The Relationship between Religion and Development in the Thought System of Ayatollah Khamenei

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Abstract

The present study aims to elucidate the relationship between religion and development and to examine the role of religion as either an obstacle or a catalyst for development by delving into the thought system of Ayatollah Khamenei. In this regard, the ideas and thoughts of Ayatollah Khamenei regarding religion and development are analyzed to respond to the fundamental question of this research: 'Is religion an obstacle to development or a driving force for it?' He has presented his specific views on the role of religion in human development and progress. Ayatollah Khamenei's perspective is significant regarding his position as a contemporary religious thinker. This paper employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the topic. In the first phase, a library research method was utilized to gather comprehensive and in-depth information. This involved systematically referring to existing sources, including books, articles, and statements by Ayatollah Khamenei, and collecting data. In the second one, a systemic analysis method was employed for a deeper interpretation and analysis of the research findings. The systemic analysis of political thinkers' ideas is a novel method for examining and interpreting the thoughts of political thinkers, and it is designed in five key stages: Research design, data collection, data analysis, reporting findings, and research validation. The findings indicated that religion is not only an obstacle to development, but it also acts as a driving force for it. The religious teachings derived from Ayatollah Khamenei's thought system, which have their roots in his specific worldview, play a vital role in achieving development in both individual and social dimensions.

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Introduction

Initially, a conceptual discussion regarding modernization and development will be presented. Since modernization represents a broader concept, it will be considered first. Modernization precedes development; it has a general aspect and manifests in all areas (Qavam, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 59).

Modernization is a complex and multidimensional process that refers to transformations in all aspects of human life, including thought, behavior, social structures, and cultural institutions. This process is ongoing and has no definitive endpoint, seeking renewal and change in all dimensions of human civilization. Neil Smelser, a prominent sociologist, considers modernization to encompass transformations in various social fields, including political, educational, religious, familial, and class-related aspects. According to him, modernization signifies the transition from a traditional society to a modern society, characterized by features such as rationality, efficiency, secularism, and individualism (Haferkamp, Smelser, 2021 AD/1400 SH: 166).

Modernization has its specific dimensions in each of the social fields. For example, political modernization means the transition from traditional systems to democratic and law-based systems. Educational modernization refers to the development of education and the expansion of literacy in society. Religious modernization entails a transformation in religious beliefs and values, moving from traditionalism to modernism. Family modernization means changes in the structure and function of the family, transitioning from traditional families to modern families. Class modernization refers to social mobility and the elimination of class inequalities (Charan Doob, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 29-30).

In this context, and among the key concepts in social sciences, development holds a unique position. This term, in comparison to terms like modernization and growth, possesses greater precision and subtlety, encompassing a broader and more comprehensive scope. Unlike modernization, which has no definite limit or end, development pursues specific goals within a defined timeframe.

Furthermore, in contrast to growth, which focuses on quantitative targets, development also addresses qualitative goals; therefore, development, in a sense, seeks to pursue both quantitative and qualitative objectives simultaneously. Development, as opposed to modernization, has clear and defined objectives pursued over a specific time frame.

It is not merely limited to structural changes; rather, it aims to enhance the quality of life across various dimensions, including economic, social, cultural, and political aspects.

Regarding the relationship between religion and development, there are two general perspectives among thinkers and scholars. The first viewpoint advocates for the separation of religion and development. Some believe that religion and development are two distinct and unrelated concepts. From the perspective of this group, religion deals with non-material and metaphysical teachings and beliefs, while development is perceived as a social, objective, and tangible phenomenon.

This group believes that religion does not play a direct role in the process of development, and these two domains exist in separate realms. Conversely, another group emphasizes the interaction and interdependence between religion and development. This viewpoint holds that religion can not only play a role in various fields of development but can also be a foundation and source for development in different aspects.

Although development is inherently viewed as a material phenomenon, its results and consequences can align with human goals and values. For this reason, many scholars, such as "Guy Rocher," consider development to be beyond mere material advancement. Guy Rocher defines development as a set of actions and measures aimed at guiding society toward achieving a set of desirable conditions for collective and individual living. These desirable conditions are determined based on values that are accepted and valued by society (Rocher, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 212).

In Iran, various perspectives exist regarding the relationship between religion and development, with some individuals advocating for the limitation of religion in order to achieve development, a viewpoint that has also garnered supporters (Doustar, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 88).

On the other hand, the Islamic Republic emerged with the slogan of governance based on Islam. This contradiction raises the question of 'Whether the Islamic Republic must inevitably limit the role of religion in society to achieve development?'

To address this question, we have consulted the intellectual framework of Ayatollah Khamenei. He has presented his specific views on the role of religion in human development and progress. The perspective of Ayatollah Khamenei is significant due to his position as a religious thinker and reformist.

The importance of Ayatollah Khamenei's views on development can be summarized in two axes: The first is his familiarity with religious and

cultural foundations as a scholar of Islam, and the second is his understanding of Iran and the Islamic Republic.

The significance of this study can be highlighted by the very important role of religion in determining the path of development. Examining this topic is important from several perspectives: First, the theoretical aspect, which involves clarifying the relationship between religion and development, necessitating an exploration of the various views in this area. This endeavor aids in shedding light on the theoretical foundations of the discussion and identifying existing challenges.

