



A Review of Educational Ideas of Mutahari and Nietzsche

Revista Publicando, 5 No 14 . No. 1. 2018, 297-309. ISSN 1390-9304

A Review of Educational Ideas of Mutahari and Nietzsche

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to consider educational views of Nietzsche and Late Ayatollah Murteza Mutahhari. The significance of conducting this study is that proper education is a prerequisite for human accomplishment and if man is educated under the best schools, he will become angelic and sometimes go beyond angels. Otherwise, he will stop at lower levels of growth, or go back and descend to animals and even lower than that. Thus, proper individual and social growth and growth of human talents depends on proper education and more importantly, proper education not only results in correcting an individual but also changes the society. This study was conducted via library method by studying relevant books, articles, and theories on the one hand and analyzing, rejecting and proving some views and theories using logical proofs on the other hand, and it has been attempted in this regard to determine path of study by suggesting related questions and hypotheses. Nietzsche is a philosopher with particular interest in various philosophical and educational subjects. His most important educational goal is realizing a human beyond current one, and to achieve to this, he has strongly lent support to some characteristics such as willpower, individualism, infidelity, godlessness, freedom, moderation, culture, etc. and on the other hand, has dismissed some human characteristics, most importantly, spirituals, nature, and intellect. The opposing point to this thought is view of distinguished Iranian thinker, Late Ayatollah Mutahhari, in whose view human educational school must be established based on Holy Koran and Islamic resources in which growth and development of all human aspects have been considered. Martyr Mutahhari had a special emphasis on spiritual, natural, religious, physical, mental and even non-sensual needs of humans. After considering and comparing educational views of Nietzsche and Martyr Mutahhari, we conclude that if man is brought up based on Nietzsche's educational principles, will undoubtedly reach nowhere in the way of accomplishment, but as a result of training under Islamic educational principle, which is the basis of study of Martyr Murteza Mutahhari, excellence and accomplishment is provided for in human life.

Keywords: education, superior human, Mutahhari, Nietzsche



Introduction

Education in human life is the most crucial and essential aspect of life, so any kind of distortion and diversion in it will lead to diversion in all aspects of life. Abilities of man show themselves in life and his humanity is realized. In Islam, this important subject has been considered and proper rules have been determined for human growth. Clearly, a school with specific goals and pervasive rules i.e. with a good legal, economic, and political system, cannot be without a specific education system.

Islamic education refers to creation of a proper situation enabling the context for manifestation and emergence of natural human talents, making them more grown-up and accomplished. Any time that opportunity and possibility of actuation of talents are provided, that time will be holy and valuable. For this reason in Islamic thought, there are holy and unholy things. Holy things are those attributed to Allah and lead to human growth. Unholy things are those God has declared as undesirable and detrimental to human condition, preventing humans from growth. With this approach, as man grows truly and approaches God, he finds sanctity. To enter this sanctum, rituals must be regarded and rules obeyed. Islamic education because of its connection with divine human nature, gets highly valuable, turning into a holy science. Although education is generally speaking a valuable topic, Islamic education gets great holiness because of attribution to Islam and Koranic creed. Thus, entry to the field of Islamic education requires special principles and rules.

Statement of problem

Nietzsche, founder of the school of originality of power, as a philosopher for whom ethics and its educational topics are one of the biggest concerns, has become one of the hardliner critics of ethics. His ethical critiques and educational views, are probably one of the most important and difficult aspects of his educational philosophy, because Nietzsche's critique of ethics comprise a big amount of his works.

Nietzsche cannot be considered antagonist to any morality. Rather, he negates any ethics that is based on sense of guilt, fear and inferiority, calling humans to hate life and abandon pleasure. "Superman or teacher of ethics and education" according to Nietzsche's philosophy is someone who tries, though the will of main power observed in the whole nature, to overpower someone and dominate popular ethics.

School of Islam with Ayatollah Mutahhari as one of its distinguished personalities, has ideas that has been considered as the basis of scientific encounter with new imported thoughts and securing scientific innovations. Considering thought and educational ideas of Ayatollah and its impact on formation of mental foundations and the fact that he knows ultimate human goal in actuation and



accomplishment of all talents, this further clarifies the subject.

