



Research Paper

The Study of Children's Spiritual Education from Imam Khomeini's Viewpoint



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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the spiritual education of children from Imam Khomeini's point of view. Data were collected by documentary method. The findings show that there are three stages in the development of spirituality: childhood's adolescence and adulthood, which evolve at any stage of the spiritual development phase. The factors involved in spiritual education from Imam Khomeini's point of view include family, school, training centers and the mass media, each of which is influential in this area and there is a need to pay special attention to each factor's role. The Islamic model of spiritual education also seeks to discover the truth of God in spiritual affairs and to extend this knowledge to the development of the soul in all its dimensions and to the realization of a pure and happy life in all respects, which can be seen in the works and teachings of Imam Khomeini. From Imam Khomeini's perspective, the essence of human being is the soul, and the body is a means of its manifestation and promotion. He emphasizes that happiness is a spiritual refuge that should be taken into account from childhood, and spiritual education of children should not be confined to religious education and practice of worship but needs to include other aspects of spiritual development as well.

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Introduction

Imam Khomeini is one of the greatest contemporary Islamic pragmatic thinkers who has devised a theoretical and practical explanation of spirituality in Islam. Imam Khomeini believes the lack of spirituality as the main problem of humanity and says: we and our nation are proud to be a religious follower seeking to get Quranic truths, which call for unity between Muslims and humanity, out from the tombs and cemeteries and, as the greatest savior, to remove all the shackles wrapped around the human foot, hand, heart and mind, which drives him/her into the story of the rebels (*Imam Khomeini, 2001, p. 3*).

The noble Imam considers all human beings in need of education from birth to the last day of their lives and says: "The entire population of the world needs education. No one can claim that s/he no longer needs education. The messenger of God needed it to the end, but God fulfilled his need. We all need it (*Imam Khomeini, 1982*). Imam Khomeini believes that education is one of the most important pillars of the monotheistic invitation of the prophets, without which man will have no way of succeeding and will not succeed in the purposeful path of life, which is divine bliss and satisfaction of God. With regard to the crucial importance of this principle, Imam Khomeini says "the purpose and philosophy of sending the prophets is to make real human beings and the whole universe is for human education (*Imam Khomeini, 1982*).

In the discussion of spirituality, Imam Khomeini focuses on three aspects of

spirituality and the presentation of spiritual patterns. As instances and the meaning of spirituality, he emphasizes such concepts as divinity, inner purity and sincerity special to human as one of the aspects of human existence, spirituality, the path of God, the divine duty and remembrance of God, and the suppression of one's inner self. With regard to the effects of spirituality on the individual and the society, he refers to the belief in monotheism and resurrection, the power of religion and reliance on God, the key to relieving social suffering, the means of progress, the key to victory, sublimation and faith, the savior of the nation and country, morality and self-purification, faith and attention to God, sincerity, the main factor involved in preserving independence and freedom and directing the society to perfection and to God, the reason for revelation to the Prophet, the means of achieving happiness, the position of martyrdom and the promotion of spirituality, and highlighting prophetic ethics (*Alvandi, 2014*). From Imam Khomeini's point of view. In order to direct human to happiness, theoretical wisdom must be directed from a monstrous position and the acceptable aptitude of the universe system and mere rationality toward realization and practice, that is, from the monstrous wisdom of the human being to the world of practice and by development of practical wisdom, the organs of the body do good deeds and move toward the actions that are consistent with human soul and self. From the Imam Khomeini's perspective, the essence of human is his/her soul and the body is a means of its manifestation and promotion. Development

of the soul and spirituality is on the agenda of his/her educational orientations and activities. He emphasizes that true happiness is a refuge to spirituality and nothing is of use without it, it is spirituality that guarantees human happiness (*Imam Khomeini, 1982*). According to Imam Khomeini, spiritual education has a mutual dimension and includes the development of natures, which ultimately leads to spiritual life (*Imam Khomeini, 1982*).