Second, the practical aspect involves reviewing development experiences in various countries, particularly Iran, which can provide valuable lessons and insights for policymakers and planners. Third, the intellectual aspect revolves around the intellectual framework of Ayatollah Khamenei, which contains strategic viewpoints regarding religion and development. Illustrating and aligning these views with the realities of Iranian society can contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the country on its path to development.

The present study aims to examine the role of religion in development, elucidate the potential of religion in the domain of development, and investigate the relationship between religion and development according to Ayatollah Khamenei.

The research method employs an analytical-descriptive approach, relying on library resources and documents based on the views and statements of Ayatollah Khamenei regarding development, focusing on examining development and its relationship with religion.

Regarding the background of the research, several studies have been conducted on the relationship between religion and development to date. However, the volume of these studies is quite meager compared to the importance of the subject, and there is a significant lack of research in this area. Among the studies conducted, the following articles can be mentioned: Ghanbari, Seyfollah (2009 AD/1388 SH) conducted a study titled "The Relationship between Religion and Development with Emphasis on the Research Culture of Religious Teachings," concluding that Islam and other divine religions emphasize various aspects of global and universal development, with Islam bearing the responsibility of establishing a divine system at a global level. Ali Akbari, Hassan (2005 AD/1384 SH) conducted a study titled "Religion and Development," concluding that religion expresses all human needs at all times and is not indifferent to the topic of development.

Ghyathvand, Ahmad (2014 AD/1393 SH) conducted a study titled "The Model of Islamic-Iranian Advancement Dependent on the

Bidirectional Relationship between Religion and Development," concluding that it is expected that religion will assist in overcoming the barriers and constraints to progress based on its capacities and abilities.

Azimi, Mohammad (2015 AD/1394 SH) conducted a study titled "Religion and Development Strategies on a Civilizational Scale in a Future Horizon," concluding that within the realms of civilization and the domain of religion, it is demonstrated that religious propositions have strategic capacity in designing religious systems and regulating their processes. Yousefinejad, Ali (2003 AD/1382 SH) conducted a study titled "Culture of Development and Religion: Imperatives and Necessities," concluding that a necessary condition for achieving development is the transformation of individuals in terms of thought and culture.

This research focuses on examining the relationship between religion and development from the intellectual framework of Ayatollah Khamenei, a topic that has not been specifically explored in any previous research. The present study aims to open a new avenue for a deeper understanding of the relationship between religion and development and will offer fresh approaches for promoting development based on religion.

This paper employs a mixed-methods approach to examine the relationship between religion and development within the intellectual framework of Ayatollah Khamenei. In the first phase, to collect comprehensive and in-depth information, a library research method was utilized. For this purpose, existing sources, including books, articles, and statements of Ayatollah Khamenei, were systematically reviewed and information was gathered. In the second phase, a systemic analysis method was used for the deeper interpretation and analysis of the research findings.

The systemic analysis method of political thinkers is a comprehensive and systematic approach for examining and interpreting the views and ideas of political thinkers. This method emphasizes a deep understanding of the thinker's intellectual system and analyzing the research topic within this framework to provide a new and deeper perspective on the thoughts of political thinkers. This method includes five key stages:

1) Research design, which involves assessing the researcher's qualifications and clarifying the research problem;

2) Data collection, which includes gathering texts and works of the thinker, reviewing secondary sources, and interviewing experts;

3) Data analysis, which includes understanding the entirety of the thinker's intellectual system and analyzing the research topic under this intellectual system;

4) Reporting findings, which includes describing the research process, presenting key findings, and interpreting and analyzing the results;

5) Research validation, which includes pre-validation, intra-validation, and post-validation (Babakhani, 2022 AD/1401 SH).

This study consists of four main sections that examine the topic of "The Relationship between Religion and Development," focusing on the viewpoints of Ayatollah Khamenei. The first section, which provides the theoretical framework of the research, addresses the existing duality in views regarding the relationship between religion and development, specifically in Islamic countries, and then refers to new approaches taken by some Islamic countries regarding this issue.

The second section discusses the relationship between progress and development. The third section, which focuses on the relationship between religion and development within the intellectual framework of Ayatollah Khamenei, explores his views on the relationship between religion and development and examines the key components of this framework. The fourth section presents a model of development based on its connection to religion, followed by an analysis, discussion, and conclusion.

1. Theoretical Framework

The relationship between religion and development has become a challenging topic after the modern transformations in the West during contemporary times and has entered a new phase. Some scholars view religion not as an obstacle to development but as a driving force behind it.

They believe that religious teachings can enhance human capital, increase production and productivity, and reduce social inequalities. This perspective, known as "Consensus Theory" in the discussion of religion and development, emphasizes the positive role of religion in development. Proponents of this view point to examples of developed Islamic countries where religious teachings have been utilized for development.

Conversely, there are other views regarding the relationship between religion and development. Some scholars see religion and development as being in opposition to one another, arguing that religious teachings are in conflict with the requirements of development, especially in social and economic spheres.

This view, known as "Conflict Theory" in the discussion of religion and development, has its roots in Western secularism. Secularism confines religion to the private sphere of individuals and believes that religion should not have a role in the public domain, including in the area of development, thus denying any development-centric perspective in Islam and consequently positioning the West against Islam.