According to Ayatollah Mutahhari, every educational system intended certain goals, organizing all their activities to realize those goals. Basic and ultimate goal of education in Islamic school is to deify man. To achieve this goal, excellent talents given to man on his creation must grow and actualize. In fact, education can be considered development of inner talents and their actualization.

Principles of educational system of Ayatollah Mutahhari are based on absolutism of ethics and relativity of ethics, steps for going out of egoism, and attention to all human talents. He considers parents, worship, self-accounting, thinking and socialization as important factors of education. In his view, education is the most important and essential aspect of human life, deviation in which leads to deviation in all life aspects. It is education of societies based on ideology and historic beliefs that besides identifying commonalities and differences with other views and schools, provides a useful experience in achieving a proper, thriving and advanced pattern and educational beliefs of a society. The present study is conducted with the aim of analyzing and explaining educational views of Late Ayatollah Mutahhari (Iranian-Islamic scholar) and comparing it with those of Nietzsche (distinguished philosopher and founder of school of originality of power).

Research Questions

What are commonalities and differences of Ayatollah Mutahhari and Nietzsche regarding educational views?

Research Hypothesis

Commonalities and differences of educational views of Ayatollah Mutahhari and Nietzsche regarding education are as follows:

- Both Nietzsche and Ayatollah Mutahhari aim to help man achieve human accomplishments;
- Nietzsche takes man away from God to give him power, but Ayatollah Mutahhari brings man close to God.
- According to Ayatollah Mutahhari, education is reparation and promoting ethical topics, but in Nietzsche's view, it is destruction of ethical topics and transition from current morality to achieve meta-ethics;
- Nietzsche considers accomplishment specific to great people, but Ayatollah Mutahhari sees accomplishment as ultimate goal of all creatures;
- Educational methods of Ayatollah Mutahhari is more consistent with human nature than those of Nietzsche's.

Methodology

The present study uses a library research method, conducted by studying books, articles and theories



regarding the subject on the one hand and analyzing and proving some views and theories using logical reasoning on the other hand. Data collection in this study is done via library information, with required information being collected by studying relevant books and articles.

Comparison of Views of Nietzsche and Ayatollah Mutahhari

Vivacity of Nietzsche's views on human philosophy can be given importance from two aspects, one being that his writings are mostly his personal real-life experiences, and actually acquired practically, so that he dedicated his thoughts and sentiments wholly to suggesting various ideas on human life, and secondly, his ideas and writings have a pure and new content. Nietzsche focused his attention on history, philosophy, morality, ideas, and human values.

On the other hand, however, Ayatollah Mutahhari knows man as comprised of body and soul, believing that none of them must be confined and both should evolve in education. Educable nature in Mutahhari's view is: religion-seeking, truth-seeking, aesthetics, worship, morality, etc.

Nietzsche believes that wasted man considers himself criterion of world values, and this belief is surely characteristic of his naivete. Human values are not intrinsic according to Nietzsche and occur only when power is involved. Of course, these values must be proportionate with power and in general, it could be said that human values according to Nietzsche are result of certain perspectives of usefulness for man, and in this regard, he introduces ethics as a collection of valuations that establish connection with existing conditions in every human being. The most important human values according to Nietzsche are two attributes of “understanding and desire”.

According to Nietzsche, values are effective in education and ultimately lead to a method that changes education. In Nietzsche's view, in education, values are an instrument to properly continue education or evaluate education in the trainee.

Nietzsche, denies existence of God and believes that God is dead and lives no more. This claim by Nietzsche in the field of human education has led to elimination of over half of human education values and methods such as spirituality, religion, soul and interior. Based on this claim, there is no relationship between man and his outside world, and spirituality does not have a role in educating man.

Nietzsche has been subject to huge criticism in this regard. Some called him a Godless man, some other believe Nietzsche did not deny God's existence, but he meant infidelity of humans in part of history – decease of Jesus – which led to His death. By killing God, man has taken His place and no belief exists. This cycle has influenced all aspects of human life, affecting education of the trainee.

In contrast, Murteza Mutahhari suggested three principles of guidance-seeking, intellect-seeking, comprehensiveness, and spirituality-seeking, with God being the essential axis of education in these



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principles, so that in every situation, He has gifted and guided man and on this basis, trainer must never consider his training responsibility as complete. Mutahhari believes that education of non-Muslims should also be considered and never treated with bias.

