

Book of Abstracts

3rd International Conference on Contemporary Philosophy of Religion

WITH FOCUS ON

Religion, morality and culture

6-7 January 2015

Tehran, Iran



دانشگاه تربیت مدرس



Iranian Association for
Philosophy of Religion

انجمن علمی فلسفه دین ایران



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3rd International Conference on Contemporary Philosophy of Religion

Religion, morality and culture

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Tehran, Iran

Organized By Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion and Philosophy Department of Tarbiat Modares University

Scientific Committee: Prof. Hamidreza Ayatollahy (Allameh Tabataba'i University), Dr. Mohammad Saeedimehr (Tarbiat Modares University), Prof. Mohsen Javadi (University of Qom), Prof. Reza Akbari (Imam Sadiq University), Dr. Amirabbas Alizamani (University of Tehran), Dr. Qodratullah Qorbani (Kharazmi University), Dr. Mahdi Akhavan (Allameh Tabataba'i University), Dr. Gholamhossein Khedri (Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies), Prof. Ronald M Green (Dartmouth college, USA), Dr. Prof. Jochen Schmidt (Paderborn University)

Administrator of Executive Committee: Javad Taheri

Address: Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion,
Hedayat Mizan Institute, Golnar Valley, Teimory Blvd., Habibollah Street, Azadi Street,
Tehran,
Iran.

Website: <http://philorconf.org>

Email: philorconf@gmail.com

The Impact of the Social Aspects of Human Beings Life on Moral Epistemology: An Internal-Externalist Approach	
Reza Akbari.....	1
Schellenberg’s Evolutionary Religion and Tolerance	
Ebrahim Azadegan.....	2
Immigrants from Muslim Countries in a Secular Europe: A challenge or an opportunity for Christianity?	
Janusz Balicki.....	3
The Theory of maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah as Practical Solution of The Religion-Ethics Debate	
Hassan Beloushi.....	4
Human Responsibility and Willingness in Doing Evil in a Religious and Secular Context	
Chiara Crosignani.....	5
Christianity and the Metaphysics of a Meaningful Life	
Joseph Diekemper.....	6
Moral attributes of God, from Mulla Sadra’s view	
Habibollah Ebrahimi.....	7
God having Personal Reasons	
Seyyed Mohsen Esalmi Ardakani.....	8
Religiously Authenticated Ethical Intuitions: An Intuitionistic Interpretation of Aql in Islamic Legacy	
Mohsen Feyzbakhsh.....	9
Kant’s Philosophy of Religion and the Challenges of Moral Commitment	
Ronald M. Green.....	10
Ethical Voluntarism in Islamic Thought	
Mohsen Javadi.....	11
The Essence of the Question of Meaning of Life and its Relation to “the Paradox of the End” and “the Faith in God”	
By Abd-al-Rasoul Kashfi.....	12
Torah and Mishpat, The Law and its liberation spirit.	
Lutz Alexander Keferstein.....	13
Religion in Hegel’s Refutation of Moral Skepticism	
Muhammad Legenhausen.....	14
Identity, Religion and Culture	

Hadamy Mahjoub.....	15
Is Secular Ethics Possible?	
Seyed Mohammad Hossein Mir-Mohammadi.....	17
Religious Ethics in Shiah’s School of Thought	
Seyed Jaber Mousavi Rad.....	18
Religion in secularism	
Jane O’Grady.....	19
The meaning of life in John Hick’s point of view	
Ahmad Pourghasem, Amirabbas Alizamani.....	20
Islamic Ethics for the Development of Science and Technology	
Pradana Boy Zulian.....	21
The Role of Believing in God in How Understanding Human’s Freedom and Moral Responsibility	
Qodratullah Qorbani.....	22
Re-examination of Islamic Educational Practice from the Philosophical Perspective of Critical Pedagogy	
Yousef Rahath House.....	23
Religion, Religiosity and Spirituality in the Modern World	
Mohammad Saeedimehr.....	24
Religion and Morality	
Amir Saemi.....	25
Critical virtue ethics	
Prof. Dr. Jochen Schmidt.....	26
Essentializing the “Enemy” in Neo-Salafi Exegesis of Qur’an: The Case of the People of the Book	
Mahmoud S. Pargoo.....	27
Embodiment and Non-religious Basis of Morality	
Javad Taheri.....	28
Logos and ethos: the civil religion in the political philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau	
Claudio Tugnoli.....	29
The Problem of Religious Experience in a Secular World	
Terry Walsh.....	30

The Sacred, Sharia and the Secular: Strange Bedfellows or Reconcilable Actualities?