Spirituality, from the viewpoint of Imam Khomeini, has three dimensions including spiritual beliefs, spiritual values and spiritual behaviors. Spiritual beliefs include a set of attitudes and beliefs that provide the necessary backgrounds and cognitive infrastructure for guiding the human approach to spirituality. These beliefs are mainly innate and include belief in being created by God and having everything from God, belief in the presence God, belief in returning to God, believing in Islam as the only correct path to divine spirituality. Spiritual values include such values as purity, Jihad Akbar (the fight against one's self), virtue, courage, stability and defending Islam and Islamic boundaries, and spiritual practices include performing religious duties such as worshiping, pleasing God by serving the people honestly or serving the people to the satisfaction of the Creator respecting the rights of others, discipline in the works, obedience to the commanders, and diligence in performing one's duties (*Alvandi, 2014*).

- Statement of the Problem

Today, there is a need to pay more attention to the spiritual upbringing of children than ever before. The focus of the contemporary world on industrial and economic advancements, and materialistic and glamorous propaganda, the invasion of alien cultures through cyberspace and the media, and easy access to everything alienate children from the health of the soul and the body and destroys their relationship with their whole, humanity, environment and the world. Therefore, spiritual education of children has come to the attention of scholars in the field of education.

The growth of spirituality in every human being is a dynamic process that occurs over a period of time. During this process, human beings increasingly understand the meaning and purpose of life (*Fulton & Moore, 1995*). The development of spirituality in the child is very complicated and is influenced by many factors such as family, media, community members and cultural values. The influence of the media today, especially television, the internet and cinema, is undeniable, and causes contradictions such as raising a child in a religious family that is constantly exposed to Hollywood media (*Smith, 2001*). Religious and spiritual experiences can have a profound effect on children's lives, affect their moral development, enhance their social relationships, and regulate the way they interact with themselves and their behaviors (*Barnes et al., 2000*). Children who are raised in non-religious families are more likely to have questions about God and divine essence and look for the answer to these questions and the secret to spirituality in the society and they

are likely to develop false spirituality (*Fulton & Moore, 1995*). Therefore, the books and articles related to spiritual health were reviewed and the contents related to different stages of spiritual development in children and adolescents were analyzed.

The remembrance of God and the strife to draw near to Him is a program that engages the whole heart and soul. A person who has enjoyed spiritual pleasures is not willing to swap them with ephemeral pleasures such as drug addiction, inappropriate forms of recreation and other harms human beings are exposed to in today's industrialized societies. Imam Ali also emphasized this spiritual effect saying that "religion provides immunity" (*Nahj-alBalaghah, p. 198*). Every year, with the beginning of Ramadan, which has a significant educational impact and boosts spiritual growth, social crime rates are significantly reduced. The root of this social reform should be sought in the community's tendency toward spirituality and spiritual domination over the society. This great spiritual solution can help to solve other Islamic and humanitarian problems (*Mir Arab, 2016, p. 256*).

The spiritual man is not oblivious to the life of others. He strives for reform and, as he sheds the light of faith on his/her life, s/he strives to keep society away from ruin and abominations (*Mir Arab, 2016, p. 256*). Accordingly, the importance of dealing with the spiritual upbringing of children is indispensable.

Some scholars assert that spiritual growth in the educational context does not concern

the development of beliefs, commitments, or specific lifestyles, but rather the development of a specific dimension of the individual (*Halstead, 1994*). Therefore, spiritual upbringing is usually formed based on a particular sense of values and its consideration necessarily involves political controversy and the challenging many understandings of upbringing and the capabilities we seek to develop (*Priestley, 2001, p. 195*). For this reason, there are different and sometimes conflicting views on children's spiritual upbringing because there is no consensus on the ultimate values and meanings. The existence of different perspectives, on the one hand, and the importance of paying attention to nurturing such a capacity in children through the formal educational system of the country, on the other hand, require identifying classifying and explaining these perspectives. Thus, acquiring a clear understanding of this concept provides the basis for critical awareness and ingenuity in this field. Accordingly, the present study provides an explanation, from Imam Khomeini's perspective, on the spiritual education of children and its influence on Islamic teachings.