However, a historical examination of the relationship between Islam and the West reveals that the current scientific and civilizational advancements of the West owe much to the achievements and experiences of Muslims during the Middle Ages. Islamic countries, prior to the formation of development in the West, had powerful empires. For instance, Iran, at various times, especially during the Safavid era under the teachings of Islam, boasted a strong empire that brought about significant social, economic, cultural, and other advancements.

While Europeans greatly benefited from elements of Islamic culture and civilization, considering the predominance of materialistic and secular thinking, the structure and orientation of contemporary Western civilization diverged from Islamic thought. This essential discrepancy is rooted in the fact that Westerners learned science and technology from Muslims but did not pay enough attention to Islamic ethics and spirituality. In other words, the West was able to leverage the scientific and technical achievements of Muslims but failed to fully incorporate the moral and spiritual values of Islam. As a result, while Islam and the West did engage in interaction and exchange of achievements in certain scientific and technical areas, in terms of intellectual, cultural, and value-related aspects, the two civilizations moved along different paths.

Michael Todaro, a prominent economist in the field of development, offers a comprehensive and multidimensional definition of development. In his view, development is a continuous and dynamic process aimed at improving the living standards of the entire community and moving toward a more desirable and humane society. This process includes three key objectives:

1) Meeting basic needs: Humans require a set of basic and essential needs such as food, water, shelter, clothing, health care, and education for their survival and continuation of life. Access to these needs provides the foundational groundwork for development. The absence or severe deficiency of any of these basic needs leads to a condition known as absolute deprivation. In such situations, individuals are at serious risk of health issues, malnutrition, and death.

2) Sense of self-esteem: Self-confidence is considered the second key component of development. This refers to the feeling of self-worth, value, and dignity. Individuals in a developed society should feel that

they possess personality and identity and are not under the domination or control of others.

The concept and form of self-confidence may vary across different societies and cultures. In every society, individuals seek a kind of self-confidence that aligns with its norms, values, and beliefs.

3) Freedom and the ability to choose: Freedom, as the third key objective of development, involves liberation from oppressive and restrictive conditions that hinder the progress and flourishing of individuals and communities. This includes freedom from social constraints, ignorance, misery, and also freedom from the domination and exploitation of people, institutions, and imposed beliefs. Freedom empowers individuals and communities to make choices and minimizes external limitations on the path to development. This means that individuals in a free society have the opportunity to choose their life path, career, beliefs, and lifestyle (Todaro, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 133-138).

A review of human rights documents can shed some light on the place of the concept of development. What is stated in human rights documents, either explicitly or implicitly, recognizes development as one of the concepts of human rights. Human rights concepts have the characteristic of being focused on individuals and considering rights for them. For instance, the "Right to Life" indicates that human beings possess a right known as "Life," and thus, it is formally recognized. These concepts carry a value charge and discuss the inalienable rights of every human being; for example, "Freedom" is a right that cannot be separated from human beings. Therefore, human rights concepts have three characteristics:

1) They carry a value charge;

2) They are inherent to human beings;

3) Their subject is also human (Mohibbi, 2015 A/1394 SH).

Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, in their influential research on human development in India, emphasize that the expansion of social opportunities cannot be achieved solely by the government or the market, but require collective action. Referring to the state of Kerala and its religious traditions, these two researchers address the role of social organizations in facilitating such collective actions. However, the study does not precisely explain how public organizations and government policies can create the necessary conditions for effective collective action. The case studies presented in this research, particularly concerning the state of Kerala, provide clues about the role of religious organizations in creating such conditions (Candland, 2000: 369-370).

According to Todaro's definition, development not only encompasses programs in the fields of economics, politics, and culture

(areas of behavior and action) but also includes two other dimensions (insight and orientation), as he considers it a comprehensive program that encompasses all aspects of life.

His emphasis on the inclusion of identity, satisfaction, and self-esteem in the development model guides us towards placing his perspective within the triad of insight, orientation, and action. If we wish to analyze the relationship between religion and development through Todaro's definition, we must first define religion. Religion is a set of beliefs, moral teachings, laws, and regulations that are formulated or accepted to govern human society and nurture individuals. This collection may include teachings that are true, false or a combination of both (Javadi Amoli, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 93).

Based on this definition, religion and all its domains can be categorized into three major divisions: beliefs, ethics, and laws. These three areas can also be identified as the broader domains of insight, orientation, and action; beliefs form the insight dimension, ethics form the action dimension, and laws and regulations represent the behavioral aspect of human beings. The relationship among these three areas is longitudinal, and in this regard, one can discuss the precedence and delay among the three areas of religion. How religion can effectively influence development relates to our perspective on these three components of religion. Allamah Tabatabai's interpretation of religion can also guide us in this triad; from his viewpoint, religion is described as a practical tradition founded on the issue of worldview and biology, which differs from reasoning and empirical science that discuss the cosmos and humanity (Tabatabai: 15, 9).

Since there is a longitudinal relationship among the three domains of religion, and the domain of insight leads to the formation of the domain of orientation and ultimately action, one can conceptualize a hierarchy of religious priorities based on the precedence and posteriority of these three areas. Accordingly, beliefs and convictions constitute the main axis of religion, because without beliefs and convictions, traits and behaviors cannot take shape. According to various verses of the Quran, the precedence of the domain of insight (referred to in the Quran as faith) is rooted in beliefs, which form the foundation of the other components of religion (al-Baqarah/62-41-82-137).