Thng Yi Ren.....	31
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The Impact of the Social Aspects of Human Beings Life on Moral Epistemology: An Internal-Externalist Approach

Reza Akbari¹

Abstract:

We as human beings have moral judgments about our behaviors, talks, emotions, attitudes or about others. Because of complexity of moral situations it seems that we need justification for our moral judgments, and we usually appeal to one of internalist theories such as foundationalism, coherentism and contextualism; even someone's choice may be skepticism. But we should notice the social aspects of human beings life alongside their individual aspects. Our individual aspects such as emotions, intentions and epistemic faculties train in a social educational frame. So the basis of our moral judgments on the one hand is our educability and healthiness of epistemic faculties and on the other hand our epistemic and moral training through participation in a style of social life. Participating in social life leads man to gain epistemic virtues such as epistemic authority, overcoming epistemic disagreements, and so on which affects his moral judgments. This observation will change our view about the justification theory of moral judgments. Maybe in some situations we don't need any justification and in some other situations we need one or many in a foundationalist or coherent framework; maybe we need justification for our belief revisions in some situations and don't need in some others. Even maybe in some situations we should be skeptic. So we relinquish one-dimensional theories about epistemic justification and obtain a multi-dimensional theory. Although this view *prima facie* seems an internalist view about moral judgments but it turns to be an internal-externalist view in which we regard epistemic faculties of human beings as faculties that have proper functions. Attention to social educational framework of human beings and their participation in a form of life make the importance of moral and epistemic exemplars and the role of religions in shaping the epistemic and moral faculties of human beings clear.

Keywords: Moral judgment, Moral justification, Reflective equilibrium, Moral realism, Epistemic internal-externalism, Epistemic virtues.

1. Professor of Islamic philosophy and kalam at Imam Sadiq University, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

Abstract:

The door that Darwin has opened for us directs us toward the fact that the slow geological and biological processes leading to evolution of our species in the past thousand millions of years will go lumbering on, generating new life changes in a very long time from now. We are now in the infancy of our species regarding some 200,000-year history of homo-sapience in comparison with three and a half billion years of evolutionary development. Based on these facts Schellenberg argues that since we are evolutionary immature many of our beliefs including our traditional religious beliefs are doubt worthy. Schellenberg proffers some criteria to specify the range of such an evolutionary skepticism. According to him we ought rationally to be skeptical in all subject matters in which we are dealing with beliefs that are *precise, detailed, profound, attractive, ambitious, and controversial*. He then concludes that traditional religious beliefs are almost worthy to doubt for all of them have the mentioned properties. In this paper I shall argue that the mentioned criteria are not suffice to rationalize any doubt of our religious beliefs because regardless of the nature and properties attached to a belief we would be rational in holding that belief if and only if it has been produced by a reliable cognitive faculty which works properly according to its design plan. However, despite the fact that I do not accept such a wide religious skepticism it seems to me that Schellenberg's evolutionary religion provide us a good hint to be aware of the possible vulnerabilities, which may attach to our traditional religious beliefs. Given this we should think of ourselves as relatively ignorant. Because of this admitted ignorance we should respect other experiences, whether of one's own community or with others. We ought to be open-minded and attentive to ideas of other religions and modes of thought as well as science, art and philosophy in order to enrich our understanding of the Truth and the ultimate reality. This type of tolerance and open-mindedness can hardly be found among believers in traditional religions who think that the whole truth is among their hand.

1 . Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy of Science, Sharif University of Technology

Immigrants from Muslim Countries in a Secular Europe

A challenge or an opportunity for Christianity?

