

A Novel Attitude towards Future Research in Religious Culture

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Abstract

Futures study is the art and science of exploring future and forming a favorable world. An important feature of this field is that it uses scientific tools in order to provide a picture matching values ruling the society, and planning in order to achieve a favorable society. Hence, sociologists consider futures study as a tool for social navigation.

Islam not only expects an ideal society which has been reported to come true in history, but it also expects its own followers to strengthen their society and its facilities in order to realize the qualities of a favorable Islamic society in a perfectionist way, by being inspired by the features of the ideal society. With inspiration from Islamic lessons such as social traditions and the philosophy of wait, a certain type of futures study is extracted whose result is an exact picture of an ideal society. By looking at such a favorable future as a goal, it is possible to design and define probable futures as drivers of realizing the qualities of a society that is ready to come into existence.

Key words: Future, Futures Study, Providence, Ideal Society, Social Traditions, Waits.

Introduction

Ideal society is a subject which has occupied the minds of thinkers and scholars during the history. This has helped certain phenomenon to appear, within which a favorable society has been planned. In this case, there are numerous sources and documents which have appeared in various frames. Many of them include the written form of plans and pictures of urban ideals which have been formed during the history of humanity. For example, we can refer to the works done by Plato, specially the book "Populace", the tradition thoughts by Agustin in "God's city", "Utopia" by Thomas More, and "Utopia" by Farabi.

In addition to these idealistic plans which are plentiful, some existing sources have focused on the analysis of the approach of an ideal city.

On the other hand, Islam, like all otherethereal religions, has pictured the future of humanity and history to be bright and full of hope. But another important point which caused us to provide this paper is that Islam not only predicts a bright future in the end of the history, but it also invites its followers to take certain measures in order to achieve a favorable society in any time or age. Based on Shia lessons, the appearance of Mahdi and the formation of Islamic ideal society are the last circles of battles against the good and the bad. But Islam requires its followers to endeavor and wait in order to realize their ideal society. It is obvious that the realization of the quality of "wait" in the Islamic society requires conditions and qualities which are signs of the realization of some minimum level of a favorable Islamic society.

The analysis of how to plan a society which can realize the different stages and level of a favorable Islamic society, and getting close to the qualities of the age of appearance are the purposes of the study. In fact, this paper is aiming to find a response to the question "how are the stages before the appearance, which provide an appropriate condition for the appearance and its acceleration, realized? What path are the necessary social studies going? And what approach can the cultural-social indexes use to make the appearance happen sooner?

The author of these lines believes that by relying on affairs such as the process base of the formation of an ideal Islamic society, and the fact that Islam emphasizes the role of humans and societies in composing a favorable society, it can be said that: a favorable Islamic society possesses level; and in any age, considering time and place conditions, some of Islam's desired features about favorable society might come true. But it is important that the Islamic society constantly try to move towards perfection and growth. In line with this, one of the above-mentioned conditions is scientific knowledge and facilities which are available in any age; they can also be provided.

Today, futures study knowledge as a novel type of knowledge focuses on certain goals, within which some sort of a social organization and picture emphasis is seen for a favorable status; in a way that sociologists consider that to be a tool for social navigation, and knowledge for forming future. Hence, we can conduct a research which, by carefully examining goals, concepts, and methods of futures study, makes it possible to use futures study to realize a favorable Islamic society. In other words, in this paper we are trying to examine the possibility of a religious futures study which is based on the role of the qualities and components of an ideal Islamic society in determining its values and norms, and in navigating social reactions through a comprehensive and hierarchical plan; in a way that the features of the age of absence get close to and develop in the shadows of the features of a favorable society in the age of appearance. The novelty of futures study knowledge inherently causes numerous constraints in researches. But loss of basic studies which form the first steps of such a study is another drawback of researches. Therefore, the present study emphasizes the question "do the futures study knowledge and the tools and facilities that a researcher uses have an appropriate capability of exploitation in the field of religious and social studies, especially to form an ideal Islamic society? The examination of such a subject requires that on the one hand, the concepts of this science and on the other hand, those religious concepts which are related to this topic, be meticulously considered; in a way that we can determine their consistency in order to determine the level and style of exploiting this knowledge in the field of religious-social studies.