In other words, faith and insight have a rank-based precedence over action and thus hold the highest position among the other three domains. The significance of the position of insight relative to the other domains can also be inferred from the precedence of the term "Faith" over the term "Action" in various verses of the Quran; therefore, in the framework of Quranic thought, the precedence of faith over other

domains of religion is a clear matter. In the structure of insight, when a person comes to believe in something, this belief becomes the source of the individual's behavior and traits, giving them purpose.

The insight dimension of religion includes individuals' fundamental beliefs and convictions regarding the world, humanity, God, and the position of humans in existence. These beliefs form the basis of individuals' identity and worldview, helping them answer fundamental life questions such as "Who am I?" "Where have I come from?" and "Where am I going?"

Globalization, as a complex and multifaceted process, has brought about fundamental transformations in theories and approaches to development. Zayn al-Din, emphasizing these transformations, introduces globalization as a new paradigm in economic development that has impacted the developmental models of developing countries. By examining the challenges faced by developing countries in the age of globalization, he points to the intense competition among these countries as one of the most significant factors creating these challenges.

Zayn al-Din believes that regional and international cooperation can help mitigate the negative effects of this competition and facilitate the development process in these countries. In addition to economic factors, Zayn al-Din also considers the role of cultural and religious variables in shaping development patterns.

He asserts that religion, as one of the most crucial components of cultural identity, can influence how societies interact with the process of globalization. Numerous studies show that while globalization creates new opportunities, it also brings challenges such as increased inequality, environmental degradation, and the loss of cultural identity; in this context, designing development policies that can leverage the advantages of globalization while preventing its negative effects is of high importance (Zayn al-Din, 2002: 37-39).

In the research conducted by Hamid et al., the concept of religious cooperation is generalized as an independent variable so that it can be applied in the study of relations among countries with diverse religious orientations, encompassing not only Muslim countries but also non-Islamic countries (Hamid, 1993: 132).

The relationship between religion and development can be found in Ayatollah Khamenei's different worldview regarding development, which leads us to answer the fundamental question of "Consensus Theory" or "Conflict theory." Ayatollah Khamenei believes that the impact of religion on development stems from the differing perspectives of religious worldview (Statements, 12/09/1379).

Religious worldview offers a comprehensive view of human life in which humans are considered dual beings, living both in this world and the hereafter. These two dimensions are interconnected, each playing a role in determining the course of human life. A religious worldview encourages individuals to pay attention to the spiritual aspect of life alongside the material aspect.

This does not mean neglecting worldly needs and desires; rather, it signifies finding a balance between these two dimensions and seeking meaning and purpose in life. Thus, it can be concluded that a religious worldview encompasses various dimensions, each addressing a specific aspect of human life. These dimensions can be broadly categorized into the following groups:

- The hereafter and spiritual aspect: This aspect focuses on human commitment to life after death and adherence to moral and religious values. Neglecting the spiritual and ethical dimensions of development can lead to social harms such as increased crime, the collapse of values, indifference toward others, and the weakening of family foundations. Sustainable and desirable development requires a balance between its material and spiritual dimensions.

- The worldly aspect: This aspect concerns human life in this world and the effort to improve it.

The second dimension of this worldview, which relates to the outlook on the world, is itself divided into two categories:

1) First category: This includes guiding individuals towards realizing their talents and personal capabilities, encompassing personal development;

2) Second category: This encompasses recommendations for work, effort, and improving the world while promoting justice, which involves social development.

2. The Relationship between Progress and Development

At the outset of this discussion, it is necessary to clarify Ayatollah Khamenei's perspective on development. The concept of development in Ayatollah Khamenei's thought is different from its prevalent Western concept. The term "Development" is widely used in today's political and global discourse; however, what he presents in contrast to development is the concept of "Progress."

He states that when we use the term "Progress," we do not necessarily mean "Development" in the conventional Western sense. "Development" is frequently employed in today's political and global terminology, but the "Progress" we are referring to, despite having some commonalities with the notion of "Development" in today's world, has

its specific meaning in our vocabulary and should not be confused with "Development" in Western terminology.

If we want to compare the concepts of "Progress" and "Development," "Progress" in Ayatollah Khamenei's thought system refers to the forward movement and improvement across various dimensions including economic, social, cultural, political, and more. This concept is often measured against local criteria and the values of the relevant society; however, in Western discourse, "Development" predominantly focuses on economic and material indicators such as economic growth, increased gross domestic product, and material well-being.

Another difference is that "Progress," in its concept, gives special attention to spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions in addition to economic and material aspects. Indicators like social justice, literacy enhancement, sustainable development, environmental preservation, and so on hold great importance in this concept, whereas in Western "Development," The primary focus is on economic and material indicators, and other dimensions like spirituality and culture are considered secondary.

Another point is that the goal of "Progress" is to achieve an ideal society that aligns with the values and needs of the concerned community. This ideal society encompasses various dimensions such as economic, social, human dignity, cultural, political, and ethical, taking into account justice, welfare, and dynamism.

