nothingness and struggle in the face of death, Dasein gains insight into the reality of the world, freedom and authentication of his life, and as a result, gives meaning and direction to his life. Preserving personal identity, discovering Dasein's existential possibilities in this world, conscious choice and thoughtful life, and responsibility for themselves and others are the consequences of an authentic and meaningful life. A person who does not die has an inalienable life. And there is this kind of fear and escape from death and the routines. Such a human being lives in refuge from the fear and anxiety caused by the thought of death, and lives in the will of the community. But, he does not have a real sense of security and the other decision-makers will determine his destiny. Such a person does not have a clear understanding of the goals pursued by his behaviors, since he does not own his life and thus feels confused and finds his life meaningless.

Keywords: Death awareness, anxiety, meaning of life, Heidegger, Dasein, consequences.

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The Consistency between Religion and Philosophy in Regard to “God and His Creation” and “the Eternity of the World”, based on the Views of Fârâbi and Ibn-Sina

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Abstract

The relationship between religion and philosophy has been of concern to theologians and philosophers for a long time. Among the Peripatetics, Fârâbi and Ibn-Sina have extensively tried to show the consistency and integration between these two areas. The aim of this paper is to show the consistency between religion and philosophy in two important controversial problems, namely “God and His creation” and “the eternity of the world”, based on the writings of some Peripatetics. In effect, this research is mainly based on the views of Aristotle, Fârâbi and Ibn-Sina which have been compared with the Abrahamic religious doctrines. So, we will first examine Aristotle’s views on these two issues, as the founder of the Peripatetic school of philosophy. Following that, Fârâbi’s and Ibn-Sina’s opinions will be compared with the Islamic doctrines, based on some verses from the Qur’an, as the most reliable source of the Islamic principles. Finally, this paper concludes with the fact that there is not a deep and fundamental disagreement between the Islamic doctrines and the philosophers’ views on the two aforementioned issues.

Keywords: Aristotle, Fârâbi, Ibn-Sina, God and His creation, eternity of the world.

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An Investigation of Ibn 'Arabi's Theory of Allegorical Interpretation and its Application to the Mystic Interpretation of the Qur'ān

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Abstract

The article at hand is an investigation of the mystic method of interpretation of Ibn 'Arabi, one of the pillars of Islamic mysticism. In this study, first a brief introduction to the biography of Ibn 'Arabi and his interpretive works is given and then his interpretive method – which is based on his claimed mystical intuition of the divine revelation – is examined using his interpretive works. Although Ibn 'Arabi believes that intuition can be both the Divine revelations and the Satanic suggestions and Devil impostures, and so the mystic is in need of truthfulness criteria of reason, the Divine Book, and Sunna, he could not keep up with the practical observation of the foregoing principles. The main questions of the article are: What is the basis of the mystic interpretation method of Ibn 'Arabi? Can mystical intuition per se be a complete method for the interpretation of the Qur'ān? Does mystical intuition need the truthfulness criterion? How can the Divine revelations be discerned from the Satanic suggestions? How much has Ibn 'Arabi succeeded in keeping up with the practical observation of the truthfulness criterion? The investigation of his interpretive method is a thorny undertaking due to what experts believe as the intrusion of forgeries and distortions in his works. It is undeniable that in his existing works, there are cases that are not defensible from the viewpoint of reason, the Divine Book, and Sunna, in a way that even his supporters have been forced to rely on the discussion of forgeries and distortions in his works at times. Some instances of such cases are presented in this article. Finally, the article ends with the conclusions of the discussion.

Keywords: Interpretation, Mysticism, Interpretive method, Subjective interpretation of the qur'ānic text, Mystical intuition, Divine revelations, Satanic suggestions.

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The Analysis of the Foundations of the Epistemic Relativism in the Secular Ethics

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Abstract

Given the fact that moral relativism is rooted in the relativity of episteme, it is necessary to address its epistemic foundations. In this paper, three bases of rationalism, individualism, and reductionism will be examined. Since relativism may also be raised at the level of religious ethics, secular ethics will remove the first possibility out of discussion. As one of the foundations of relativism, the minimalistic rationalism holds that the moral stimulus of the human being is not intellect, rather emotion. Reason is simply a prudent instrument under the control of desire. Here, t rationality disappears and the authority of all moral theories is destroyed. In individualism, all humans are equal and have the right to be free to determine ethical values. In this case, the "other" isn't important at all. Non-awareness of all personal desires and the lack of solution as behavioral contradictions occur are the defeciations of this foundation. Reductionism as another foundation regards the human in one aspect and reduces the morality to subjective things and it serves ethics just for the purpose of the biological needs. Not only this foudnation destroys authority itself, but also denies the lower values and needs by negating the higher values

Keywords: Relativism, minimum rationalism, individualism, reductionism.