Hence, the main question of the present study is: can we use futures study knowledge in the process of forming a favorable Islamic society? And if the response to this question is yes, another question is raised: in what level and style should we use futures study knowledge?

Definition of futures study

Because of dealing with humans and their behaviors, and because of social realities having multiple layers, the essence of human sciences, especially social sciences is of a type which confuses and amazes thinkers in the process of presenting equal definitions of concepts. For instance, sociologists have come up with a united agreement about the definitions of concepts such as culture, deviations, and institution. Hence, it is tried to pay attention to the basic features of the concepts. In writings, we inevitably refer to certain differences in the conceptual field; because in the field of futures studies, various terms are used whose biggest weakness is the fact that there is not a conceptual boundary between them. The most important terms which are used in the field of future studies include: providence, prediction, future study, foresight

Providence: it is a broad concept meaning the ability to imagine future through studies, research, and visualization. Such an attitude can be obtained through scientific methods, religious lessons, and or non-materialistic evidence. It is obvious that a provident person's approach can, based on his noetic principles, be a divine approach which is based upon spiritual or materialistic lessons.

Prediction: it is the statement of the definite occurrence of future happenings, which normally does not include an acceptable scientific base in any age. Predictions are divided into two groups: statements that are based on meta-physical findings with a root in spirituality and inspiration; it comprises rational-inferential support, as well as statements which only have materialistic and terrestrial dimensions, relying on superstitions. A feature of prediction is its definiteness, i.e. the provident person claims that he/she has found out about the future without any mistakes. But in other cases, the provident person accepts a certain percentage of mistake chance.

Future study: it is the process of studying and examining possible futures, using scientific methods. In this process, important steps are taken, including: identification of change, analysis and criticism of change, picturing possible future, picturing a favorable future, and finally planning and determining strategies to achieve that future. A factor which makes future study distinctive is its rationality; because the output of the process of future study using rational principles and criteria can be judged and examined. In order to explain the terms "prediction" and "foresight", we must refer to the fact that since the emergence of future study knowledge in 1960s and its development, there has been two different traditions and approaches in this field:

Prediction: in this method, scientists use the findings and data obtained from the past and present in order to examine the form of future procedures and their occurrence probability. Prediction can be referred to as a scientific guess about the continuation of specific variables in future, which are accepted by scientists with a certain percentage of error. This tradition is intensively "elite-oriented", which leaves the prediction of future to a group of professionals who not only study the future but also present extensive information on the predicted subject.

Foresight: in this tradition, it is tried to take the focus of future study away from an "elite-oriented" state, and make it a common effort in the society. Foresight is an attempt to produce a human capacity which enables all members of the society to consider future, to examine probabilities, to model and create the future, and finally to react to it.

Therefore, foresight focuses on goals that are beyond prediction goals; in addition to dealing with main challenges, it seeks to reach a united understanding of future and how to build it. In other words, in addition to the identification and discovery of future, it plans to build future in a favorable way. To complete this comparison, it should be said that: when predicting, because variables are mainly quantitative, concrete, and identified, future is assumed to be separated from unexpected changes. In fact, the base of prediction is consistent with the continuation of the current status with little change. But in foresight, variables possess a very broad domain within which qualitative variables are the focus of attention; even these variables can be hidden and abstract. Therefore, in foresight, we are not focused on one future, but several possible futures are considered at the same time.

The point is that we should not expect future study to predict future perfectly, because as mentioned before, this knowledge is only able to predict several possible futures by relying on quantitative and qualitative variables, and to clarify possible ways to future. Indeed, after this identification, choosing a favorable future and taking measures to realize it play an elementary role in the society. The value of such a science is that it can be a good guide for today's decisions by intelligently engineering future.