- History of paying attention to children's spiritual development

The issue of spirituality for children originated from the United Kingdom and is now widespread in many countries around the world (*Hay & Nye, 2006*). This issue was first formally introduced in the 6499 Education Act referring to the Christian spirituality (*Adams, 2009*). As Priestley shows in his

study on the 1944 educational law, the term “spiritual” was considered as more comprehensive than religion (*Watson, 2006*). However, in practice, spiritual growth was understood to relate to religion, and, in particular, to Christ (*Watson, 2006*). In the late 1980s, a national curriculum through the Education Reform Act of 1988 required schools to provide for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children (*Adams, 2009*), but there were divisions on how to deal with spirituality in educational disciplines (*Hay & Nye, 2006*). For these purposes, the Reform Act of 1992 created a government body called the Office of Education Standards to oversee the spiritual development of students in schools (*Adams, 2009*). In 2004, with regard to spiritual development in upbringing the office explained:

- The concept of spiritual growth in the field of education

"Spiritual Growth, the growth of the immaterial and vital element of our existence depends on our point of view about whether it ends or continues after death; it is about our sense of self-worth personal insight, meaning and purpose. Spiritual development is about the growth of a student's spirit, and some may call it mental development or development of personality or character (*Adams, 2009*).

According to these documents, spirituality is different from religion and should provide opportunities for the spiritual development of all students throughout the curriculum and not be confined to religious education and practice of worship (*Watson, 2006*).

Literature review

There have been various studies in the field of spiritual education. Some of these studies are reported in this section.

Examining spiritual education from Imam Khomeini's point of view, *Nadri Abyaneh and Khaki (2015)* showed that he believed that education is based on the thinking of Islamic society on the basis of human beings and emphasized human intellectual beliefs as the basis of spiritual development. This is the kind of education that can connect man to his/her origin.

In a study entitled Analyzing and Criticizing New Spiritual Education Processes, *Baghgoli et al. (2015)* concluded that the gap created in western societies and the explicit educational functions of spirituality in the individual and social dimensions led to a return to spirituality as an indispensable aspect of education.

Amini and Mashaalahi Nejad (2013) examined the position and status of attention to the development of spirituality in universities and higher education institutes, suggested that the spirituality in the universities should be developed in the framework of two thematic and integrated approaches. In the first approach, spirituality is addressed directly through specific lessons, and in the integrated approach of nurturing the capacity for spiritual capacity, it becomes the dominant trend and component of the curriculums.

In a study on the concept, principles and methods of spiritual education from the

perspective of Allameh Tabataba'i, *Ashaari et al. (2013)* concluded that by examining Allameh's view of man and using such concepts as the factory of abstraction about the human self, his emphasis on spirituality, the existence of all human beings and the impact of action reveal how this existential field is shaped and nurtured. Allameh Tabatabai believes that the beginning points of formation of abstraction of self and, therefore, the beginning of training is when the imagination is formed, and then to the extent of the abstract self-development of the self, it may take many different forms.

Heidari (2012) concluded in a study on spiritual education from the viewpoint of Imam Ali on the basis of the letters of Nahj-alBalaghah that in the opinion of Imam Ali, spiritual education is the divine education which requires moral virtues and paying attention to the origin and resurrection and suffering to be achieved. It comes with a great deal of suffering, and needs rationalization and contemplation in self-sufficiency and solace over the universe and an attempt for the purification of the soul from the vices and having all the virtues, the result of which is the enlightenment, sincerity of the heart, salvation and closeness to God.