Dr. Mutahhari refers to intellect seeking for better effectiveness of religious education, during which strong proofs are brought to the trainee which are required to perceive the truth. Also, he attributes intellect to God, prophets, and honest people, and subsequently, considers it necessary to acquire intellect from any source, which is very practical in educating people. Mutahhari establishes a natural connection between education and spirituality and says that via pray and worship, man can become closer to God and believes that comprehensiveness of education has resulted in all human aspects growing concurrently, abandoning a single dimension. Mutahhari knows comprehensiveness directly related to moderation and influential.

According to Ayatollah Mutahhari, man needs religion in his education both religiously and socially. Personally, once eternity-seeking tendencies grow in human soul, need for religion and sentiment is felt and strengthened. In effect, emergence of tendencies and desires on the one hand and bodily and human physical conditions (i.e. limitation and mortality of man) on the other hand are so complex that only beliefs, religion and worship can answer educational problems.

By freedom, Nietzsche means preparing the trainee to face future life, acquire higher responsibility and have right of choice in this regard. The trainee according to Nietzsche must be so free to grow critic and expand this approach. That being said, reasoning is the pivot of his personality so he is not quickly or even gradually influenced by others' thoughts and beliefs. Nietzsche observes that the trainee must be active and based on thinking, evaluate others' views courageously and ultimately, achieve the best educational methods and educational style.

In front of this theory, Mutahhari suggests the principle of willpower based on which finding and moving along proper path is responsibility of the trainee himself and it could not be performed forcibly. In this principle, Mutahhari strongly stresses the higher role of educator, because extremism of educator can take the trainee away from religious education, creating a space between them. By the way, Mutahhari deems use of will for education necessary only when it is accompanied with intellect, as intellect is in fact light of the way without which the trainee will get lost.

Principle of moderation is accepted in Nietzsche's school and he believes that the trainee should not learn virtues beyond his ability, as in this case, he belies his beliefs and this characteristic will always remain in his character. According to Nietzsche, age of seven is the beginning of debilitation of sentiments in people, and since, child has high ability and enthusiasm, he should be demanded responsibility as much as his age.



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According to Ayatollah Mutahhari, moderation plays a significant role in educating the individual, so that, education period starts from a certain age and over the education period, extravagance must be avoided. Ayatollah Mutahhari addresses natural training in this regard which is the most moderate type of education, in which all physical and spiritual aspects have been considered.

Nietzsche's view in the field of culture shows that it is necessary that man take step to real culture over his education period. Nietzsche separates path of culture from that of science and knowledge in educability of individuals, and instead, establishes a connection between culture and art in this path, believing that cultural magnificence in human education becomes meaningful through art, and art is the climax and meaning of the world. Practice of culture in education according to Nietzsche is to make a genius out of man. Practice of culture in human education grows free man and subjects his mind to truth, encouraging both.

Nietzsche has considered a role for history in human education. He attributes the principle of prophecy in man to passing of time and believes that separation from the past and forgetting history of human prophecy does not occur easily. Besides, creating value in the individual's personality will not occur. According to him, history is the best instrument for knowing forces, methods, etc. in human education, enabling man to achieve self-knowledge and use it as a loyal servant. In this regard, Ayatollah Mutahhari also stresses using others' experience and past history in socialization and reasoning principle. Principle of socialization with certain people and past history according to Mutahhari has desirable effects on man's education. In his opinion, all educational principles must be declared for the trainee with proof and by divine school. For example, historic experiences can be reflected. In this principle, the trainer must not create human characteristics for God to prove His existence, teaching the trainee and not giving him a chance to think or criticize.

In Nietzsche's education school, the whole world is an instrument to improve man and originality is in this category. Interior origin of individual is very important in this respect. In this regard, all that matters for the trainee is his inner command and this is the axis that determines educational style of the individual, i.e. the individual criticizes subjects of surrounding world under the influence of what he sees from them. On the other hand, in proportion to his capacity, he determines commands and criteria that signify his education and educational traits. Nietzsche believes that originality in education gives value to human nature.

Regarding originality of man, Ayatollah Mutahhari suggests the topic of inner capacities and believes that due to capacity, man is educable, and for this reason other objects cannot be educated. In fact, by education, he means flourishing inner human talents.

