



Research Paper

Universal Rational Education: Teaching Thinking Through Quranic Stories



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Abstract

The present study aims to reconsider the prevailing approaches to teaching thinking and propose an indigenous model for developing children's cognitive skills by exploring the potentials of Quranic stories within the framework of the Philosophy for Children (P4C) program. First, by critiquing memory-based educational systems, the process-oriented approach to teaching thinking-based on Lipman's ideas and the Socratic tradition-was examined. In this approach, the primary emphasis is placed on developing reasoning skills through participation in a "community of inquiry." Subsequently, by shifting the focus from skills to subject matter, the content-oriented approach was investigated; an approach in which the quality and richness of reflective content are considered essential prerequisites for stimulating thinking. Accordingly, this study highlights the necessity of employing indigenous content by critically examining the cultural dependency of imported stories used in existing programs. The findings indicate that Quranic stories, due to their philosophical structure encompassing three domains of ontology, epistemology, and axiology, can serve as "reflective content" and replace non-indigenous examples. The research method employed in this study is analytical-comparative, through which the educational capacities of Quranic concepts were examined for their adaptation, rewriting, and simplification for presentation in philosophy classes for children. The results demonstrate that utilizing Quranic stories not only provides an appropriate context for practicing critical and creative thinking but also establishes a profound connection between children's cognitive frameworks and authentic Iranian-Islamic culture. Moreover, it contributes to the realization of the goals of religious education in ethical and epistemological dimensions through an internalized and reflective process.

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Introduction

Education is one of the most complex and, at the same time, most influential human activities in contemporary societies. It requires rational efforts to design the most appropriate approaches for cultivating thoughtful and competent individuals. [Smith \(1992, p. 9\)](#) state: *“If children do not learn how to think during their schooling years, how can they continue learning? The fact that schools engage in developing intellectual abilities is of great importance.”*

The inefficiency of the American educational system in the second half of the twentieth century became evident through the inability of individuals educated within this system to use their intellectual abilities to confront life challenges, which manifested itself in social unrest, wars, conflicts, and lawlessness. [Ndofirepi \(2011, p. 247\)](#) states: *“With the escalation of the Vietnam War in the mid-1960s, moral reasoning regarding the wisdom of war and social problems became a subject of debate. The question that followed was: If education is supposed to teach young people how to think, why are many products of the educational system unable to think? Lipman (2003) was concerned about the level and quality of reasoning presented by educated American citizens.”*

When Lipman encountered his students, he found that their abilities in reasoning, discrimination, and judgment had not been sufficiently developed-abilities that should have been cultivated during childhood. Accordingly, the Philosophy for Children

(P4C) program was designed by Lipman at Montclair State University in New Jersey, USA [3] in the 1970s, aiming to improve the deficiencies of the memorization-based educational system through this program. *“Philosophy for Children (P4C) is a thinking skills program that was developed by Lipman and Sharp (1980). This program has gained worldwide recognition and is used in more than 50 countries around the world” (Lyle & Thomas-Williams, 2012, p. 2).*

The Philosophy for Children program was rapidly welcomed in many countries; however, not all supporters of this program simply replicated Lipman’s method. Instead, by designing stories or utilizing the literary and cultural resources of their own countries, they attempted to introduce indigenous narrative content into the Philosophy for Children program. The question addressed in this study is whether narrative content for the Philosophy for Children program can be designed through stories from religious texts. Although Lipman’s version of the Philosophy for Children program has received various criticisms, it remains the most common and widely used approach. Therefore, this study first examines Lipman’s approach and subsequently discusses the content-oriented approach. Through a critical examination of each approach, Quranic stories are explored in terms of their potential use as narrative content for the Philosophy for Children program.

Story as a Tool for Teaching Thinking

Exploring the history of philosophy demonstrates that the use of philosophy for

the growth and advancement of human life has a long-standing tradition. *Eslami (2005)* states that the existing English-language philosophy education books indicate three distinct forms of teaching philosophy. The first form includes academic and scholarly works, which seek to provide a clear and precise understanding of philosophical discussions and issues. The second form consists of simplifying works, which draw

upon literature and employ the language of dramatic arts in an attempt to present an account of philosophical issues, philosophical domains, or philosophers. The third form includes story-like works, in which philosophical issues are presented through a narrative language, including novels and plays. The approaches to teaching philosophy are presented in Figure (1).