In a study entitled the Emphasis of Religious Education, Persian literature and third Grade History on the Elements of Spiritual Education from the Teachers' point of view, *Mozaffari (2012)* concluded that from the teachers' point of view, the content of the mentioned textbooks emphasizes God's centrality, faith and self-sacrifice for excellence and tranquility as Components of

spiritual upbringing, but self-awareness and contemplation have been emphasized to a low and very low extents.

Qasempour Dehghani and Nasr Esfahani (2011) analyzed spiritual approach and curriculum planning while discussing the nature of spirituality and the factors involved in it from different perspectives and describing spirituality and its indicators based on the Qur'an. They found that the components of spiritual curriculum were compatible with the foundation and principles of Islam.

In a study entitled "The relationship between prayer and religious practices in spiritual and mental relaxation," *Gabler (2004)* concluded that there was a significant relationship between existential health and religious health of the participants. There was also a positive and significant relationship between spiritual well-being and intrinsic religious motivation.

In a study on spirituality, health, and quality of life, *Koenig (2007)* found that people with high spirituality had a better immunity system and a more regular endocrine function. As a result, they were less likely to die of cancer. There is also a significant relationship between spirituality and normal blood pressure.

Wright (1998), in a comparative study, examined the role of teachers in the spiritual education approaches of English and Welsh students. In this study, he asked whether teachers play a role in the development of spirituality in different dimensions (social, religious, moral) of students' life. The results

indicated that teachers, intentionally or unintentionally, are involved in the spiritual education of students. They have an important role to play and their method and performance in the classroom have a great impact on this.

Method

This is qualitative research carried out through a documentary (library-based) study. In documentary research, the subjects under study are often from a distant or recent past, and the researcher uses documents from earlier times that are available in the libraries. The required data were collected from books and works of Imam Khomeini, theses, journals, websites and studies related to the subject. Purposive sampling method was used for selecting the sources to be included in the study. The instrument used included sample note taking. The data were analyzed using qualitatively using rational, conceptual and inferential analysis.

Findings

Phases of spiritual development

Some believe that there are three periods involved in the growth of spirituality (*O'Brien, 2004*):

- 1) Early childhood: when a child simply accepts "good", and "bad" with encouragement and punishment.
- 2) Late childhood and adolescence: when a child or adolescent gains a better understanding of morality.
- 3) Adulthood: when one accepts the views of society about good and bad. Most spiritual development theories are based on the

theories of Erikson Germany, Jean Piaget of Swiss, and games Piaget of America, some of which are outlined below;

However, it should be acknowledged that these theories cannot be adapted to other societies and religions without being examined and they may not be appropriate for Islamic societies.

Childhood: Most children depend on their surrounding environment to meet their needs. Although the common belief is that children are born without any spirituality or religious values, in Islam there is a belief in human nature from the very beginning of human birth (*Carson, 1989*).

The first few years of life are a very important time for religious growth and spiritual development, usually achieved through communication with parents or child care (*Fosarelli, 2011*). Erikson considers this period to be from zero to

four years of age and believes that this is the time when the child feels safe about those who are taking care of him/her. The child trusts everyone and enjoys the presence of others, but in later times the presence of strangers will excite him/her.

At this period, the child's understanding of "God" is vague. He responds to an environment full of love and warmth, not to an environment of punishment (*Betz, 2005*). This period is also called the spiritual latency. Spiritual insight and motivation are covered by the mind's accumulation of sensory and motor experiences. It seems that all of the child's perceptions of himself and the world

around him/her are shaped by his/her feelings, and perhaps if the child is treated well, he/she will trust those around him/her (horizontal spiritual growth) and provide a basis for greater confidence and belief in God (the vertical growth of spirituality). Many researchers emphasize the need to build this confidence and trust early in life for a child to grow spiritually and believe in God. Obviously, these conditions are provided by parents, especially by mothers (*Fosarelli, 2011*).

When a child starts walking, s/he feels that s/he is a valuable person because s/he has learned new skills in walking, running, climbing, dressing and going to the toilet. By gaining the will, s/he says no to parents in many cases.