In contrast, the goal of Western "Development" is often predominantly achieving material well-being and economic growth. Progress does not necessarily guarantee development. The enhancement of various aspects of life, including in economic, social, and cultural fields, will pave the way for sustainable development; however, development alone cannot guarantee progress. Economic growth without attention to other aspects of life can lead to inequality, injustice, and social dislocation. In analyzing the concept of progress, various dimensions should be considered:

- Economic: Economic growth, job creation, material welfare;
- Social: Social justice, literacy improvement, health and security;
- Cultural: Preservation and promotion of local values, creativity, and innovation;
- Political: Freedom, democracy, citizen participation.

It can be concluded that "Progress" and "Development" are similar concepts but with nuanced meanings and significant differences. The "Progress" envisioned in Ayatollah Khamenei's thought system aims to create a model that aligns with the values and needs of Iranian-Islamic

society, rather than merely pursuing "Development" in the Western style with all its criteria and specifications. Progress is a more comprehensive concept that encompasses development.

Achieving sustainable and balanced progress requires attention to various economic, social, cultural, and political dimensions. In this research, whenever "Development" is mentioned, it refers to the progress that has been specified in detail within this writing. In this text, the term "Development" is used to mean progress and improvement across various dimensions. This progress includes various aspects that are elaborated upon in the text; therefore, wherever "Development" is mentioned in this research, it means the same progress and improvement across various dimensions as detailed in this writing.

3. The Relationship between Religion and Development in Ayatollah Khamenei's Thought System

Now that Ayatollah Khamenei's perspective on development has been explained, we turn to his view on the relationship between religion and development. Ayatollah Khamenei has a comprehensive view regarding the connection between religion and development. He believes that religion plays a central role in all aspects of social life, including development. In Ayatollah Khamenei's thought, development is not only understood as economic growth but also encompasses cultural, social, and political progress, all of which must occur within the framework of Islamic values and teachings.

For instance, in his book on political philosophy, it is emphasized that the Islamic Revolution was the origin of the emergence of citizenship reality in Iran, and this will lead to the realization of an Islamic society and ultimately Islamic civilization. He believes that the Islamic government should be defined and explained based on divine will and religious texts, and this is a step towards realizing Islamic civilization (Mohajernia,2013 AD/1393 SH: 120).

Ayatollah Khamenei asserts that the influence of religion on development relates to the different worldview perspectives that include both the spiritual and worldly dimensions (Statements, 26/02/1375).

3.1. The Spiritual Dimension: The Role of *Tawakkul* and Remembrance of God in Development

Tawakkul (trust in God) and remembrance of God are two key concepts in Abrahamic religions, particularly Islam, which have a close relationship with sustainable and comprehensive development. Al-Ghazzali defines *Tawakkul* as an internal state resulting from faith in the oneness of God and the perfection of His grace. In other words, *Tawakkul* means complete trust in God as the only absolute power and

reliance on Him in all aspects of life. This trust enables an individual to maintain their calm in the face of difficulties and hardships and, instead of relying on apparent factors, to hope in the power and grace of God (Al-Ghazzali, 1982 AD/1361 SH: 722).

Tawakkul can be defined as a combination of individual effort and reliance on divine superior power. This concept implies that after making all possible efforts and preparing the necessary prerequisites to achieve a goal, the individual confidently entrusts the outcome of their efforts to God (Aghababayi, 1939 AD/1319 SH).

Meanwhile, remembrance of God signifies the constant awareness of His presence and power. Being attentive to God and mentioning Him, motivated by the desire to attain spiritual perfection, leads to more precise fulfillment of individual and social responsibilities.

This relationship between the remembrance of God and an individual's performance is due to its positive impact on psychological factors such as motivation, purposefulness, and a sense of responsibility (Mostafapour, 2008 AD/1387 SH).

These two elements can help individuals confront life's challenges while maintaining the necessary hope and motivation for progress and development. Studies show that trust in a higher power can have positive effects on an individual's psychology. This belief, by increasing feelings of security and support, leads to greater courage in decision-making and a reduction in anxiety and depression.

Additionally, trust can act as a motivational factor, encouraging individuals to fulfill their personal and social responsibilities more effectively. Given Michael Todaro's definition of development, which emphasizes the importance of individual participation and self-esteem in the development process, these elements can be considered effective factors in achieving sustainable development (Todaro, 2012 AD/1391 SH:133-138).

Trust and reliance on God have been examined as beneficial traits for coping with difficulties, resisting despair, and managing anxiety and depression. Ultimately, trust and remembrance of God can contribute to creating a stable and united society, where individuals, with confidence and hope for the future, advance toward common goals. These concepts are beneficial not only for the individual but for society as a whole, as they can lead to the creation of positive relationships and effective collaborations.

Prayer and worship, as fundamental pillars of spiritual life, alongside efforts and endeavors in material areas, form the groundwork for human elevation in light of Islamic teachings. Therefore, Islam does not oppose material and worldly development but considers it a necessity for

humanity. While emphasizing development and the flourishing of the world, Islam also reminds us that material development without regard for spirituality is incomplete and meaningless.