In Nietzsche's education school, human thirst for power has always been discussed and this has been



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analyzed by him in all aspects. Nietzsche believes that desire for power is the most important inner principle of man. Thus, all motivation of man is desire for power and in this way, education is not an exception. Ayatollah Mutahhari believes that in the course of human education, the power of identifying and answering spiritual and non-sentimental needs of the trainee should be understood and provided for. According to him, if this principle is not respected, there is not much disparity between man and beast.

In the view of Nietzsche, who is an individualist thinker, everyone must assume responsibility for one's education and individualism in his view means type of power about which we already explained. According to him, society is a factor for strengthening the person in growth and education.

Ayatollah Mutahhari addresses Nietzsche's opinion regarding individualism in the form of attendance and accounting and says that in educational school of Islam, the individual must take care of their speech and behavior. So far, views of both are similar, but next, Mutahhari names an essential condition for this attendance, that the individual must evaluate themselves in line with attendance, and this evaluation must be based on commandments and principles intended by God, making him immune to corruption and guilt, but Nietzsche has no view in this regard, therefore, they have disagreement in this respect. Mutahhari considers the principle of attraction and repulsion based on the relationship between trainer and trainee and believes that with attraction and repulsion, the relationship between these two groups (trainer and trainee) is strengthened or loosened. In fact, attraction and repulsion must both grow in proportion in the trainee so that he knows right from wrong, rather than losing humanization and development of Islam.

Ayatollah Mutahhari considers childhood to be the golden period of education, stressing it for development of human nature, which needs to be attended in the beginning following development. Of course, in this respect, Ayatollah Mutahhari compares man to a plaster that can coagulate, is first loose and then becomes firm, and everything can be made out of man in this period. This view is to some extent similar to Nietzsche's conclusion from man, as he has mentioned man as a malleable object.

Nietzsche denies presence of intellect and soul in the course of human education, believing that intellect and soul are only instruments serving human body.

Nonetheless, what interests the reader in this regard is that Nietzsche's educational views resulted from his beliefs, are influenced by philosophers of Ancient Greece such as Schopenhauer, etc. Nietzsche condemns the best values of life introducing it as instrument for power-seeking people. In the face of all beauties of the world, Nietzsche believes that life should be lived dangerously. Nietzsche nearly criticizes all education schools that ever existed before his time. For instance, on the



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one hand, he introduces retaliation a sign of human weakness, while on the other hand, he himself seeks vengeance from other educational schools. Nietzsche only sees education in physical dimension, neglecting spiritual and mental dimension as he does not believe in it, and only occasionally addresses spiritual power of inner human capacity. Criticism in his school acts as yeast, and he has no conditions or age for this practice, considering no differences. Of course in other educational schools, criticism and thoughtfulness of the trainee is addressed but with certain conditions. Generally speaking, Nietzsche has considered a goal for his educational school and striven for it, which is not other than realizing a superman, for promotion of which he strongly supports certain educational traits such as pride, egoism, cruelty, and individualism, etc.

Nietzsche's shortcoming starts from the fact that he does not involve spirituals in his educational school and ignores them. However, almost in all educational schools, growth of human body must serve excellence of his spirituals and soul, is the Jesus of human being. Nevertheless, never in Nietzsche's educational school will human being become perfect.

Nietzsche deems freedom necessary for education of human being, and questions his intention elsewhere, when he says that educable man resembles a raw material that can be shaped and scraped and cut, and this is probably where he has destroyed freedom.

In general, commonalities and differences or specific views of Nietzsche and Ayatollah Mutahhari with respect to education can be listed as follows:

Table1. Major commonalities and differences of Nietzsche and Ayatollah Mutahhari

| Index | Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche | Murteza Mutahhari |
|-------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Individualism | Attendance and accounting (inner capacity) |
| 2 | ---- | Religion |
| 3 | Moderation | Moderation |
| 4 | ---- | God (wisdom seeking, justice seeking, comprehensiveness, spirituality) |
| 5 | Value-judgment | Value-judgment |
| 6 | Morality | Morality |
| 7 | Freedom | Freedom (will) |
| 8 | Culture | Culture |