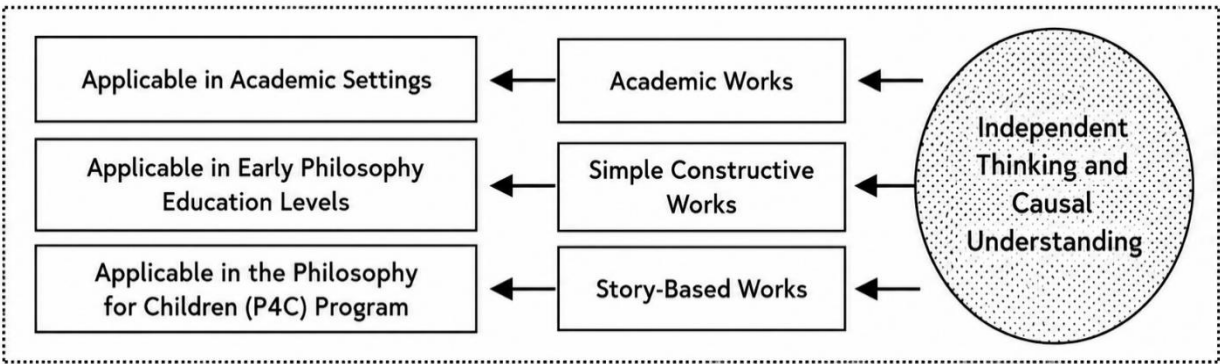


Figure 1. Approaches to Teaching Philosophy

Lipman’s Process-Oriented Approach to Philosophy for Children

For Lipman, philosophy means an “activity[1],” specifically an intellectual activity[2]. In other words, for Lipman, Philosophy for Children is understood as a process[3]. This conception of philosophy emerged from the extensive criticisms of the inefficiency of education during the second half of the twentieth century. *Gregory (2008)* believes that the emphasis on the process of philosophizing in the Philosophy for Children program originates from the fact that the process-oriented approach in education has gained considerable acceptance in recent years. In this approach, students actively

participate in teaching and all of their scientific skills are developed. The teacher organizes learning opportunities, and learning occurs through students’ active participation in the teaching–learning process. In this approach, the development of various fundamental skills (such as conceptualization, judgment, discrimination, reasoning, and related abilities) is prioritized.

In Philosophy for Children, the “process approach” also refers to presenting a set of genuine questions-questions that go beyond conceptual inquiries-within the learning process. *Gutek (2003, p. 19)* states: “A subject-centered curriculum represents the conscious and deliberate transmission of adults’ perspectives regarding reality to the younger generation. The subject-centered

curriculum[4] is organized hierarchically. In contrast to subject-centered curricula, experimentalists, progressivists, and reconstructionists pay greater attention to the learning process rather than the acquisition of curriculum content. This process-oriented approach[5] to curriculum planning is often referred to as activity- and experience-based learning or problem-solving.”

In the process-oriented approach, the method is designed in such a way that experiences gained through dealing with problems and reflections derived from those experiences create capacities within individuals. In this approach, the transmission of content is considered less important than the methodological skills that are developed. Therefore, by introducing the Philosophy for Children program, Lipman sought to establish a productive process-oriented framework.

Lyle and Thomas-Williams (2012, p. 2) state: “The revolutionary nature of Philosophy for Children can only be understood in relation to the active model of classroom interaction, in which questions are posed by the teacher and students each participate in responding and interacting with the teacher and their peers.”

Lipman considered stories to be an appropriate tool for developing thinking. Farmahini Farahani et al. (2009, p. 49) state: “In a series of textbooks entitled Philosophy for Children, Lipman presents critical thinking for educational purposes and demonstrates how children spend a significant portion of their time thinking about thinking itself.”

In Lipman’s approach, the classroom is considered a community of inquiry. The way children interact in a Philosophy for Children classroom is presented in Figure (2).