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An Analysis of the Components of Religious Knowledge from the Viewpoint of Master Javadi Amoli

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Abstract

Reasoning and knowledge are very important for the human as a conscious and self-determined creature. For the societies that have accepted the divine religion as the main element of their life, it is essential to know what thought is religious and what knowledge is divine. The purpose of this article is to examine the quiddity of the Islamic knowledge from the viewpoint of Master Javadi Amoli. The article at hand clarifies the components of religious knowledge and the way to achieve them from his viewpoint. The study has adopted a descriptive-analytical method of research, and has found that Master Javadi deems reason and narration as the two means of the attainment of religious knowledge. From his viewpoint, it is no possible for anyone to refer to the religious sources and be successful in attaining the religious knowledge without having an intellectual background. Understanding the religious texts with an empty mind cannot happen to anyone and the supporters of secularism – who claim to the contrary – have numerous disagreements among themselves in understanding the religious texts. Of course, Master Amoli does not either accept the theory of religious knowledge evolution, which sets the reason as the criterion for the accuracy or inaccuracy of one's understanding of religious texts. From the viewpoint of Master Javadi, intellectual and narrative assessments are the two components that interact to form the religious knowledge. The intellectual assessment is manifested in the form of Enlightening reason and Source reason, and the narrative assessment is exhibited in referring to the words of the Qur'an and Sunna. These two components collaborate to reveal the religious knowledge, and even if – in an impossible supposition – there is a contradiction, this contradiction will be solved through the preference of one over the other.

Keywords: Reason, Narration, Enlightening reason, Source reason, Contradiction, Revelation.

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A Comparative Study on the Redemptive Faith based on the Views of Mulla Sadra and the First Leaders of Protestantism

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Abstract

Abrahamic Religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) consider faith as a condition for salvation and redemption in the other world; of course not every faith, but the faith that is life saving and redemptive. This kind of faith, i.e. a redemptive one, is a real one and comes from the religious texts. But the question is what kind of faith is this? According to Mulla Sadra, redemptive faith is a kind of faith that comes from *burhan* (reasoning, a kind of firm argument) and is the fruit of intuition face-a-face the faith of the simple and ordinary people. However Luther believes that only when a person believes full heartedly and is confident about his faith, then s/he may receive redemption. Calvin also holds that redemptive faith is just the faith that comes from a firm and strong belief so that it can overcome all the doubts that may weaken it. This research tries to compare the views of these three thinkers of Islam and Christianity.

Keywords: Faith, redemptive faith, Mulla Sadra, Luther, Calvin.

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Inherent Independence or Dependence of Ethics from Religion: An Examination of the Viewpoints of Kant and Allamah Tabataba'i

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Abstract

The article at hand aims at specifying the inherent independence of ethics from religion and showing the relationship between the two in line with examining the ethical teachings of Kant and Allamah Tabataba'i, so as to disclose the stances of these two thinkers toward the foregoing issue. The discussion of ethics and its relationship with religion has a strong relationship with the discussion of the axiology of ethical propositions and the functions of practical reason. Therefore, the discussion on each one without addressing the other one will be fruitless. This article first provides a brief explanation of the stances and main epistemological structures of Kant and Allamah Tabataba'i toward ethical rulings and then investigates the main viewpoints of these two thinkers toward the independence of ethics from religion. Next, the commonalities and discrepancies of the views of the two thinkers are used to show that based on the inherent meaning of ethical rulings, we might consider the two as believing in the inherent independence of ethics from religion, since both deem that practical reason – with its intellectual criteria – can identify the goodness and badness of deeds. Meanwhile, as the main source for the recognition of value-related rulings, reason is sometimes in need of the complementing role of religion. At the end, some shortcomings of Kant's viewpoint are discussed that are not witnessed in the viewpoint of Allamah Tabataba'i.