If a person solely pursues worldly matters, they will be deprived of the true essence of human life. One common deviation in this regard is the sole focus on materialism while neglecting spirituality. In this approach, all efforts of society, planners, policymakers, and the government are directed towards improving people's lives in material terms. From this perspective, development indicators are limited to aspects such as increasing wealth, well-being, solving economic and livelihood issues, and providing material resources for people.

This one-dimensional approach to development has several negative consequences. Neglecting the spiritual and ethical dimensions of development can lead to social harms such as an increase in crime, the breakdown of values, indifference towards others, and the weakening of family foundations. Sustainable and desirable development requires a balance between its material and spiritual dimensions. Institutionalizing ethical values, strengthening religious beliefs, promoting justice and fairness, and attending to human spiritual needs alongside material needs are among the requirements for achieving this balance (Statements, 26/02/1375).

3.2. Worldly Dimension: The Role of Religion in World Development

The worldly dimension of the religious worldview addresses human life in this world and the effort to cultivate it, which can be broadly divided into personal development and social development. One of the prominent features of the revealed religion of Islam, particularly the Shia faith with its rich and elevated teachings, is its comprehensiveness in providing the necessary solutions for both individual and social growth and transcendence. This is a highly significant point that is rarely found in other schools of thought and ideologies.

Many schools and ideologies may have positive aspects in certain areas. For example, they might stimulate the inner forces of individuals, providing an environment for the flourishing of talents, creativity, construction, wealth production, and innovation. However, the inherent deficiencies of many of these doctrines lead to losses for their followers, which sometimes exceed the apparent benefits. In contrast to these contradictions, Islam outlines the correct path for human growth and transcendence in both individual and social dimensions by offering a comprehensive and flawless system.

The noble teachings of Islam not only guide individuals towards the flourishing of their talents and capabilities-encompassing personal development - but also provide solutions for establishing justice, peace,

spirituality, and ethics in society, thereby creating the conditions for a prosperous and dynamic life that includes social development. A key difference between Islam and other schools is that, unlike other doctrines that focus solely on one aspect of human growth (individual or social), Islam addresses both dimensions simultaneously, thus paving the way for true happiness for humanity (Statements, 26/02/1375).

3.3. The Role of Islamic Teachings in the Flourishing of Human Talents: The Impact of Religious Worldview on Personal Development

Islamic teachings play a fundamental role in promoting personal development through emphasizing concepts such as self-awareness, self-building, spiritual elevation, and the purification of the soul.

- Self-awareness: In Islamic teachings, humans are recognized as unique creatures with their own specific talents and capabilities. The first step on the path of personal development is a precise understanding of oneself and the potential talents that lie within. Islamic teachings encourage individuals to think and reflect on their creation and discover their abilities;

- Self-building: After gaining self-awareness, individuals must take steps to enhance their abilities and talents. Islamic teachings encourage the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and experience in various life domains. Additionally, they emphasize commitment and perseverance in the journey of self-improvement;

- Spiritual Elevation: Ultimately, the final goal of personal development in Islamic teachings is to achieve spiritual elevation and human perfection. Islamic teachings encourage individuals to connect with the source of truth and meaning in life and to enhance their moral and human qualities. Spiritual elevation provides individuals with peace, hope, and motivation, aiding them on their path to personal development;

- Purification of the Soul: The purification of the soul refers to cleansing it from negative traits and adorning it with commendable qualities. Islamic teachings consider the purification of the soul as one of the most important pillars of personal development. It helps individuals gain mastery over their selves and walk on the correct path of life (Statements, 26/02/1375);

- Lifestyle: One of the most important effects of the religious worldview on personal development is the change in lifestyle. By lifestyle, we mean a collection of values and behaviors that not only meet human needs but also contribute to the individual's identity in relation to others (Sharifi et al., 2012 AD/1391 SH: 27).

According to Ayatollah Khamenei, lifestyle is equivalent to "The wisdom of livelihood," and this meaning has been emphasized in various

traditions (Statements, 27/07/1391). In this regard, it can be described as the software of Islamic civilization, contrasted with its hardware. The influence of religion and the religious worldview in the realm of lifestyle is such that we can conceive two different livelihoods based on whether the worldview is religious or non-religious.

In other words, the boundaries of religious and non-religious life can be traced within lifestyle. Therefore, it can be stated that the religious worldview directly impacts personal development; as religion clearly refers to faith, knowledge and awareness, avoidance of imitation, attention to religious and cultural symbols (like Islamic architecture), language, the attire of a Muslim, travel and recreation, marital and family life, and human relationships with one another and with nature, these teachings can also transform an individual's personal development (Amini and Halalkhor, 2015 AD/1394 SH: 16-23).

3.3.1. The Role of Islamic Teachings in Urbanization and Prosperity: The Impact of Religious Worldview on Social Development

The religious worldview, with its emphasis on work and effort, justice, and cooperation, encourages individuals to improve the world and promote justice in society. This leads to increased production, economic prosperity, enhancement of individuals' living standards, fair distribution of wealth and opportunities, protection of individual rights and freedoms, and the eradication of discrimination and inequality in society.

The improvement of the world is another significant goal within the religious worldview. Religious teachings emphasize hard work, appropriate use of natural resources, and environmental preservation. This contributes to increased production, economic prosperity, and the enhancement of individuals' living standards. The religious worldview values work and effort, encouraging individuals to strive for a lawful livelihood and to better the world. Religious teachings emphasize the proper use of individual talents and abilities for the advancement and development of society (Statements, 28/10/1377).