According to the above-mentioned, we can add the following practical definition which has appropriate comprehensiveness: future study is an intellect which keeps people aware of future events, opportunities, and conflicts. It reduces ambiguities, doubts, and concerns to some extent; it enhances the society and people's ability to make smart choices, and allows them to know what their future is going to take (probable futures); it lets them know where they should go (normative futures); and it helps them to figure out what paths they can use to more easily reach their favorable future. In fact, future study is the knowledge and intellect of forming future in an active, conscious way.

Theories of future study

The interdisciplinary essence of future study knowledge has put future researchers into a broad group of sciences and tendencies each of which deals with a different matter. But the examination of their works shows that all of them are interested in discussions of social changes and evolutions. Indeed, the essence of future study is of a type which desires social change and evolution.

Future researchers' favorite theories are normally affected by Pollock's future picture which is considered to be a basic and theoretical concept in future studies. Pollock focuses an important question: is people's positive picture of future the consequence of their success? Or is their success a consequence of their positive future picture? After examining the advances of old civilizations such as Iran, Jews, and after examining historical turning points like renaissance, age of enlightenment, and industrial revolution, he came to conclusion that future pictures and inspirations are the key to communal prosperity. He believes that successful societies have transformed ideals and dreams to something more important and stronger. Of course these important insights are prerequisites of important successes. Emphasizing the role of elites, he believes that initially leaders showed a concrete image of future; societies accepted this image and supported it; and they realized it by cooperation.

Using this concept, future researchers issued a general theory: "future pictures form individual and group measures." In social future researchers' opinion, although past is likely to make present duty-bound and contingent, social future pictures can shape the present; because these future pictures direct our present actions, and consequently the present status and actions form future. When individuals are able to picture their social role in future, votes, values, and behaviors which have formed such a picture affect and enrich present.

Another theory of future study is the "indefiniteness" of future. Future is a point of time which has not come yet. In fact, future's world is the purpose of our current actions. This type of future flexibility on the one hand makes it harder to predict and on the other hand, makes future more important for studies. The most important aspect of future study in terms of method is to achieve symmetrical probabilities for different possible scenarios. Such a hypothesis shows the fact that future has not been enforced for people in an inevitable way; "Godeh" uses the term "open and unfinished future" and writes:

In any given time, there is a collection of possible futures, and real future is the product of different players' goals and the interaction between them in a specific status. The development of future is determined by the influence of causations and individuals' actions.

In fact, the varieties of future and people's freedom of action determine one another. Future is not written, but it is about to happen.

Another basic and common principle in all future-focused thoughts is that the universe is an integral whole. The emphasis on the mutual interactions between things such as humans, and the emphasis on the impossibility to fully understand each entity without considering its position in the universe form the basic concepts of today's future studies. In this holistic attitude, humans like all other creatures form part of the universe; and the existence of each individual shows the functions of the whole universe which cannot be separated from it. The unity of the universe, relying on the unity of time and space, refers to the fact that future world is created within the present world.

Future study purposes

Future study has considered three duties for itself, within which various goals are achieved:

1. Consciously facing future trends in order to reduce damages caused by unexpected happenings;
2. Correcting present trends by focusing on future;
3. Attempting to form a favorable future.

Based on these duties, we can define the following goals for future studies:

1. Providing priorities for issues; this helps to clearly understand future opportunities and challenges, and actively face future events. For instance, we can find solutions to control predictable future changes; we can also plan to accelerate certain trends.
2. Setting, evaluating, and editing social criteria; hence, individuals can evaluate different futures. Values are mechanisms which guide societies to select their lifestyles. Future researchers follow this aim by doing regular research in order to make different choices for future. They would like to consider future, and try to create novel pictures of future. "Slotter" presents some of the values evaluated by future researchers as follows:

- Freedom and welfare, satisfaction in life, and individual happiness;
- Social consensus, peace, and justice;
- Capacities of life on earth.