Keywords: Ethics, Immanuel Kant, Allamah Tabataba'i, Religion, Practical reason, Self-determination of will.

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The Theory of *Śūnyatā* and Its Related Concepts in *Mādhyamika* Philosophy of Buddhism

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Abstract

Mahāyāna is a large branch of Buddhism with numerous followers in China, Nepal, Tibet, Mongolia, Korea, and Japan. While emphasizing on the same principles as its sister branch, Thravāda, Mahāyāna views them in the light of different interpretations. The theory of *Śūnyatā* (void) and its related teachings, the belief in the ideal of budhisatva and the existence of many budhisatvas, and the way of devotion or *bhaktimārga* are considered as the main constituting tenets of Mahāyāna, and its main differentiating points against Thravāda. Moreover, without rejecting the Thravāadian scriptures, each Mahāyāna school has its own authoritative texts, which express its particular views. One of the oldest schools of thought in Mahāyāna is Mādhyamika or the middle way. This school is also called *Śūnyavāda* or *Śūnyatāvāda*, because *Śūnyatā* is considered as its basic principle. In this paper we are trying to reexamine this concept and its related teachings through the Mādhyamika texts, while giving a short history of the development of its philosophical thought.

Keywords: Mahāyāna, Mādhyamika, *Śūnyatā*, the middle way.

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The Epistemological Assumptions of the Modern Science

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Abstract

The positivistic approach in the modern natural science regards experience as the unique way to the natural sciences. This approach has received general acceptance over the recent centuries so much so that the progress of the natural sciences was considered to be indebted to this approach. This view was challenged in the second half of the twentieth century and some philosophers and social scientists, by discussing the role of presuppositions, have tried to challenge the exclusivity of the method of natural sciences, at least in some stages. In this work, I have tried to extract, some epistemological assumptions of the modern natural sciences that influenced the selection of data and hypotheses, shaping scientific theories of the scientists and even their evaluations. Assumptions whose presence or absence, in the mental context of the scientists in the recent centuries, could have created a different path in the direction of these sciences, as revision in any of these assumptions could have had an impact on the developmental process of natural sciences.

Keywords: positivism, assumption, epistemological, natural sciences, experimental sciences.

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A Reflection on Different Expositions about the Secret of the Praise by the Creatures

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Abstract

There are many verses and Islamic *hadiths* which imply that everything that is in the universe praises God. This statement has raised several expansions and clarifications in the history of the Islamic thought. Mystics, philosophers and theologians and commentators of the Qur'an explain it on the basis of their approaches and points of view. This article, at the beginning presents a special classification of different religious texts and then explains various approaches, and afterwards classifies them into eight; a classification which could not be found in the other works. In the end, analysis and theoretical critiques of each is presented with their due prerequisites. As a main result, on the one hand, based on the ontological aspect, some kind of life and cognition, and on the other hand, on the epistemological bases, the implications of the universe to existence, and the glorification of the Creator God can be affirmed and this is the exact implication of the Islamic verses and narratives.

Keywords: Praise, God's transcendence, invocation of creatures, the intelligence of the universe, influence of life and cognition.

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The Critical Analysis of the Interpretation of Avicenna and Mirdamad of the Theory of the Platonic Forms based on the Perspectives of Sayyid Ahmad Alavi and Molla Mohammad Aqajani

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Abstract

In the history of philosophy, the theory of Forms had some advocates and opponents. Some like Farabi, Ibn Sina and Mirdamad have criticized and given interpretation of it. Two Muslims philosophers, namely Seyyed Ahmed Alavi, a student of Mirdamad and Molla Mohammad ibn Alireza ibn Aghajani, a student of Mulla Sadra, looked at this theory from a different point of view and challenged the critique of Avicenna and Mirdamad. This paper first raises the issue and the report of the theory of Forms and then critically analyzes the opinions of these two philosophers in the commentary and interpretations of Avicenna and Mirdamad. The findings of the paper show that both Ibn Sina and Mira Damad have fallen wrong, in explaining and criticizing the Platonic Forms.

Keywords: Forms, Plato, Avicenna, Mirdamad, Alavi, Aqajani, contingency through perpetual duration, predication.

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