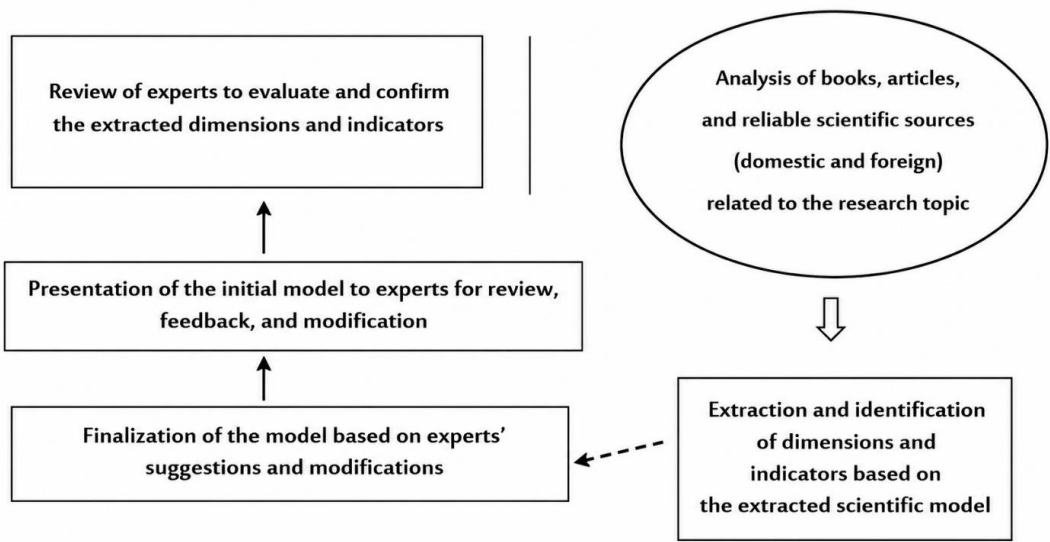


Figure 2. Children’s Interaction in the Philosophy for Children Classroom

The Role of Stories in Lipman's Approach

Considering Lipman's emphasis on method, it can be argued that stories in Lipman's framework serve the success of the community of inquiry, so that questions-similar to those raised in Socratic dialogue and questioning-become prominent in children's minds. *Thwaites (2005)* states: *"The community of inquiry allows children to focus on the level of exploration and logical discussion because questioning in Philosophy for Children never comes to an end. Lipman's primary method in the community of inquiry is the use of Socratic questioning. This is in contrast to traditional methods that emphasize the relationship between teacher and student, a relationship in which the teacher evaluates children's capacities for creative and critical thinking."*

Emphasizing the method of philosophizing and participation in the community of inquiry leads to activating children's roles and eliminating the limitations associated with their subordinate status as young learners. In addition, philosophical activity within a group contributes to the development of cooperation and basic skills. Group participation enhances children's cognitive abilities. This is consistent with Vygotsky's perspective on the "zone of proximal development" (tasks that children cannot easily perform independently become achievable through cooperation and collaboration with others), which has been confirmed in some studies (*Hedayati et al., 2009*).

In Lipman's community of inquiry method[1], critical, creative, coherent, and

careful thinking develops as a result of participation in the group. *Splitter and Sharp (1995)* state that in P4C, the hierarchical relationship between children and adults is eliminated, and children become free from the limitations of the school system.

Despite the many achievements of Lipman's approach, some scholars are concerned that the Philosophy for Children program may be limited to achieving personal experience alone. *Gregory (2008, p. 136)* expresses concern regarding personal meaning as the goal of philosophy: *"It places considerable value on individuals' immediate experiences or focuses heavily on enhancing personal understanding, and may fail to give sufficient attention to knowledge or understanding of important aspects of human culture and society. It may also encourage a 'remarkable self-absorption'[4] among adolescents."*

Critics of Lipman's method-oriented approach argue that philosophy extends beyond method, and throughout the history of philosophy, it has been emphasized that philosophy is concerned with addressing fundamental issues of human life. *Bagheri and Yari Dehnavi (2009)* state that the method-oriented approach[5], which is mainly associated with Lipman's program, deliberately avoids discussing philosophers and their ideas in teaching philosophy to children, whether extensively or selectively.