Ericsson regards the age of 1-3 as the time of autonomy against doubt. A child is eager to do his/her works but is mostly unsuccessful, so he/she will have doubts, regrets, and reduced self-esteem.

It is in this time that the reactions of those around him/her helps him/her regain his/her self-esteem. If at this time those around the child speak of God with respect and affection, the child learns that God is special. The child imitates ceremony of "prayer" during this time. If people who are around the child never talk about God, there will be no feelings for God in the child (*Betz, 2005*). It is obvious that at this time the child has no conception of God as a supernatural power. The child distinguishes between the facts and the supernatural. God may appear in child's mind to be an angel or a lovely person (*Hitchcock,*

1999). Some believe that if there are no religious or spiritual beliefs in the family, the child will design a form of superior power for himself. Offering love, affection, attention, helpful guidance and counseling at this person help to develop both the vertical and horizontal aspects of spiritual health.

- Pre-school age

At this age, that is between the ages of 4-7, the child learns to think, but his thinking may not be systematic and logical, although the child has his own logic. The child is mostly focused on one area and is unaware of other angles. At this time, s/he does not distinguish between reality and unrealistic things. His understanding of "God" may be different from that of adults because the limitations adults have in what they say and can think of do not exist in their child. Religious development in this era mirrors the religious behavior of parents. Stories, religious rituals, and religious activities affect them. This period is also called the period of spiritual revelation. The spiritual vision, which was concealed by the conquest of the mind by the hidden senses, gradually emerges and transcends the level of imagination and the child's imagination grows. Going to school, s/he will contact people other than their parents, which may affect their beliefs. During this time, the child's conscience develops and understands God as a superior power that reward or punish. Therefore, in this period, attributed unjustified relations with God (e.g., if you do this, God will punish you, etc.) will be harmful.

Late childhood: Between the ages of 6-12, more intellectual development takes place and the child learns logical skills. If properly trained, the child will participate in religious or spiritual activities and communicate properly with others. In this period, the child realizes that God is, in fact, the infinite power that his parents and society have offered him/her, but if he encounters a deviation from what they have learned, s/he will consider his/her belief as mistaken and rejects it (*Hitchcock, 1999*). At this age, the child is very eager to know what God is doing and how He is doing it (*Fosarelli, 2011*).

- Spiritual education from the perspective of Imam Khomeini

While every human being is inherently different from other human beings, people who live in a socio-cultural setting are similar in many respects. This similar behavior demonstrates the importance of upbringing within the culture of society, on the one hand, and the capacity for human adaptation to the socio-cultural environment, on the other.

It is because of this cultural ability and commonalities that, despite the individual differences of members of a society, one can speak of sociological upbringing or sociological interpretation of humanity. Education is the cultural development of the individual, which is achieved through the acquisition of skills and the development of one's inner talents. It is the flow of social interaction through which people acquire their personality and learn the lifestyle dominant in their community. Education is an essential juncture between the individual and

the community. Without it, the individual and community cannot survive. In the process of training, one learns the norms, values, skills, beliefs and patterns of thought and action that are all essential to social life. However, by definition, socialization involves both education for a specific purpose and the development of human rationality. Therefore, the two main mechanisms involved in socialization and upbringing include education and internalization. These two mechanisms are closely linked and cannot be separated. Learning and education refer to obtaining reflections, habits, behaviors, etc. that are embedded in the mental organism and guide an individual's behavior (*Roche, 1988, pp. 159-160*). Internalizing others, which is still one of the common mechanisms of education in the developing communities and has a semantic balance with the two words culture and education, represents a task that leads to changing childhood habits and perceptions and acquiring the socially acceptable culture. These three concepts imply that ethnic culture is capable of changing a weak culture, a change that encompasses not only cognition but also the behavior of individuals. This is done by education, provided that it does not destroy the child's potential talents and take into account his/her mental-developmental evolution (*Golshani Famani, 1994, p. 101*). In the view of Imam Khomeini, the human being is an animal capable of being educated (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 180*), that is, he is capable of accepting certain behaviors and abilities to adapt to the socio-cultural environment, and his personality is the product of these two abilities and talents. According to Imam, the

development of personality must have a purpose and direction since the personality formed according to primary education imposes itself on the human being. Therefore, human education must create an Iranian-Islamic personality.