Janusz Balicki¹

Abstract:

The process of secularization in Western Europe has been developing over many years. As a result, in some countries, the proportion of believers and those practicing their own religion is dropping significantly. It has had an influence on traditional moral Christian values with some people questioning, rejecting them and transferring back to a pagan time. This process is clear in the following: protection of human life at the beginning of life (abortion); death (euthanasia); same sex marriage and the undermining of sexual ethics. Meanwhile many practicing Muslim immigrants are coming, showing strong moral values. The purpose of the paper is to answer a question, if the strengthening Muslim presence in Europe is still a challenge or an opportunity for and aid to the Christian community in Europe to maintain their traditional (Judeo-Christian) beliefs, religious and moral values? The paper has three parts: first shows the process of secularization in Europe. The second part presents the main disputes between Christian churches and liberal legislation regarding marriage, family values and the protection of human life. The third part shows the cooperation of Christian and Muslims on a base of UN, States or NGO's in the area of legislation protection of human life and family. In the conclusion we see that in an age of secularization in Europe, the major religions are looking at what they have in common and uniting around their shared religious and moral values and consequently Muslim immigrants are an opportunity for Christianity.

1 . Card. S. Wyszyński University

Abstract:

This paper examines the issue of the relationship between religion and ethics in Islamic discourse. While it exceeds the theoretical theological and philosophical debates, it argues that the theory of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* in its various forms as a jurisprudential theorisation and an actual application of the theological and philosophical conceptions represents the actual embodiment of the relationship between the religion and ethics in Islamic discourse. Thus, the paper attempts to provide a conception of this relationship by examine a) the general conception of the nature of the *sharīʿah* and b) the methodological and hermeneutical mechanisms that provide a moral reading of the holy texts. This will be done through the works of a contemporary Shīʿī scholar Grand Āyatallah Muḥammad Taqī al-Mudarrisī, of which his contribution might be deemed as the most important one amongst the Shīʿī contemporary discourse. The provided analysis of his works is seen as actual answers of the most important philosophical and theological problems of the religion-ethics debate. The paper argues that al-Mudarrisī has provided three significant insights in regards with the nature of the *sharīʿah* and moral methodological and hermeneutical mechanisms that solve the issue of independency or dependency of the ethics from religion and vice versa. Furthermore, it answers tacitly why the previous jurisprudential theorisations provided by Shīʿī scholars have not worked practically. These insights are i) the theory of faith; and thus the nature of the *sharīʿah*, ii) the five levels or circles; and thus the nature of legal issue, iii) the hermeneutical mechanisms; and thus the way in which the *sharīʿah* being applied morally.

1 . Exeter University

Human Responsibility and Willingness in Doing Evil in a Religious and Secular Context

Chiara Crosignani¹

Abstract:

The aim of my paper is to analyse the origins and the development of the idea of willingness and responsibility in doing good and especially evil, as it appears in a secular context, the *polis* where the ideal citizen of the Aristotelian *Ethica Nicomachea* lives, and his impact on the religious traditions of Judaism and Early Christianity, and above all in the writings of Philo of Alexandria and Origen. In the *Ethica Nicomachea*, Aristotle states the difference between responsible and irresponsible acts: while Aristotle's ideas on ethics are strongly tied to the environment of the Greek *polis*, Philo and Origen are very deeply dependent on their religions; but at the same time both of them are interested in explaining their faith in a philosophical context. My intention is to underline the importance of the concept of willingness in doing evil as a mean to give responsibility to mankind in the religious contest of the Hellenistic Judaism of Philo and in the Early Christianity in Origen.