Story as Reflective Content

Examining philosophical content is a collective experience that incorporates the perspectives of many individuals throughout

different historical periods, and this collective and temporal dependence cannot be separated from philosophy. *Bontempo (2006, p. 139)* state:

“Historical dependence is an essential and inseparable characteristic of philosophical thought. Some contemporary philosophers believe that their philosophical concerns represent a continuation of and are connected to the works of their predecessors. According to these philosophers, there exists a set of issues and questions that have characterized philosophical work and will continue to do so. As Stuart Hampshire[2] argues, six words collectively represent the central interests of philosophers in the Greek and Western philosophical traditions: existence, truth, knowledge, good, sameness[3], and cause.”

Hegel opposed separating philosophy from content and criticized the practice of philosophy teachers who begin teaching philosophizing[4] by separating content from the process of philosophizing (*Bagheri & Yari Dehnavi, 2009*). Such an understanding of philosophy can be referred to as Philosophy for Children as a Content[5].

“If philosophy is to continue its existence, it should not become detached from its roots, and this is the approach pursued in various books on Western philosophy education. The anonymous person who sends letters to Sophie in the philosophical novel Sophie’s World also attempts first to stimulate her curiosity by raising questions such as ‘Who are you?’ and, in this way, encourages her to philosophize, because he believes that the only necessary ability for becoming a

philosopher is remaining astonished about oneself. The statement attributed to Aristotle regarding the reason for turning toward philosophy two thousand years ago still appears to be valid” (Gaarder, 1995, p. 25)

Gregory (2008) states that in the content-oriented approach, a set of collective and multidimensional questions is raised, the content of which includes concepts such as justice, person, thought, beauty, truth, subject, and goodness. Through this process, children are helped to recognize the philosophical dimensions of their own experiences.

“The first Western philosophers proposed comprehensive theories about the world. Some of these theories were fundamentally incorrect, but others were so profound that their influence has continued to the present day” (Magee, 2009, p. 12).

Philosophical stories represent an attempt to encourage children to explore philosophical concepts and methods. This encouragement occurs by embedding philosophical concepts and approaches within story-like events that are directly connected to children’s experiences. In other words, stories present philosophy through the experiences of fictional characters (*Eslami, 2005*).

Presenting philosophical ideas in a more understandable language and in a narrative, form has also existed among major philosophers of the past.

“Influenced by Socrates, Plato wrote his books in the form of dialogues in order to communicate more effectively with his audiences and incorporated his own ideas

and those of Socrates into philosophical dialogues. This was one of the secrets behind the lasting influence of his works. Later, other thinkers discovered the significance of this method. Dialogues expressed through characters within real-life events—that is, events occurring in stories and novels—are more tangible and comprehensible. Interestingly, some of the great works produced in this field are not considered philosophical works. For example, Dostoevsky’s novel The Brothers Karamazov is traditionally classified as a literary work rather than a philosophical one, although almost the entire novel is devoted to theological and philosophical issues and problems experienced by ordinary people of that era. In particular, one of the three brothers has philosophical education, another is a priest, and the third is seemingly an irresponsible person. The dialogues that emerge among them in the course of everyday events are each connected in different ways to existing philosophical and theological discussions. Dostoevsky presents many philosophical problems, contemporary perspectives, and possible solutions through the words of the story’s characters. Islamic mystics and even an Aristotelian philosopher such as Avicenna also turned to storytelling as a means of expressing and communicating highly abstract ideas” (Naji, 2008, p. 52).

This story describes the journey of a traveler who travels toward the West and, along the way, becomes imprisoned in the well of Qayrawan. However, he is rescued by his father, “Hadi ibn al-Khayr al-Yamani.” Afterwards, he travels to Mount Gog and

Magog, journeys through the celestial spheres and constellations, converses with them, and reaches the Fountain of Life at Mount Sinai with the guidance of a fish. Ultimately, he arrives at Paradise, which represents liberation from the constraints of nature.