From the Imam's collection of discourses on education, it can be understood that in his view, child-rearing is not subject to natural and physical laws, like a seed that flowers being watered by the gardener. But education in every society is similar to the attempt made by an artist to shape raw materials. At first, the child's soul is like a clear sheet of paper that easily accepts any role (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 154*). This is the meaning of upbringing that is determined by the particular system of culture of a particular society. Educational criteria were colonial before the Islamic Revolution. For this reason, according to Imam, the acquisition of cultural identity leads to the independence of education and upbringing (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 160*).

- Factors Involved in Spiritual Education in Imam Khomeini's View

There are two criteria for classifying spiritual education factors:

1- Sometimes the categorization of education factors is based on whether education is carried out within institutional groups such as the school, family, etc. or more comprehensively even involving the mass media. Imam's education factors are very broad, even including the mass media.

2- The classification may be based on whether education is the primary goal or is a secondary objective alongside the primary goal. There are many speeches of Imam indicating that mere education is not the purpose, but the pure and divine man is the purpose of upbringing. Despite that, the factors involved in upbringing include family, school, educational centers and the mass media. In this section, each factor is discussed in detail.

1. Family

Because family systems are so different, the range of contact a child experience is not the same in different cultures. Everywhere the mother is usually the most important person, but the relationship between mother and child is conditioned by the nature of the institution of family and its relation to other groups in the society. In today's societies, education occurs first and foremost in a small family context. Despite many differences in the status of family in terms of parents, the number of children and the relationship with relatives, the presence of father without a mother and vice versa, and the mother's occupational status, one of the major factors in parenting from childhood to adolescence and beyond is the family that links generations of families as a series of successive stages of growth and development. Families have different positions within the overall framework of the institutions in a society. In the majority of societies with a traditional family system, to a large extent, one's social status determines the social position of an individual in the rest of his/her life. In most societies, social status is not inherited, but the social class of the family

strongly influences the patterns of education. Different patterns of child upbringing and discipline, always with conflicting values and expectations, are found in different sections of large societies. It is obvious that only a few children accept their parent's insights easily and unquestionably. This is even more true about today's world where change is so pervasive. Moreover, considering the existence of a variety of factors, socializing may result in disparity between the insights of children, adolescents, and generations of parents (*Giddens, 1995, pp. 84-86*).

Therefore, the family is an institution that is very closely related to the process of education, because human being is raised as a child inside the family more than anywhere else. The Family is responsible for the socialization and upbringing of children in the early years of life. The child develops his/her emotional and intimate attachments within the family and it is the mother who plays a significant role in internalizing cultural values and norms. The family teaches the child habits, transmits religious and ethical concepts, and prepares children for social life.

The information transmitted to the child in the family helps him/her to understand sociocultural conditions and realities. This factor is especially important for Imam because he believes that children are better educated in the mother's womb than in the

presence of teachers, a child feels a special love for her mother and what s/he hears from his/her mother in her childhood is inscribed and remains there to the end of life. Mothers should care to nurture and raise their children

well, make them as refined individuals and make their family a scientific and spiritual school, and this is an important thing mothers can do and not anybody else (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 6*). The wombs of mothers are the places from which true human beings have to be made. That is, the first level of education is the upbringing of a child on their mother's laps. Because the child's interest in the mother is above all other interests, children learn better from their mother (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 76*). Since a significant part of child rearing is conscious or intentional in the family, Imam emphasizes that mothers provide an Islamic-human education so that when you deliver this child to a primary school, a good child with good ethics.