1 . Post-PhD "Raffaele Pettazzoni" at the University of Pavia (founded by Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Rome, Italy)

Christianity and the Metaphysics of a Meaningful Life

Joseph Diekemper¹

Abstract:

According to most monotheistic religions, having a meaningful life consists in having a proper relationship with God. God has created human beings so that they might be in a loving, worshipful relationship with Him; and it is in virtue of this relationship, and its working out through God's providential purposes, that human beings live a life of meaning. Sin, however, has derailed this purpose and separated us from God; for it is contrary to God's nature to allow unrighteousness in His presence. According to Christian theology, however, God provided a solution to this problem of separation in the form of His Son's redemptive death and resurrection. Because of Christ's once and for all sacrifice, human beings can receive God's righteousness on the basis of faith, not of works. The Apostle Paul speaks of the sinner who has repented and received this unmerited gift of righteousness as 'a new creation' (2 Cor 5:17). This paper attempts to provide a metaphysics of the human person which takes seriously this terminology and the associated Christian doctrines of redemption and regeneration. By 'taking seriously,' I mean that the metaphysics will provide *ontological* grounds for the distinction between fallen and redeemed human beings, such that the redeemed human can enter into the proper relationship with God. The starting point for this metaphysics will be Aquinas's conception of human persons, but we will see that significant adaptation of this conception will be required in order to account for the distinction in a way that is both metaphysically and theologically sound.

1 . Lecturer in Philosophy School of Politics, International Studies, and Philosophy Queen's University Belfast

Abstract:

In Holy Scriptures including the Noble Quran, attributes such as justice, mercifulness, kindness, fulfillment of obligations, and so on, have been used to refer to God. These attributes are generally known as *moral attributes* in human ordinary language. However, some have questioned moral descriptability of God by basing morality on divine dictate. In Islam, this approach has been generally assigned to Ash'arites. The question, however, is "Does God possess moral attributes?" In this paper, by describing and analyzing some of requisites for moral description of God in Mullasadra's thought such as goodness and badness, quality of moral proposition, and moral realism, it is argued that, from Mullasadra's philosophy, it is possible to assign moral attributes to God .

Keywords: moral attributes of God, Mullasadra, goodness and badness (hosn va ghobh), quality of moral propositions, moral realism

1 . Assistant Professor, philosophy of Religion, Islamic Azad University, Marvdasht Branch

God having Personal Reasons

Seyyed Mohsen Esalmi Ardakani¹

Abstract:

In one of recent variations of divine command theory, the aim is to show that morality is dependent on God's personal reasons. I explore merits and disadvantages of the theory elsewhere. Here I am concerned with two questions: (1) whether "personal" reasons are possible at all; (2) whether God can have "personal" reasons. There are philosophers that see the whole idea of "personal reason" inconsistent and deny the possibility of such "reasons". After considering this debate, granting personal reasons, I discuss whether it could be applied to God. In this regard, we can ask about possibility of having personal reason for "God". Here I borrow ideas from Muslim philosophers on God's nature. Finally, although personal reasons seem defensible, I conclude that there are serious difficulties in ascribing any such reasons to God.

Keywords: personal reasons, divine command theory, nature of God, reasons.

1 . PhD student of Philosophy, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Religiously Authenticated Ethical Intuitions: An Intuitionistic Interpretation of *Aql* in Islamic Legacy

Mohsen Feyzbakhsh¹

Abstract:

The epistemological question of the relation between religion and morality could be formulated as whether the validity and justification of moral judgments depend upon their being in coherence with religious commands or vice versa. Some believe in the former, that is, moral judgments, in order to be considered as true, are needed to be in accordance with religious commands. This view, however, is repudiated by those who believe in epistemological primacy of morality over religion. Although these aforementioned views are *prima facie* irreconcilable, I personally believe that, according to some materials from metaethics, on the one hand, and an alternative reading of some passages of Islamic scriptures on the other, there may be some bases on which one can forge consensus between those who believe in epistemological primacy of religion over morality and their opponents. On the one hand, I shall propose “Ethical Intuitionism” to be assumed. Ethical Intuitionism, in a general sense, is the view that there are some moral facts which could be known non-inferentially. According to Ethical intuitionists, we have some moral intuitions which determine and justify our moral beliefs. On the other hand, I shall suggest that there is a possible exegesis of Islamic scriptures’ data on *Aql* (usually translated as “reason”) that validates moral intuitions as a source of grasping religious commands. Hence, Provided that moral intuitions are authenticated by scripture, the aforesaid debate would not be of (at least practical) use anymore.