In his story, Suhrawardi was inspired by “Hayy ibn Yaqzan” by Avicenna and Ibn Tufayl, which is considered one of the most beautiful and profound philosophical narratives in the Islamic world. The story describes a newly born child who is abandoned alone on an island and is saved from death by a female deer. The deer protects the child from dangers until he grows up. Gradually, he matures and begins to encounter questions and curiosities about the world around him, attempting to find answers based on his innate nature and rational capacity.

On that island[1], he first becomes aware of himself, his surrounding environment, death and life, the sensible world, and other aspects of existence. This narrative represents the intellectual development of an infant who, according to an imaginative account, is born from a piece of clay on an island in India. This idea is based on the belief of those who consider human birth possible without the existence of a father and mother. The description of the birthplace of this imaginary human being as one of the islands of India refers to religious narratives according to which Adam descended from Paradise to the land of India, and the human race began there[2].

The existence of such efforts demonstrates the importance of philosophical themes among philosophers. Therefore, they attempted to make philosophical content attractive through various means. Examining diverse perspectives and sometimes conflicting views of philosophers throughout the history of philosophy liberates children from intellectual rigidity and certainty accompanied by arrogance and pride.

Russell (1980) states: "Although philosophy cannot answer with certainty and absolute assurance the doubts that it itself raises, it nevertheless suggests multiple possible ways that expand thought and free it from the domination of oppressive habits" (Cohen, 2010, p. 4).

However, it should be noted that this approach may also involve certain problems. For example, emphasizing the philosophical content of thinking may threaten the importance of other subjects and opportunities for thinking, while there are numerous contexts for developing thought. Ryle[3] believes: *"All lessons are an education for thinking" (Fisher, 2009, p. 8)*

Furthermore, the absence of a carefully designed process that can provide the foundation for philosophical inquiry, critical reflection, and discussion of philosophical content may increase the possibility of passively imposing ideas regarding philosophical issues. *Finocchiaro (1989)* emphasizes the importance of method and argues that the characteristics of philosophy are not defined by the content or subject

matter it studies, but rather by the approach or method it employs.

Philosophy for Children as a Process and as a Content[1]

Despite their important achievements, both the process-oriented and content-oriented approaches have deprived themselves of some features of other dimensions due to their emphasis on a particular aspect. *Gregory (2008)*, acknowledging the existence of two opposing approaches to the cultivation of thinking, states that some scholars focus on critical thinking and philosophical methods, while others emphasize the content domain of traditional academic philosophy.

By focusing on the education of adolescents, Dewey helps us understand that adolescents require greater attention to attempts aimed at resolving stressful questions concerning meaning and application.

Emphasizing the community of inquiry and the process of philosophizing should not lead to neglecting the importance of curriculum content. In a community of inquiry, individual experience may become more important than precise and comprehensive experience, and in the process-oriented approach, personal experience may gain priority over complete experience based on reason. A circle of inquiry, instead of being restricted by the existing boundaries of school subjects, attempts to continue investigation and inquiry as far as it leads. Dialogical progress, which is consistent with the principles of logic, is indirect and resembles a boat moving along

the direction of the wind; however, in its process of development, it is as if it thinks for itself (*Lipman, 2003, p. 22*).

Gregory (2008) states that the process of philosophizing becomes more productive when it focuses on philosophical concepts, because this enables us to move beyond problems raised in philosophical, cultural, and personal dimensions and achieve appropriate political, logical, ethical, and aesthetic judgments. Such judgments may improve our experiences in a way that makes them better, more beautiful, more logical, and more conceptually meaningful.

From this perspective, Philosophy for Children interprets philosophy as a principled practice that not only deals with the meaning of life but also encompasses meaningful living.

One of the methods for enriching content is the use of stories from religious texts. *Piquemal (2009)*, emphasizing the importance of rich narrative content, states that today's children need to think deeply and broadly; therefore, they should be nourished through stories and legends. For this purpose, Picmal also used stories related to prophets, including the story of Solomon and the Ant, which was narrated by Attar, the Iranian poet (6th century AH).

Furthermore, *Fisher (1998)*, acknowledging children's interest and attention to issues such as fairness[3], freedom[4], friendship[5], truth[6], knowledge[7], and judgment[8], attempted to provide rich content for children's thinking in these areas.