During the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), some individuals misunderstood the concept of reliance (*Tawakkul*) and withdrew from effort and activity in worldly matters, opting for isolation and seclusion with the belief that God had promised, "And whoever relies upon Allah, then He is sufficient for him." (al-Ṭalaq/3)

This led to a decisive response from the Prophet (PBUH). He clarified the correct concept of reliance by emphasizing the necessity of effort and endeavor alongside faith and trust in God. In this regard, the Prophet (PBUH) narrated a hadith that conveys the message: "Whoever solely relies on Allah, Allah will not answer any of their prayers." This

hadith indicates that reliance does not mean indifference to worldly affairs or abandoning effort and activity, but rather signifies faith in divine assistance alongside striving toward one's goals (Statements, 26/02/1375).

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not merely issue commands for work and effort but invigorated the spirit of labor and exertion among the people through various methods. One of these methods was elucidating the importance of work and effort from a religious perspective. In this context, he cited narrations that condemned idleness and praised work and effort. For instance, he is reported to have said: "God is not pleased with a young person who wastes their life in idleness." Beyond explaining religious teachings, the Prophet (PBUH) also emphasized the significance of work and effort through his behavior and interactions.

The reason for the Prophet's (PBUH) emphasis on these matters was the necessity for progress and development in various dimensions of society, particularly in the material aspect. A society in which its inhabitants rely solely on trust, prayer, and worship while neglecting effort and action in worldly matters will not be able to advance or achieve well-being and comfort. The significant difference in the living standards of Muslims at the dawn of Islam compared to a few decades thereafter serves as clear evidence of this claim. While many Muslims lived in poverty and hardship at the beginning of Islam, within a few decades, we witnessed economic flourishing, urban development, and the expansion of material blessings in the Islamic community. These advancements were the fruits of the efforts and endeavors of Muslims, combined with their reliance on and faith in God (Statements, 28/07/1368).

One of the most important overarching perspectives in religion is the idea of the primacy of society. This perspective has its roots in several verses of the Quran, which address society directly and attribute specific qualities, effects, and a distinct existence to it (Tabataba'i, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 57-59).

This viewpoint elevates the importance of society, particularly in relation to the individual. Thus, it can be said that from a religious perspective, society is not merely a tool for human life but rather an entity that possesses a distinct happiness and misery, separate from that of individuals; therefore, its development and flourishing also entail separate principles. In this context, the development of society becomes as important as individual development, and more precisely, an individual's flourishing is contingent upon the flourishing of society.

The scope and depth of investment in social development are dependent on the prevailing worldview of a society. This worldview, rooted in ontology, determines the priorities and directions of development. In religious thought, especially in Islam, society holds a high position, and its development is posited as a moral obligation.

This perspective is grounded in the fundamental principles of the formation of religious communities. Specifically, Islam, and particularly Shia Islam, seeks to establish an ideal society where all individuals enjoy equal rights while emphasizing equality and social justice (Javidan and Dastmalchian, 2003: 130-131).

3.4. The Role of Islamic Teachings in Correctly Understanding the Relationship between the World and the Hereafter

In addition to an excessive focus on materialism and neglect of spirituality, disregarding divine bounties in the material world is another deviation from the path of development. This approach, which has historical roots in some religious movements, leads to indifference toward the blessings of life and the hidden potentials within the material world. In this view, a concentrated attention to the hereafter and spiritual matters deprives humans of the enjoyment of divine gifts in the material world and the opportunity to utilize their God-given talents.

Such an attitude not only contradicts human nature but also conflicts with religious teachings. As stated in the verse "He it is who created you from the earth and settled you therein," (al-Hūd/61) God has commanded humans to cultivate the earth. Cultivating the earth means discovering the endless potentials of the material world, utilizing them for the welfare and advancement of humanity, and improving the quality of human life. This requires attention to knowledge and the production of knowledge, innovation, and efforts to exploit natural resources in a sustainable and responsible manner. In Islam, not only is piety and attention to the hereafter emphasized, but there is also a recommendation to cultivate the world and benefit from divine blessings.

Attention to knowledge and the production of knowledge, innovation, and efforts to utilize natural resources in a sustainable and responsible manner are among the requirements for achieving balance and reaching sustainable and balanced development. Alongside deviations such as an excessive focus on materialism and neglect of spirituality, indifference to material needs and the bounties of life in personal living is also considered another deviation in the path of development.

This approach, which has a history in some intellectual and spiritual currents, is interpreted as asceticism and renunciation of the world in

favor of the hereafter. In this view, attention to material and worldly matters is seen as a deviation from the path of spirituality and a lack of consideration for the hereafter.

However, Islam, as a comprehensive and complete religion, presents a balanced perspective on the world and the hereafter. In Islamic teachings, not only is piety and attention to the hereafter emphasized, but there is also a recommendation to cultivate the world and benefit from divine bounties.

As stated in the Quran in Surah al-A'raf/32: "Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has produced for His servants and the good, pure things of provision?" The prohibition of divine adornments and pure provisions is challenged in a questioning and critical tone. Islam emphasizes the balance between attention to the world and the hereafter. Neglecting either of these dimensions can lead to deviations in the path of life and result in negative consequences.