1 . University of Tehran

Kant's Philosophy of Religion and the Challenges of Moral Commitment

Ronald M. Green¹

Abstract:

Immanuel Kant's philosophy of religion is built on two key insights about the challenges of living according to the demands of the rational ethics he had developed. Kant introduced these insights in his *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. One insight concerns the inherent circularity of any purely rational argument for moral commitment. The second points to the rigorous nature of the moral demand and its requirement of unexceptional obedience to it. In both of these cases, Kant indicates the value and rational permissibility of transcendent (religious) confidences as a way of harmonizing our reason with the moral demand. Here I sketch Kant's arguments and suggest that contemporary moral philosophy lends support to them.

1 . Professor for the Study of Ethics and Human Values, Thornton Hall, Hinman Box 6036, Dartmouth College,
Email: ronald.m.green@dartmouth.edu

Ethical Voluntarism in Islamic Thought

Mohsen Javadi¹

Abstract:

After the definition of ethical voluntarism, its different kinds are discussed in details. The absence of Individual and social voluntarism in Islamic ethics is explained and some verses of the Noble Quran are cited against both of these two kinds of voluntarism. The expert voluntarism is rejected on the basis of its self-contradictory. The Divine voluntarism known as Divine command ethics is discussed in more details. It is also rejected mainly on the basis of its misconception of the moral phenomena.

1 . Prof. of the University of Qom

The Essence of the Question of Meaning of Life and its Relation to “the Paradox of the End” and “the Faith in God”

By Abd-al-Rasoul Kashfi¹

Abstract:

This research addresses the essence of the question of meaning of life and its relation to two topics, ‘the paradox of the end’—the Landou’s theory, explained in his 1995 article— and ‘the faith in God’. I show that the Humans’ most reiterated existential interrogatives: *what is life for? What does it mean? What does it lead to?*, and the similar ones on the meaning of life are not informative ones, and so, they do not have any informative answer, as, in his famous autobiographical fragment, “A Confession”, Leo Tolstoi states “I sought in all the sciences, but far from finding what I wanted, became convinced that all who like myself had sought in knowledge for the meaning of life had found nothing”. Furthermore, I show that the Question of Meaning of Life is not an ordinary question in its real sense, but a kind of “linguistic behavior”—the term borrowed from Ludwig Wittgenstein—such as moaning or groaning. This special behavior has its roots in the dissatisfaction of a deep existential need and the response to it lies in a passionate and enthusiastic faith in God.

1 . Associate Professor, University of Tehran

Torah and Mishpat, The Law and its liberation spirit.

Lutz Alexander Keferstein¹

Abstract:

This essay has two primordial objectives: 1) Acknowledging the fact that the fundamental responsibility of the philosopher, due to the social order conditions in many regions and nations in the world, requires not merely thinking, but also actions that transform the latter into a more equitable and including one, the author proposes a text to the reader that shows a simple way among the many other possible, to gather the discourse of the Enlightenment's Practical Reason, acclaimed as a novelty of Modernity, with the one of the so called Symbolic Reason, frequently reviled by the Cosmo-vision of modern scientific and academic communities although daily lived by the peoples all over the world; and 2) the author wishes to present and interpretation of the notion of Justice found in the texts considered sacred within the Jewish and Christian communities contrasting it with the traditional way of defining such notion, the Ulpian Roman way, upon which the normativity of the self-proclaimed Modern peoples is based.

Keywords: Enlightenment's Practical Reason, Symbolic Reason, Paul of Tarsus, Tora, Mishpat, Justice.