According to *Fisher (1998)*, ancient stories can be considered as content that is entirely philosophical. Among Fisher's rewritten stories, religious stories can also be found. *Fisher (2008)* used stories related to Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, and presented a story about animal rights entitled "Buddha and the Swan." He also referred to a biblical story entitled "The Workers in the Vineyard" concerning fairness.

At the end of each simplified story, Fisher followed the common approach used in his reconstructed stories by presenting several thought-provoking questions under the title "Reflection on the Story."

Among other narrative works for children that pay attention to religious texts are the works of Alves[9]. In his two books entitled "The Scorpion and the Frog"[10] and "Lizards and Dinosaurs"[11], written for children, Alves was influenced by liberation theology and Protestantism and incorporated political messages into these stories. In Alves's stories, the use of religious concepts distinguishes his works from other narratives.

Examples of Quranic Stories Containing Philosophical Themes

Religious and spiritual stories can contribute to the development of rational thinking. *Taqavi (1997)* states that, in general, stories deal with three dimensions of human personality. Epic stories are primarily concerned with the will, agency, and power of the audience; religious, historical, symbolic, and instructional stories are concerned with inviting the audience toward reasoning, reflection, and the enhancement of cognitive

understanding; and lyrical stories are mainly associated with emotions and feelings.

The Holy Qur'an contains instructive and engaging stories. In order to utilize these stories, it is necessary to identify the philosophical themes embedded within them and, based on the nature of these themes and children's age-related needs, undertake their adaptation, rewriting, and application.

Howie and Gimes (2010) consider the essentialist approach to be based on a set of questions that have remained relatively constant throughout different historical periods, with various generations addressing them in different ways. The philosophical questions that have been presented throughout the history of philosophy in the form of philosophical categories can be summarized, as *Alavi (2007, p. 25)* states, into the following domains:

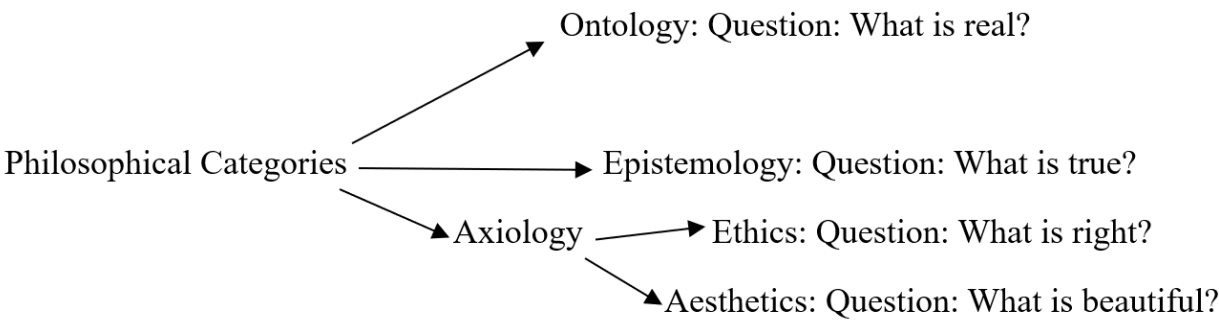


Figure 3. Major Domains of Philosophical Questions

Philosophical Content in Philosophy for Children

The content of Philosophy for Children includes stories addressing various philosophical topics, such as epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, and logic (*Naji, 2008*).

Examples of Ontological Stories in the Quran

Dadbeh (1999) considers one of the fundamental issues of philosophy to be reflection on the nature of being or existence (the world, human beings, and God), which Aristotle regarded as the noblest of all forms

of knowledge. Questions related to ontology[1] have occupied the minds of many philosophers throughout the history of philosophy.

Presenting ontological discussions to children is difficult unless they are expressed through a narrative form. Attempts to present such issues through stories and narratives for children have been successful. Examples of this success can be found in Magee's *The Story of Philosophy*, White's *Philosophy for Little Ones*, and Gaarder's *Sophie's World*.

Among stories in religious texts, there are narratives that address philosophical issues. In the following section, some philosophical issues and related stories are presented.