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| | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|
| 9 | History | History (consulting history and historical reasoning) |
| 10 | Power seeking | Power seeking (identifying sensible and insensible needs) |
| 11 | Pain | ---- |
| 12 | Instrument of serving body | Intellect and nature |
| 13 | ---- | Attraction and repulsion |

Conclusion

Education principles are rules for achieving educational goals. Because of this, type of educational goals has a direct impact on the development of principles. Given that according to Ayatollah Mutahhari, educating divine man, is the ultimate goal of divine education system, principles should be presented to help realize this goal. No doubt, planner and trainers can help school and college students in Islamic education using the principles compiled in this study based on views of Ayatollah Martyr Murteza Mutahhari, thus cultivating the context for realization of Islamic education goals. Pondering over the mentioned principles and proportion between them shows ultimate goal of Islamic education. For instance, principle of consistency with nature has been devised due to the fact that deification of man because of flourishing of his natural capacities is done under the light of religious teachings, and without consistency of educational content with natural tendencies, climax of Islamic education cannot be secured. Thus, it is clear that according to the Ayatollah, ultimate goal of Islamic education is to grow holy humans in whom religious body forms perfectly and from whom rooted religious behaviors are manifested. Philosophy of human creation is found in this very point, as God created man so he evolves via proper training and reach the ultimate intended goal. Bearing this goal in mind, Islamic education finds a specific meaning. By creating suitable circumstances, Islamic education prepares the context for emergence and manifestation of natural human capacities, making him more grown-up and accomplished, so opportunities for actualizing capacities are increasingly provided. For this reason in Islamic thought, holy and unholy subjects can be discussed. Holy subjects are those attributed to Allah and which result in human growth. Unholy subjects are those which God considers undesirable and detrimental to human, thus forbidding humans from committing them. With this approach, as man evolves and approaches God, he finds sanctity. To enter this sanctum, certain rituals must be regarded and rules obeyed. Islamic education, because of its connection with divine nature of human being, gets highly valuable and important, turning into a holy



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knowledge. Although education in general is a valuable subject, Islamic education, because of its attribution to Islam, gets holiness. On this basis, entry to the field of Islamic education requires special principles and rules.

Nonetheless, considering the suggested subjects, Nietzsche seeks to realize a human being beyond existing man and to realize this aspiration, according to him, man needs a superior education. Education must be based on principles and methods, so no one can be educated without a plan. Goal of education is accomplishment of mankind, and this human being must appreciate the power of his capacities and use his powers. To educate a dextrous educator, an approach should be taken, in which he himself is a man of action and an educated man himself before being educator, thus being capable of training and bound to performing the responsibilities of his role.

No doubt, main rival of Islamic-Iranian culture and civilization, is Western culture and civilization. If Westerners have worked to know Islamic-Iranian thought and trained Orientalists, it is necessary that Easterners and Muslims and Iranians also know the West and train Occidentalists.

One of the Islamic thinkers who has taken good and significant steps in this respect is Ayatollah Murteza Mutahhari. In Occidentalism, it is quite necessary to know Nietzsche, who is so called the ultimate teacher of metaphysics. Attempts of Late Ayatollah Mutahhari about Nietzsche's educational school are limited and elementary, but it should be reminded that Mutahhari introduced and criticized Nietzsche at a time when thoughts of cultural elites of the West were not conveniently available to us, Iranian, however, at least one should bear this in mind that if we have a limited knowledge of thoughts of a scholar, we must scrutinize that this knowledge is not limited, wrong, or untrue. A short meditation over thoughts of Nietzsche (given that he himself insists on them remaining cryptic) suggests that it is a hard job to know Nietzsche and no premature judgment should be made over Nietzsche.

On force, power, and will, Nietzsche presents certain views and according to him, goal of power is not guarding oneself, but to expand, as every living creatures wishes to grow, expand and develop. In his view, power refers to a deviation and activity, in which, consumption and coalition of power are involved rather than the goal to be secured.

Although Late Ayatollah Mutahhari does some mediation over power and deems power-seeking desirable along with other values, the topic of power, will and force has not been addresses yet basically in the world of Islam. Late Ayatollah Mutahhari has suggested in another discussion over power that Islam favors two powers: one is spiritual power and the other is economic power. Islam upholds spiritual power that is, it says you must be ethically so robust and strong that you do not pay attention to the world and what's therein. And economically, we must work hard to secure wealth via



proper ways and use this material and economic power (Mutahhari, Revitalization of Islamic thought, Office for Islamic Publishing, 1982, pp. 59-60).