1 . Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, Mexico; Faculty of Philosophy; lutzakefer@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper explores the role Hegel accords to religion in his refutation of moral skepticism. We begin with a brief overview of the structure of Hegel's system in order to locate the place of discussions of skepticism, ethics, and religion. Next we turn to the general structure of Hegel's response to skepticism. Hegel's defense of morality is one in which the concept of *εὐδαιμονία* (happiness) is ambivalent. The ambivalence is inherited from the roots of Hegel's moral thought in Aristotle and Kant. Although Hegel considers himself to be a Kantian, his rejection of the "empty formalism" of Kantian morality has generated a secondary literature of its own. Since the most prominent contemporary forms of moral constructivism cite Kant's ethics as a precedent, the question may be raised of whether Hegel's criticism of Kant applies to them, as well. Thom Brooks has argued that a defense of Kant from Hegel's criticism would require an understanding of the role of religion in Kant's system. The role of religion in Hegel's moral thought is then contrasted with the Kantian strategy. Finally, it is concluded that Hegel's ethical thought may also be considered to be a form of moral constructivism.

1 . Prof. of the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Qom, Iran

Abstract:

Identity has been a key issue in philosophy since Socrates words " Know yourself" all the way to Freud, and before him philosophers like Ibn Sina, Ibn Tofail, Descartes and Spinoza. Identity is what characterizes me and makes me different from others. It is not only a number of obvious features but the fact that I belong to a religion, a culture thus to a specific ethnic group and a language. Throughout history some have considered that one affiliation prevails over others and was thus" Identity" itself. Religion for some, Culture for others with. So is culture as a defining Identity an introverted assertion of Identity, passeist thinking, leading to extremism and rejection of universal values? Or is Identity an association with specificities not being a prisoner of them, recognizing and valuing cultural diversity? Why is crime committed in the name of religious identity today? It is a shame that a in a name of a culture monstrous crimes, "women trafficking" practices of another age and the use of technology to and social media to kill in the name of God. Is the ancestral Barbary lying dormant in all cultures back and why in the heart of the Muslim world?

It appears that the "culture" of religious killings, and crimes committed in the name of religion cannot be matched or compared to any other system of killings. As it draws or tries to find its legitimacy from an" interpretation" of the religious text making crime a moral duty. So is a reason enough to be passive on the moral front? I do believe it is a mistake to only fight daech on the military front with the help of the west as it is not a viable solution to eliminate the IS. As it is not only a terrorist organization it is a culture: It is a religious and political culture with roots in our historical imaginary (historical narrative). It has a plan, as the objective is to control people in the name of a religion. We cannot ignore the instances of violence throughout our religious history because it prevents us to acknowledge the nature of the problem today as one reason of the emergence of daech is our silence over this aspect our religious history.

Is Islam compatible with modernity, can reform be achieved as in the catholic religion with Vatican II? Is Islam against Freedom? If we go through the 2000 years of Christian history, we find long periods of violence, and denial of basic rights all in the name of religion (slavery, the inquisition, St barthelemy massacres, religious wars, 100 years war). All these events and practices defining the society at one point led to an evolution over time of the western society rejecting certain values and interpretations and adopting principles and values serving the best interest of the majority. All religions can either opt for extremism or open mindedness

1 . Faculty Member of the University of Tunis

according to their cultural evolution. Daech is the legitimate result of the triumph of the ignorance era that started with the persecution of the shiite and the burning of Ibn Ruch and Ibn Baja books and writing not fitting the moral and religious standards in place.

From here we should not only care about the impact of religion on history and social life, but we must also care about the impact of today's culture and recent history on religion itself. Culture has an impact on religion. As the Arabs, the Persians, the Kurds, the Turks and the Berbers all Muslims have specific cultural identities with an impact on their religion. The cultural identity issue in our opinion is a complex issue. The sophistication of a culture, how science and culture are valued has an impact on how religion is processed and understood and lived. The main reason, the culture is weak and lacks openness today is due to the fact that the education system in most of the countries with Islam as a religion present the hard facts, no in depth analysis, no presentation of the diverse sources and references, only a number of them, some doctrines prevail, some are totally ignored. If you are raised in a Sunni state Chiite do not exist in your history books and vice versa. When we look at the mainstream culture in these countries, and here we are talking about the newspapers, media, electronic media we see that they encourage a culture of rejection of the unknown, no in depth analysis but easy to process paradigms and clichés. Diversity in the Islamic culture and the differences between the Muslims are totally ignored. While we know that the Islamic culture was at the zenith when it welcomed new influences from different cultures, when the Arab language grammar was put together by non-Arabs, when it was open to the world.