Ontological Stories

One of the fundamental questions of philosophy concerns issues related to God. *Dadbeh (1999)* states that rational theology deals with the existence of a perfect being who, according to some thinkers, is the creator and sustainer of the universe.

This fundamental question has occupied the human mind throughout history and has resulted in various answers. Xenophanes states:

“The Ethiopians say that their gods are flat-nosed and black, while the Thracians say that their gods have blue eyes and blond hair” Magee (2009, p. 16).

Table 1. Examples of Ontological Stories

Philosophical Question	Example Story
Theology	Moses and the Shepherd
Theology	The Story of Prophet Idris (peace be upon him)
Cosmology	The Story of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him)
Death and Metaphysics	The Story of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him)
Resurrection / Life After Death	The People of the Cave
Divine Power	The Story of Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him)
The Power of Love and Its Effects on the Body and Soul	The Kingdom of Prophet David (peace be upon him)

Epistemology is one of the fundamental issues of philosophy. *White (2010)*, emphasizing the importance and position of addressing the issue of knowledge in philosophy, states that many questions concerning knowledge have occupied the minds of philosophers such as Zeno, Aristotle, Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Wittgenstein, Sartre, Russell, and Dennett.

One of the important questions in epistemology that philosophers have discussed is the limits of human knowledge. *“Since ancient times, it has been believed that things possess two aspects: one is their*

essence and the other is their appearance. The question of whether human beings can go beyond the appearance of things and reach their essence has been one of the fundamental questions. Since thinkers have not reached a consensus regarding the importance and limits of human knowledge, various theories have emerged” (Dadbeh, 1999, p. 102).

Such important issues have existed and continue to exist in philosophy and other sciences; however, presenting them to everyone is not possible except through different approaches. Therefore, the following section discusses epistemological questions and related stories.

Table 2. Examples of Epistemological Stories

Philosophical Question	Example Story
The Value of Reason	The Story of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him)
Knowledge of Truth	The Story of Prophet Salih (peace be upon him)

Examples of Axiological Stories

One of the fundamental issues in philosophy is axiology, which deals with topics such as the explanation of value, the

types of values, and their nature. “The task of philosophy in our era is the study of values. Like other phenomena, values have both an individual dimension and a social dimension” (Shariatmadari, 2001, p. 154).

Table 3. Examples of Axiological Stories

Example Story	Philosophical Question
Dhul-Qarnayn: A Righteous King	The Good
Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him)	Aesthetics

Analysis of Examples of Stories

One of the important philosophical questions concerns the relationship between the soul and the body. The question of whether human beings can infer their spiritual inclinations through their behaviors is an important philosophical issue. Aquinas states: “The soul is known through its actions” (Magee, 2009, p. 58). The question of whether the human soul is properly guided by reason is also a philosophical inquiry. Hume argues: “Reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions” (Magee, 2009, p. 116).

Regarding the relationship between the soul and the body and the influence of desires on human actions, the story of the Kingdom of Prophet David can be mentioned, which is presented in Surah Al-Baqarah, verses 246–252.

The Kingdom of Prophet David

“Have you not considered the assembly of the Children of Israel after Moses, when they said to one of their prophets, ‘Appoint for us a king, and we will fight in the way of Allah?’ He said, ‘Would you perhaps refrain from

fighting if fighting were prescribed for you?’ They said, ‘Why should we not fight in the way of Allah when we have been expelled from our homes and our children?’ Yet when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, except for a few of them. And Allah is Knowing of the wrongdoers.

Their prophet said to them, ‘Indeed, Allah has appointed Saul (Talut) as a king over you.’ They said, ‘How can he have kingship over us while we are more worthy of kingship than him, and he has not been given abundant wealth?’ He said, ‘Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physical strength. Allah grants His sovereignty to whom He wills. And Allah is All-Encompassing and Knowing.’

And their prophet said to them, ‘Indeed, the sign of his kingship is that the Ark will come to you, containing reassurance from your Lord and remnants of what the family of Moses and the family of Aaron left behind, carried by the angels. Indeed, in this is a sign for you, if you are believers.’