This balance should be considered not only in personal life but also in large-scale planning and actions, such as running the country. Sustainable and desirable development requires attention to both the material and spiritual aspects of human life. Sustainable and optimal development requires a balance between attention to spirituality and benefiting from divine bounties in the material world. Neglecting either of these dimensions can lead to deviations in the path of development and result in negative consequences. (Statements, 27/2/1388)

4. Development Model Based on Connection with Religion

The formulation of a progress model is an undeniable necessity for the country on its path to achieving its goals and aspirations. This model serves as a comprehensive roadmap, creating coherence and unity in planning, specifying priorities, enabling the evaluation and monitoring of progress, fostering a culture of values, guiding elite discourse, directing public mindset, and determining strategies for exports and imports (Statements, 18/8/1385).

The concept of progress is one of the key and fundamental concepts in political and social thought. There are numerous definitions of progress, each examining this concept from a specific perspective. In the Islamic Republic system, the definition of progress is not limited to economic and material indicators; rather, it encompasses multiple dimensions. Considering the elucidation of the concept of progress, existing models and frameworks of development are not suitable for the country. In this regard, a reevaluation of the development and progress model is of vital importance, and it is essential to define a new model for development and progress.

The new model of development and progress should possess the following characteristics:

- Comprehensive perspective: This model should consider societal welfare and happiness in various dimensions as the ultimate goal of development, rather than focusing solely on economic indicators;

- Compatible with Iranian-Islamic identity and values: This model should be consistent with the religious, cultural, and moral identity of Iranian society and respect these values;

- Suitable for the conditions and capacities of the country: This model should be designed considering the climatic, geographical, economic, social, and cultural conditions of the country, and it should utilize internal capacities to achieve progress and development.

The Iranian-Islamic model of progress is introduced as a local approach based on religious teachings within the discussions of development. This model aims to create an ideal society across various political, economic, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions by offering a comprehensive framework and a macro perspective.

Unlike some secular approaches that regard religion and development as two separate and unrelated subjects, this model emphasizes the profound and inseparable connection between the two. In this model, religion is seen not only as a set of individual rules and decrees but also as a rich source of strategic and insightful teachings for achieving true and sustainable development.

The Iranian-Islamic model of progress possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it from other development models. Some of these characteristics include:

- Centrality of religious values: This model, by emphasizing the fundamental values of Islam such as justice, monotheism, human dignity, responsibility, and spirituality, seeks to establish a society based on these values;

- Comprehensive and macro perspective: The Iranian-Islamic model of progress does not limit development solely to economic or political advancement; rather, it seeks progress in all dimensions of human life, including spiritual, cultural, social, and political aspects;

- Attention to social justice: This model considers the establishment of social justice as one of the main pillars of true development and aims to address inequalities and ensure equitable distribution of opportunities and resources within society;

- Public participation: The Iranian-Islamic model of progress emphasizes the active role of the people in the development process and welcomes widespread participation in decision-making and program execution (Statements, 25/2/1386).

The Relationship between Religion and Development in the Thought System of Ayatollah Khamenei

The Iranian-Islamic model of progress, as a roadmap for achieving true development in Iran, can be a guiding framework in various fields. It can assist planners, policymakers, and managers in formulating and implementing development programs and can also serve as a framework for evaluating and measuring the country's progress.

Despite the numerous advantages of the Iranian-Islamic model of progress, it is just the beginning of the journey and serves as an example of how religion and development can be aligned. To realize the lofty goals of the country, extensive work and research in this area are required.

Conclusion

This research examines the intellectual framework of Ayatollah Khamenei, exploring the relationship between religion and development. It demonstrates that this relationship cannot be simplified into "Consensus Theory" or "Conflict Theory" but can rather be explained within the context of Ayatollah Khamenei's specific "Religious Worldview." His religious worldview offers a comprehensive perspective on human life, viewing humans as dual beings with both worldly and otherworldly dimensions. These two dimensions interact with one another to shape the path of development. The otherworldly or spiritual dimension creates the necessary conditions for achieving development through factors such as the reduction of crime and an increase in social responsibility. The worldly dimension, in turn, is divided into individual and social aspects. Individual development focuses on the flourishing of individuals' talents and capabilities, while social development pertains to fostering a spirit of work and endeavor, the prosperity of the world, and the promotion of justice.

Based on this intellectual framework, religion is not only an obstacle to development but plays a central role in facilitating, guiding, and advancing it. Religion, by providing an ethical and spiritual framework, establishes the necessary conditions for enhancing human and social capital, thereby contributing to development in both individual and social dimensions.

From Ayatollah Khamenei's perspective, the development model must fundamentally be based on three elements: Comprehensiveness, alignment with Iranian-Islamic values, and suitability to the conditions and capacities of the country.

He sees the path of development as stemming from a collective focus on both dimensions of human existence-this world and the hereafter. In fact, consensus or conflict approaches are criticized in that

they center on only one of these dimensions as the axis for development; in other words, reducing human life to either the worldly or otherworldly dimension leads to an incomplete acceptance or rejection of the entirety of development. Meanwhile, development, from his perspective, is a path that navigates between these two human truths and the associated aspects.

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