That shows us that the crisis of the Islamic culture lays in its present not in its past. So it is not surprising that illusions, false myths spread from the Atlantic to the Arab gulf in books describing the torment of the grave, the marriage of minors, and the therapeutic virtue of some substances and other stories preachers diffuse. So it is the necessity today to break this terrible circle of ignorance that led to this cycle of violence and intolerance. We have to work at spreading a new culture, a scientific culture, an open culture, Islam is not a passeist Identity that restrict us. In reality there are no limits in an Identity to prosper and evolve, only in the minds of those unable to think by themselves. Identity is not an acquisition given to us ready to use to eternity, but it evolves with new circumstances and data. And as Edgar Morin says: the composite Identity can only enrich the personality and doesnt impoverishes it and all the better it gives us more tolerant and open vision of the world. While a static, locked identity leads to the hatred of the others because they are different in culture and in religion, and to the forming of "murderous identities" in the words of Amin Maaloouf.

Is Secular Ethics Possible?

Seyed Mohammad Hossein Mir-Mohammadi¹

Abstract:

Secular Ethics is known as the real opponent of religious ethics. Although it is possible to present different interpretations of “secular ethics”, it is possible to understand it in contrast with religious ethics. Knowing the *real* religious ethics, it helps us to understand two facts: (1) the fundamental elements of religious ethics; and consequently (2) the fundamental elements of secular ethics which are in contrast with religious elements. So, pure secular ethics should be known as an approach which has no elements applied or recommended by religious ethics. In order to know the fundamental elements of *real* religious ethics, the only reliable resource is the religion itself. Religiosity, media and different interpretations of religion and religious ethics cannot be considered as reliable resources to know what religious, ethical elements are. However, most of contemporary understandings of the elements are based on these three resources. In this paper, I try to focus on the reliable resources of religion particularly those based on Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Holy Quran. Then, I present some well-known, wrong understandings of religious ethics presented in great philosophical books such as Kant’s Second Critique. Finally, it will be discussed whether it is possible to have a pure secular ethics which has none of those elements applied or recommended by real religious ethics.

Keywords: Secular ethics, religious ethics, Bible, Holy Quran.

1 . Professor at University of Qom

Abstract:

The Shiite, who are one of the two main branches in Islamic thought, believe in the opinion which is called rational *goodness and evilness*. This opinion is special interpretation of religious ethics. According to this interpretation, there are some ethical propositions which are understood by intellect without any need to religion and there are some other ethical propositions which are conceived by the divine command. So this view is between two extreme views: between the view of *divine command* which maintains that all ethical propositions need divine command and forbiddance. And between the view of *secular ethics* which maintains that we can understand all ethical propositions without any need to religion. In this paper, the point of view of Shiah about goodness and evilness has been explained. Then the reasons of Shiah to reject the point of view of divine command and secular ethics has been accounted.

Keywords: Shiah, ethics, divine command, secular ethics, rational goodness and evilness

1 . Ph.D student of Islamic Studies, Islamic seminary of Qum and Ph.D student of philosophy of religion, Tehran university

Abstract:

At the end of the 19th century, the philosopher Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God, and the sociologist Weber declared the disenchantment of the world. During the 20th century, the last bastion of transcendence – the concept of the non-physical mind – also began to be dismantled. Successive theories in the Western philosophy of mind have variously sought to reduce the mental to behaviour, neural states, interactive causal processes – or an atavistic illusion. I want to examine how feasible it is in practice for even the professedly secular to operate without some notion, however hazy, of mind, self, or (to put it theologically) soul – at least in ethics. I shall look at the concept of sincerity, and ask whether it can make sense without presupposing a dualism of inner and outer, hidden self and public behaviour. If the presupposition of dualism is indeed indispensable to sincerity, and sincerity is integral to any form of morality, and some form of morality is essential in any society, then in some sense even those who deny dualism inadvertently accept it. If we unavoidably have to act as if we believe something, then in some sense we do believe it. This sort of Kantian transcendental argument (we have to accept that there are some things we 'know', so had better ask how it is we know them) similarly applies to free will, another concept we cannot help but apply in practical circumstances. This paper will investigate the elements of religious thinking which ineluctably linger in secular societies.