3. Commitment to next generations; such a responsibility requires future researchers to defend freedom and happiness in future generations, i.e. humans who have not been born yet.
4. Identification of change and evolution factors in the society; future researchers have identified the reasons of technological advances as well as the evolution of political, economic, social, and cultural disciplines; and they try determine unexpected and out-of-control evolutions. Indeed, they attempt to determine expected evolutions which are controlled by humans.
5. Focusing on the present; we think about future in order to become aware of the present's duties in order to form a favorable future by paying attention to current status. The results of future study make it possible for societies and individuals to weigh their current demands against future demands. Sometimes people, through planning, keep themselves from focusing on certain things in order to achieve their ideals.

The five-fold above-mentioned objectives are achieved through the following measures:

Analysis and examination of future pictures that exist in different individuals, analysis of important social pictures and their effects on the sunset and sunrise of civilizations, description of possible trends in order to set goals and values, leading to presentation of alternative policies by presenting various pictures. The design and renovation of the society lie in this frame too. Only in this way, absolute and meta-time ideals are related to future study, which help to form a favorable future.

Future study methods

As active thinkers in the field of future study have different tendencies, future study knowledge, in terms of method, includes a broad group of social-political analyses and computer-based and statistical analyses which encompass natural and social science methods and simple patterns. But all of them need smart and conscious decision-making for future, which generally use two types of examination: 1. Things that happen in future and become important; 2. Things that must happen in future and matters which must be considered important.

In an extensive international examination, more than 17 methodological approaches, which are normally used in integral way, have been identified. Here, some examples of the most common and important techniques and tools of future study are introduced:

1. Monitoring; monitoring refers to the act of continual surveillance for global changes in different fields by a group of future researchers. Surveillance is one of the most important future study methods, which is typically based on the regular examination of the contents of newspapers, magazines, internet bases, and other media in order to discover "change signals". Those who do the monitoring focus on the monitoring of trends not events, i.e. they emphasize continual changes over time. The data that are obtained through regular monitoring help policy makers and planners in different fields to be constantly prepared.

2. Scenario creation: the purpose of scenario creators is to develop thoughts of future and widen the varieties of alternative futures. Do scenarios help us to understand the probable results and consequences of our decisions? Scenarios teach us to think about the unknown and get rid of today's problematic assumptions in order to be able to identify ruptures which might revolutionize our world. In future study, there are several scenarios in order for decision makers to know the fact that some future events might invalidate a very probable scenario which has been the base of their planning. It is clear that what attracts policy makers' attention is a common denominator which is obtained from numerous and multi-fold scenarios, being the base for their strategy setting.

3. The Delphi technique: this method has been specifically invented by future researchers. According to Jay Lambert:

The purpose of the Delphi technique is to collect a broad group of divergent expertise and attitudes in order to reach a final agreement. The Delphi process has a repetitive essence. Hence, a group of experts responded to a list of questions in sequential periods. In the end of each period, the participants observe the responses and they can change their own responses based on others' beliefs. The responses are collected in a way that the respondents remain unknown in order to diminish the over-weighting of the responses given by those who have a higher credit in the group.

This technique is normally combined with the analysis of the transverse effect in order to see what would happen to an event if another issue changed in a special way.

4. Historical analysis: the analytical study of history can be instructive for discovering probable events. Historical analysis is based on the fact that sometimes history is repeated. Hence, we can compare a current situation with one or more historical situation in order to figure out what will happen.

5. Picturing: most future researchers seek to produce pictures of a favorable future for societies, organizations, and individuals. They generally begin to act by reviewing past events and current situation; they produce a picture of a favorable future; and they attempt to find clear and creative ways in order to realize such futures. In this approach, past-to-present-and-future events do not continue at the same speed and rhythm. If nations and societies do not like to experience pattern paralysis, they must track novel phenomenon and intelligently observe paradigms and pattern changes which are occurring fast.

The present study helps us conclude that future study knowledge can well design stable plans by presenting efficient methods and tools in order to reach a favorable society. But the fact that the concepts and purposes of Islamic regulations are kept safe in the process of exploiting this knowledge is subject to the examination of other issues.