2- School

The school also plays an important role in education. Schools encourage competition through regular rewards and punishment systems. A child trying again to learn a new skill may feel overwhelmed or unsuccessful, but when it comes to personality maturity, s/he can make a realistic assessment of his/her mental and social abilities.

Student subculture is an important element in education. Children are quickly acquainted with attitudes and norms related to power by older peers. Functionalists point out that schools serve the function of educating the values and customs of the larger community to new members. Controversial school theorists agree that schools may also reinforce discriminatory aspects of society (*Schaefer, 1986, p. 101*).

The, which is officially mandated by the community to teach cognitive and cultural values to children and adolescents, is a factor that follows the impact of family education. What impacts school children and teens more than peer groups is the teachers' reactions. Therefore, the numerous recommendations of Imam to the teachers can be justified in this regard: "these children, from the time they enter, are simple, healthy, unadulterated and accepting of any education.

Children in the kindergarten are divine trustees to those who teach them in the kindergarten and these trustees are transferred from there to other teachers and to higher education and universities (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 27*).

However, the function of the social factors involved in education is not only the transfer of knowledge to children and their upbringing, but continuation of the process that parents, especially mothers in the family, have begun to educate children and transfer values and behavioral patterns intended by the community culture.

- Mass media

Imam emphasized the reformation and independence of radio and television and the press (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, pp. 103-207*), because much of the community's time is spent with these media rich with information. It covers all aspects and dimensions of life and all individuals including the literate and illiterate people. The message of the mass media is heard everywhere and, in every way, and its waves have penetrated into all the openings and what was considered to be his

privacy, which was considered safe throughout human history. These means, whether written such as newspapers and magazines) and non-written (such as radio and television), make the greatest contribution to the transmission of cultural and intellectual heritage and the upbringing of individuals in the community, which promote the excellence of human culture and education (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 83*).

It should be noted that although humans can use these modern and new cultural means to attain proper transcendence and correct education or upbringing, they must not neglect the fact that these devices can lead to the perversion of perverse education, deviation and degeneration. In their view, these machines, which are the cultural educators of today's society, must be the means of nurturing the nation, which should not only prevent the spread of anti-cultural and anti-nurturing propaganda but should also educate and nurture the society.

Mass media play an important role in educating children and adults. The concept and cultural teachings related to important social positions and bases are illustrated by the mass media. The media promote certain values and people's perceptions are influenced as changes in social norms and values are quickly reflected in the mass media and may be readily accepted by people who, otherwise, would not be able to access them without the media (*Rastun, 1995, p. 131*).

This tremendous impact has led Imam to emphasize that the mass media, in general, and radio and television, in particular, need to

attempt to promote the human spirit. The media should act like the teachers who educate the youth (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 191*). In any case, all the media are instructors of a country and they should educate the country. In the age of the media, the monopoly of education has been taken from the school and educational settings. Therefore, one of the functions of the media in Imam's view is their educational function. The media are a kind of cultural institution that can participate decisively in the education process. If the media are properly used and serve people especially children and adolescents, the leisure time of the child will be no longer useless but efficient and effective. Both radio and television are an educational means (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, pp. 209-210*) not a means of causing ignorance or neglect in human beings. They are educational devices and all the people of the nation should be educated using these devices; it is a public university (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 203*). If these devices prevent adolescents from spotting adolescents, they would be more effective in teaching culture rather than having the child wander in the alleyway or go out to do the chores while learning to spend good time with them (*Sarukhani 1988, p. 163*). For this reason, in the opinion of Imam, if the mass media are properly used, they will shed light on all aspects of human life as a public university (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 203*).

The educational function and socialization of the mass media is more important than that of educational centers and environments

(kindergartens, primary schools, schools, universities, etc.).