According to Nietzsche, today's Europe is less valuable than Renaissance Europe. After that, the concept of development does never necessarily mean the same progress, evolving forward and toward power. Nietzsche is one of the critics of liberal individualism, who considers modern individualism to be the cause of egoist preoccupation with merely personal goals and in his view, the dangerous thing is that society ignores cultural significance, permitting promotion of barbarity. That is, Nietzsche is a contemporary Western critic, so we consider the following questions:

How does Nietzsche's criticizing view on Occidentalism help us?

How helpful is his questions and critiques for us?

To understand shortcomings of the rival, how much understanding of these dimensions of Nietzsche's views do we need?

As Ayatollah Mutahhari correctly suggests, although Nietzsche theoretically defended power, force and will and supported “superman”, and wished to achieve the position of “superman”, but practically lived otherwise in his late life, as in 1889, one year before his death, by seeing cruel behavior of a coachman with his horse whose feet had been trapped in a pit, he could not tolerate it and objected to that man, and suddenly fell to the ground by several lashes of the coachman, and given his weakness, this became an introduction to his stroke and death, and he died shortly afterward. As an author describes this atmosphere “On January 3, Nietzsche breaks Piazza Carlo Torino, holding to his arms the old carriage horse who was being beaten by its owner” (Stern, 1996, pp. 59-60).

Thus, it has correctly been stated that Nietzsche was not personally an implementer of the power-focused theory, and has just described it.

But, the essential question is how can such a personality that is deeply antagonist to intellect, society, soul, ethics, God and religion and does not concede to any of mentioned subjects be justified with educational points and presented positively? Is such a personality who evades a series of basic subjects eligible as a personality whom we can introduce positively by transforming his ideas to new principles in education? Does essentially non-spirituality of Nietzsche in rejecting the principle of education make a difference in negativity of his personality?

On the other hand, how positive or perfect is evading religion, God, ethics and other subjects, so as to enable proving spiritual attraction and positivity of someone?

Most importantly, is it correct to put the anti-ethics and anti-life, off-God and off-spirituality Nietzsche along with personalities who are exalted in terms of wisdom and knowledge, such as Mutahhari, Suhrawardi, Rumi, etc. whereas there are numerous differences in their ideas and views?



Will any wise and mystic person place the pessimistic psychotic hopeless Nietzsche in the same position as ambitious mystics and scholars of knowledge such as Rumi, Mutahhari, Hallaj, and Suhrawardi, who experienced merry, cheerfulness, excitement, love, mysticism, and spirituality, most of whom had traversed mysterious worlds of the universe and morality?

Is Nietzsche, who knows the whole world full of evil and misery eligible to be compared with exalted people like Mutahhari and Suhrawardi, who see the world wholly Godly light and goodness?

Can Nietzsche whose theory about perfect man was based on the theory of “will of power”, considering powerful emotionless and senseless-toward-other-living-creatures, egoist, and selfish human as perfect human being, be granted the same rank as great mystics such as Mutahhari, Rumi, Suhrawardi, etc. who deem people with all ranks of ethical and spiritual accomplishments as perfect humans?

Is Nietzsche, who shouted egoistically his “power of will” comparable with Hallaj whose “Ana al-Haq” was not a cry of selfishness, but that of pure monotheistic knowledge, talking of divine “me” and his perdition in divine “me”?

Does all anti-mystical issues in Nietzsche's ideas allow one to suggest mystical and Oriental face of Nietzsche?

Recommendations of the study

Whether we like it or not, it appears that Iranian society has stepped on this danger and now Nietzsche is hotly debated in philosophical sessions. In this respect, it is necessary that concepts of the broad world of Iranian thoughts be selected and reflected in the society so that danger of Nietzsche's view on education philosophy of man is eliminated from Islamic societies. In this regard, the following recommendations are given:

- a) Considering educational views of other Iranian Muslim scholars and promoting them among today's young generation.
- b) Comparing other educational schools with Islamic educational school and practical studies based on proof to influence the society.

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