Favorable Islamic society

Islam is a social religion; its individual orders have a social sense too, which are used in order to modify and reinforce social relationships, and to implement social purposes. Islam has made a connection between individual and social worships; for example, even though prayer, which is a sign of faith and dependence upon God, was canonized individually, its social dimension was requested from Muslims in the next level. Fasting, which is a completely individual worship without any outside aspect, has received a social dimension at the arrival of Fetr tide and the tide's prayer. Hence, the purpose of Islam is not only to train religious individuals but it also tries to build a favorable society; a society whose social relationships are based on goals and orders of Islam is a value-focused, moderate, and global society in which individuals' happiness is merged with the society's happiness, leading to a strong connection between social responsibilities and Islamic faith.

Quran invites people to build such a favorable society and does not leave them with indifference towards the society. Indeed, it invites them to make presence in the society, try to form a favorable society, resist hardships and difficulties, and express gratitude for such a society. As Quran says:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ» (Al-e-Emran, verse 200): those of you who have become faithful, be patient and resist enemies, defend your country's border, and apply divine virtue in your life, so you may be blessed. In the interpretation of the word "رابطوا" we see: "مرابطه" has a broad meaning including any preparation for self and Islamic society defense. The reason why in some narratives, thinkers and scientists have been called "مرابط" is that they are the watchmen of the beliefs and culture of Islam. For such a defense it is necessary that Muslims always participate in societies and try to establish a favorable future and sustain it.

Hence, it can be said that: unlike other thinkers who have focused on picturing an ideal society in the world of illusion, Muslim thinkers, who have had Quran's solutions in order to extract the features of a favorable society, have more focused on its interpretation than creating it.

Social traditions

Social phenomenon and its related changes are formed based upon a series of rules. Victory and failure, prosperity, esteem and nadir in different societies have discipline with which we can become aware of the phenomenon of this age and use them on the way to happiness. We can call these specific relationships "social rule" which are called "tradition" in Quran culture.

In religious texts, tradition, which means method and style, is referred to as a method which is followed by people. But what we are intending to examine is the phrase "سنت الله", i.e. God's tradition. This expression is a method that God has selected for people based on his wisdom and people's behavior towards his religion. In fact, we can consider it as a collection of God's basic and fixed rules, which sometimes monitor the ups and downs of societies, sometimes show the fact that the universe is purposeful, and sometimes are defined as the discovery of the rules governing universal phenomenon and their effects on one another. Thus it is necessary that the Islamic society become familiar with these social rules and traditions, think about them, and seriously discover them in order to use them for the purpose of providing happiness. These social rules and traditions have certain features:

1. They are divine and realize God's sovereignty;
2. They are communal and eternal; therefore, they are repeatable in similar situations. In this case, we can refer to the expression "سير في الارض" from Quran (Al-e-Emran: verse 137), which refers to thinking about historical events and realities in order to take lessons. Now that each historical event is an individual phenomenon which is exclusive to a certain society and is not repeated in other situations, what is the point of scrutiny?
3. They are necessary and concrete; the concreteness means that those relationships which rule people's social reactions are external and genetic but not credit-based. And the meaning of "necessity" is that they are definite, and they experience no transformation, delivery, and accident (Fater: 43).
4. They do not deny people's will and optionality; because "tradition" like any other phenomenon is subject to "causality" with this difference that one of the elements of complete solitude is people will. Basically, the role of humans in this field is not to watch and monitor, but they can change their own behavior and reactions, through familiarity with social traditions. And by diminishing the variable of a necessary relationship, they can prevent it from happening.

Therefore, humans are able to change their future by making any choice. And basically the belief that societies must wait until an external force comes along and helps them to change conditions is a fallacy which is criticized; such a change should be initiated within the society. As long as people are not conscious enough to be able to revolutionize themselves, their destiny will not change. In the social field,

based on Shia lessons, "بداء" is referred to as the people and society's power to form a necessity and remove other necessities through a change in social reactions, because in Quran thoughts, people are bound to their thoughts and actions. According to Menin Ali:

People lose their gifts and luxurious lives because of the sin that they do; since God is not cruel to his creatures, and when disasters occur, if people remain well-intended and ask God for help, he will return any lost gift to them and he will heal and revitalize any villain.