And when Saul went forth with the armies, he said, ‘Indeed, Allah will test you with a

river. Whoever drinks from it is not of me, and whoever does not taste it is indeed of me, except one who takes a handful with his hand.' But they drank from it, except a few of them. When he and those who believed with him crossed it, they said, 'We have no strength today against Goliath and his soldiers.'

Those who were certain that they would meet Allah said, 'How many times has a small group overcome a large group by the permission of Allah? And Allah is with the patient.' And when they advanced toward Goliath and his soldiers, they said, 'Our Lord, pour upon us patience, make our feet firm, and grant us victory over the disbelieving people.'

So they defeated them by the permission of Allah..."

Conclusion

The proponents of Lipman's program, including *Finocchiaro (1989)*, *Hagberg and Jost (2015)*, *Haynes (2002)*, *Jenkins and Lyle (2010)*, and *Glina (2009)*, studied his works and became familiar with the Philosophy for Children program. They attempted to apply this program in their own countries by designing a process-oriented set of activities based on stories. However, others, such as Matthews[1] and Sutcliffe[2] in England and Brenifier[3] in France, focused on developing philosophy with children (*Murris, 2000*).

According to *Naji (2008)*, these scholars sought to introduce and develop new approaches to the program, such as "Philosophy with Children" (PwC)[4], as a

modified version of the original program. By employing the history of philosophy and philosophical themes, this group attempted to enrich the content of the program.

In other countries, interest in teaching thinking skills also led to different experiences. For example, *Fisher (2008)* and *Piquemal (2009)*, acknowledging the philosophical richness of literary stories, attempted to consider not only the philosophical texts and content of literary works but also to expand the scope beyond purely philosophical texts. By examining existing stories in world literature and adapting them to children's age and developmental levels, they developed philosophical stories suitable for children.

Some other advocates of Philosophy for Children, while emphasizing the usefulness of this program, argued that Lipman's stories were culturally dependent and attempted to design stories more compatible with their own cultural contexts. Among them was Jespersen[6], who used stories from his compatriot Andersen[7] to create content appropriate to Danish culture.

Considering Lipman's methodological achievements, the importance of the history of philosophy in Philosophy with Children (PwC), the use of philosophical stories in teaching thinking by *Fisher (2009)*, and the emphasis on culture by *Jespersen (2005)*, it can be argued that the process of philosophizing requires philosophical content. Together, these two elements provide the possibility of engaging with profound and

thought-provoking themes through a critical approach.

Khosronejad (2005) argues in this regard that the material of philosophical thinking, although in its initial manifestations during the early moments of the process appears as a complete transformation of everyday realities, in later stages and moments, it is the engagement with philosophers' ideas that moves this process forward.

Emphasizing the process of philosophizing in the Philosophy for Children program has resulted in neglecting philosophical content. Consequently, the content of Lipman's Philosophy for Children program has become somewhat detached from philosophy itself. Lipman's stories lack authentic philosophical themes, and a person encountering them without prior knowledge of Philosophy for Children may not recognize philosophical elements within them. However, *Hegel and Ripalda (1984, p. 446)* argued that "the human mind cannot think in a vacuum" as cited in *Bagheri and Yari Dehnavi (2009, p. 35)*.

Therefore, it should be recognized that philosophical activity requires philosophical content. To make such content appealing to children and to develop their capacity for philosophizing, an appropriate method such as the Community of Inquiry is necessary.

Accordingly, if it is possible to design rich philosophical content similar to *Gaarder (1995) Sophie's World*, rewrite ancient stories in an attractive narrative form like Jespersen, and prepare practical frameworks for their application-such as the Community of Inquiry

approach and teacher guidebooks in Lipman's model-it can be expected that integrating process-oriented and content-oriented approaches would lead to better outcomes in developing philosophical thinking.

To enrich the content, religious texts (particularly the Quranic stories) can be utilized because Quranic stories, due to their narrative discourse, depth and richness, simplicity of expression, and cultural relevance, can serve as appropriate content to replace the original stories of this program. These stories can be rewritten and adapted according to children's age and developmental levels and used effectively in Philosophy for Children programs.

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