- These directions include the following

1- Educational centers such as schools are constrained by time meaning that they cover only a few years of the life of children, adolescents and the youth. But the media are unrestricted and people spend their time with the mass media in all stages of their life from the beginning to the end. These two- or three-year-old children watch these devices and this affects their souls so that the elderly are all affected (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 83*).

2. School and university only cover a few hours of a child's or adolescent's life during the school year, but this is not the case about the mass media. Radio and Television waves are at home night and day and there is no time limit for them.

3. Schools and universities are restricted in location, but there is no restriction in their means of communication. The waves are everywhere in the houses, schools, towns and villages. Accordingly, the radio and television stations are a university that is spread all over the country. They are watched and listened to all over the country and as far as the wave goes. The image presented here the image that is shown here will be present all over the country and wherever there is coverage (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 83*).

4. The school and university cover a special group of people in small numbers and in a few hours, but the mass media cover all human beings, both literate and illiterate. Therefore, all sections of the nation should be

trained by this device (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 203*). Those who are illiterate watch movies and listen to those who are literate. It is not the case that these devices belong to one particular group (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 83*).

The importance of these media to Imam is that these devices can be a means for destruction of human life or at the service of human happiness because the means of mass communication can lead to human freedom or captivity: radio and television should help to develop the young people so that they become independent and have the will and the decision not to adhere to sensuality or other issues such as heroin and the like (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 104*). Therefore, the moral function of these media is to support social norms and human freedom, not undesirable roles such as social exclusion by creating a kind of imaginary participation in reality: “one of the institutions that was active in this respect was the television, which first broadcasted its narcotics. This music is all narcotic, that is, our youth and the young people who are accustomed to music can no longer do a good job. Radio and television wasted out youth’s time and they were corrupted in this way. This is a device that can be the best in providing services or the worst betrayal. If it is corrected, a country can be reformed, and if, God forbid that, there is deviation in it, it can divert a whole country (*Imam Khomeini, 1982, p. 83*).

Islamic model proposed in accordance with the philosophy of education of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the spiritual education of children:

Given that the concept of spiritual education is formed based on a specific concept of values, the philosophy of education of the Islamic Republic of Iran should also provide a suitable model. Accordingly, the present study provided an overview of its proposed model as an Islamic model for the spiritual education of children. The Islamic model of Spiritual Education of Children concerns a) Discovering the truth about the presence or lack of God's spiritual authority, b: Expanding knowledge of God, c: Deepening the Tendency to Him, and development of the soul in all its dimensions to facilitate and precipitate the move toward God; conscious and voluntary fulfillment of the true and pure life at all levels.

Jafari (2013) emphasized that no human being can claim to have all the divine values unless s/he is aware of the identity of the principles and values. It is a product of intellectual and rational efforts in recognizing the identity of principles and values of human life.

Therefore, it is necessary to gain a correct view of God and a firm belief in Him. In order to deepen the tendency towards God, the child must realize his/her feelings and desires towards Him and refine his/her heart and soul from employments other than him, develop various dimensions of the soul to facilitate and accelerate the movement towards God and towards realizing a truly happy life in all levels.

Discussion and conclusion

The findings of the present study showed that education is one of the important pillars

in the monotheistic call of the prophets and the goal and philosophy of the resurrection of the prophets is to develop good human beings and the world is based on human education. From Imam Khomeini's point of view, the essence of man is the soul, and the body is a means of its manifestation and promotion. The need for paying attention to children's spiritual development is felt more than ever before. The process of spiritual education of children is affected by several factors that should be taken into account in each period of his/her growth. On this basis, spiritual education should provide the opportunity for the spiritual growth of all children throughout the curriculum, and should not be limited to religious education and the practice of worship. Given that there are three early periods of childhood spirituality including late childhood, adolescence and adulthood, spiritual education should also be formed for children accordingly. Imam mentioned the factors involved in education including family, schools, educational centers and the mass media. In this regard, spiritual education is not related to a specific place, time or people, but spiritual education should be done by the family, school, educational centers and the mass media in a balanced and coordinated manner.

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