Therefore, in terms of Islam's lessons, the ups and downs, and the shortcomings and inadequacies of societies always occur following the emergence of factors and the realization of phenomenon; and individuals can modify their own society and lead it towards perfectionism by identifying such things.

Hence, the identification of social traditions as fixed and unchangeable rules which existed in the past, and does in the present and future, help sociologists, who seek to find similar samples in different societies, to identify and understand an unknown phenomenon and explain them, using their symmetry and by comparing them. Indeed, the importance of knowing God's traditions as one of the tools of predicting and discovering future, becomes clear when we know that the reason why Quran expresses certain samples of God's rules is not to say that the rules of people's lives are limited to these case, but to say that it is the people's duty to know traditions and extract them. The acceptance of this point can be very constructive in the process of Islamic foresight.

The future

Martyr Sadr, in his discussions over social traditions, has paid attention to the providence of social phenomenon; a future which is motivational within its intellectual existence. This intellectual existence possesses two elements: 1. the view that it has from the goal; 2. the creation of the motive and will that which navigates people towards their goals. From the combination of both of these, there comes the power to form future, and the motive for social activities. And it is this intellectual existence and internal content which play the role of infrastructures on which social relationships and structures are based.

It is clear that the center of the internal content and outlook is the ideal goal which is closely connected to the intellect and worldview ruling the society. According to Quran, this ideal progress so much that it can turn into a "اله" for that society. And this "اله" is sometimes a Shah, sometimes a myth, and sometimes values and temptations; and for some societies, it is "الله". While the ultimate goal must only be God, all demands, efforts, and wishes are divine, and people, depending on their advances in terms of understanding and wanting God, grow from time to time; and because God is absolute, this way does not have an end.

The consideration of this type of idealism, in addition to its quantitative difference from other types, guides us to a qualitative distinctiveness; that is the sense of inherent responsibility which turns into such an ideal through faith. A faithful society, which has chosen such an important ideal as its goal, has also enhanced its capabilities and tries hard to establish a divine society on earth; a society whose favorable status is derived from religious norms and values.

Islam like all other religions, especially Abrahamic religions, has pictured a bright, developed, and happy future for the society. In many verses, Quran emphasizes the fact that humans ultimately need a society based on rights, in which corruption and evil have been eliminated, and it belongs to those who have virtue. The Islamic promise about the stance and revolution of Mahdi is presented in this theory. The ideal society which is pictured by Quran is a society in which those with virtue become Imam. Hence, by knowing God, worshiping God, obeying him, satisfying him, and getting close to him, the Islamic ideal society achieves its goal which is perfection. It is in the shadow of this perfection in humans that people's dreams come true. Dreams such as: complete governance of justice, freedom and peace, united global governance, complete reclamation on earth, maturity in thoughts, elimination of wars and corruption, and compatibility with nature.

Philosophy of wait

The examination of hadiths which have been presented about Mahdism shows that these hadiths are divided into two groups: 1. Features of the age of appearance and components of an ideal society; 2. "waiting for victory" and preparing for the age of appearance. In a practical sense, we can define "wait" as a provident approach which by having a picture of an ideal state leads to dissatisfaction with the current status, forcing individuals to try harder in order to achieve their ideal society. Hence, it can be said that the wait philosophy in an ideal society with Mahdism and global stance has been composed of two elements: dissatisfaction with the current situation, and attempting to have an ideal status. Such an approach naturally leads the society to prepare for up-to-date conditions and appearance of the ideal.

This point is the answer to the question: what results do the debates about the future of the society and the appearance of the savior have for our today's world? From the expressions which have been used in the hadiths of "wait" we obtain a clear point referring to the fact that waiting for victory is constantly accompanied by broad and active efforts. This attempt is the origin of two activities which must be done at the same time: on the one hand, we must stop any cooperation with cruelty and corruption factors. We can even fight these factors. On the other hand, self-education and cooperation are needed in order to make materialistic and spiritual preparations for the purpose of forming the united global government.

Therefore, waiting for the sun does not mean that we should not turn on a lamp in the dark. Thus, a person who is waiting cannot play the role of a watcher, but he must be alert all the time and try to overcome his weaknesses. In addition to self-refinement, he must try to modify others and his society; because waiting for the realization of an ideal Islamic society is a matter which requires all social elements to be revolutionized. Such a revolution needs public and inclusive attempts.

According to Martyr Motahari, from the collection of hadiths connected to the philosophy of wait we can understand that the appearance of Mahdi is a circle of battles against evil, which leads to victory for those with virtue. If someone wants to share the happiness, that person must be in the group of righteous people. This clearly refers to the fact that those waiting for the appearance of Mahdi must not stop moving, but they must increase their efforts to prepare for the appearance. According to religious leaders, the soul of wait has nothing to do with inactivity. The elimination of cruelty on earth does not mean that we should deny a just society; but the appearance of Mahdi happens on the condition that believers who seek happiness and those who are cruel see the results of their actions; people with virtue are the most precious treasures in societies, who are so prepared to join Mahdi. Beyond the presence of such individuals, in certain hadiths we see points referring to a righteous society which continues until the stance of Mahdi.

In the age of wait, which is the period of Mahdi's absence, there are groups of righteous people who defend their divine religion. They keep the lights of their religion burning, and by meticulously planning, they prepare for an Islamic ideal society. Such individuals, groups, and societies constantly praised and admired in religious hadiths. In this case, it is said that one day, our prophet Mohammad stated that:

God, show me my brothers. One of the listeners said: Your majesty, aren't we your brothers? He replied: you are my assistants. My brothers are those who show up in the apocalypse and express their faith in me while they have not seen me before. Their resistance in their religions is harder than picking horny plants in the dark and holding fire in hands. They are navigation flames, who have been saved from disasters by God.

Therefore, even though the ideal society which is advertised by Quran and hadiths is realized at the appearance of Mahdi, we must not focus on the collection of intellects which only picture our future with no connection to the present. In other words, if modeling after such a society becomes a culture, in a way that all elements of the society must learn about ideal features, then the real meaning of wait is realized. It is the attention paid to this point that helps us to distinguish a favorable society from an ideal Islamic society. Therefore, we should not look at the society of the appearance age in the same way as other ideal societies which have been proposed by thinkers, but we must turn it into an appropriate and practical

pattern for today's social life. With such an approach, it is possible to apply a certain type of future study which acts as a social navigation tool in step-by-step planning in order to achieve favorable conditions. Hence, the present study proves its hypothesis referring to the possibility of exploiting future study knowledge methods and tools in order to form an Islamic favorable society. The result of such an approach is reaching a certain type of religious future study with the focus of an Islamic favorable society.

Religious future study

Religious future study refers to the discovery of future and building it based on religious ideas which are a combination of "religious" future study and conventional future study. Religious future study is what is put forward in the macro stages of religious future study offering a bright picture of the destiny of the society and the universe, leading us to more consciousness and more effective assertiveness in order to build a world with no cruelty, full of peace and justice and happiness. Conventional future study is the common experimental future study which fulfills people's minimum needs. Conventional expectations of the society in the form of designed pictures can be defined in a way that they constantly get closer and closer to Islamic ideals.

The micro level of providence in religious lessons refers to social traditions. Quran's verses and Islamic hadiths familiarize us with numerous samples, such as: management, prayer for good destiny, the fact everything is finite, worldly rewards for behaviors, worldly punishment for sins especially those sin that have social tincture, thinking about karma.

Paying attention to providence in many of these lessons is presumable. For example, when Islam emphasizes management and invites faithful people to have it, it is clear that management requires prediction and prediction has its own prerequisites including future study. This subject is of greater importance in the social dimension; because social management in order to achieve a macro-goal requires step-by-step planning. According to Menin Ali: "لا فخرَ مع حسن تدبير": with management, there will be no poverty. Hence, what has been mentioned in religious texts about learning from past experiences can be considered as learning dot future, and its value depends on how we exploit it for present and future. Undoubtedly, taking these lessons turns faithful people into humans who constantly consider future and never forget about it.

Indeed, two levels of religious providence interact with one another: macro and micro. In addition to the lessons and advice that lead humans to providence in a micro level, two lessons – the end of the universe and the end of the history – are out of the state of a predictor of far future, which enhance people's providence. This feature strengthens the future-building dimension of humans' acts; because in a religious outlook, the position and status of people is a function of their behavior and reactions in everyday life. It is obvious that what was mentioned in the individual level has been also mentioned in the social level, which will have deterministic effects in terms of sociology and planning.

Conclusions

Now that we are, on the one hand, familiar with future study knowledge and after the expression of some Islamic theories about future on the other hand, it is easy to figure out the overlap of some of the theories and goals of these two in order to be sure of the capabilities of future study knowledge to realize goals in a faster and surer manner. By being definite about the destiny of humans and the universe, we have done part of the process of discovering future, using Quran lessons. As by trying to understand and discover divine traditions in the society, it is possible to design future in a definite way. Hence, our scientific and experimental future study will be completely different from western future study; firstly, because our intellectual theories are completely different. Secondly, when designing pictures of 10, 20, 50, and 100 years that normally receive attention from future study scenario writers, we can use clear features that we have received from religion; or we can discover these features, considering unchangeable traditions in order to increase the likelihood of predicted events; thirdly, the destination of our favorable society,

which is the ideal society of the appearance age, is a certain and definite destination which has achievable qualities.

Therefore, religious future researchers must create a religious picture which is based on lessons taken from Quran and hadiths in the first step; they must, at the same time, try to apply this religious picture in the planning system. Indeed, this is what is hidden in the essence of Shia lessons, but this future consideration, which has sometimes been applied in the hidden part of our minds, must effectively appear in our lives.

When presenting a model for religious future study, it can be said that: with inspiration from verses that tell faithful people about the belonging of earth to them, and about a religious end, as well as exploiting hadiths which have been mentioned through these verses, we can define a certain type of religious future processing; hence, some verses and hadiths guide us to future identification, and inform us of the formation of a favorable and ideal society in which the religion and faithful people become rulers.

In the foresight dimension, a broad volume of hadiths express and define the qualities of the age of appearance and the components of governing righteous people in the apocalypse. In fact, these two dimensions can be considered as a type of religious wait which refer to perfect qualities and features, being realized based on Shia lessons when Mahdi appears.

But another group of hadiths show the future study dimension which can be called conventional wait, i.e. waiting for minimum qualities and privileges in the age of appearance in the present age which can have a movement going toward perfectionism and growth. Hence, it can be said that this group of hadiths encourage the society to define conventional expectations which are in line with religious wait and the appearance of a Mahdavi society. In fact, a Mahdavi ideal society is like an umbrella which must be over the heads of a society in the absence period, in order to take steps toward a perfect and developed society in the age of appearance.

Now we can present a definition of future study and consider it to be a study on individuals' future, society, and humans based on religious lessons (Quran and tradition) around an ideal Islamic society and the society of the age of appearance. The result of this study can be an exact picture of an ideal future; by considering this favorable future as a goal, we can design and define possible futures.

Designing these possible futures is done through creating pictures and by writing scenarios. The art of a Muslim sociologist or religious researcher is to make scenarios as close as possible to the desired future. Certainly, such an action is a huge project which cannot be done by an individual, so there needs to be an inclusive committee.

It must be noted that what is mentioned in this sentence is only a theory which must be operated, and we should go a long way until Islam's desired providence and religious demands in the field of social traditions as well as the culture of wait are applied in our society; in order to have pictures of future based on Islamic lessons.

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