¹ . London School of Philosophy

The meaning of life in John Hick's point of view

Ahmad Pourghasem¹

Dr. Amirabbas Alizamani²

Abstract:

The question of the “meaning of life” has always been studied by philosophers like John Hick and led them to make an explanation regarding to their philosophical bases about it. John Hick mentions “the practical meaning of life” in his work based on the concepts he borrows from Wittgenstein and Kant and states that the meaning of life depends on an interrelation between the human and the world. Thus, he inevitably talks about the world as a place that the human experiences his life in it and then he relates “the explanation of the world” to “the cosmic optimism”. He, then, thinks that the cosmic optimism depends on religious beliefs. Therefore, he makes a turn from the question of “the meaning of life” to the question of “the world’s nature” and then, from the “world’s nature” to “the religious features which give us better judgments about the world”. The article is going to explain his point of view about the meaning of life regarding to his ideas about critical realism and then, is going to consider the results and notes about it such as being allocated just to Abrahamic religions, being not general and being no implication between cosmic optimism and religious belief.

1 - Ph.D. Student of University of Tehran

2 - Associate Professor, University of Tehran, The Philosophy of religion Department

Islamic Ethics for the Development of Science and Technology

Pradana Boy Zulian¹

Abstract:

This paper features the principles of Islamic ethics or philosophy for the advancement of science and technology. It argues that Islam has set a number of principles with regard to the philosophical and scientific endeavors and discoveries. Based on Islamic doctrines and traditions, the ethical framework of scientific innovation can be summarized as follows: 1) Islam encourages its people to pursue knowledge and science (*al-‘ilm*) and places people with knowledge (*‘alim*) in a high and respectable position; 2) it should be based on and derived from the *tawhid* principles; 3) it has to seriously consider the harmony of relationship among God’s creatures on the earth, or in other words, Islam pays considerable attention on the environmental concerns in every kind s of scientific and technological innovation; and 4) that human being should be the axis of scientific and technological innovation, in which that it has to bring benefits for human beings and does not endanger, contradict and against the dignity of human beings. Science is created by human, controlled by human and should bring benefit for human’s life. In order to gain a better understanding of this context, this paper also briefly describe the variety of Muslims response to this issue as to whether Muslims should adopt to modernity which is manifested in the form of science and technology or avoid it.

1 . Muhammadiyah University of Malang, Indonesia

The Role of Believing in God in How Understanding Human's Freedom and Moral Responsibility

Qodratullah Qorbani¹

Abstract:

The conception of God is of human's fundamental questions that concerns atheists' minds. The fundamental role of this idea and the way of believing or disbelieving in God is cleared in all aspects of human life, that is, theistic or atheistic thinking towards God determines the meaning of human identity generally, and his/her limits of freedom and moral responsibility specially. The way of maintaining to divine or non-divine God, also, effects human freedom and moral responsibility, since the nature of believed God defines the meaning and restrictions of human ethical acts. In divine religions, also, the way of believing in aspects of Theoretical Unity or Monotheism, like essential, attributive and creative one, and Practical Unity explains boundaries of human freedom and moral responsibility, because human approach to plural aspects of monotheism determines his/her relations to God. In addition, it should pay attention to the way of human thinking to God's attributes, namely, how ascribing finite or infinite attributes to God, such as knowledge, power and will, and determining the way of relation between God and human attributes, influences on human freedom and moral responsibility. In this case, how these attributes is defined has fundamental role in defining human determinism or freewill. So, the totality of theistic or atheistic thought and aspects of our beliefs in God determine the place and meaning of our acts which moral responsibility is of them. In this paper, these issues is reviewed and analyzed for clarifying their results.

Keywords: God, Freedom, Moral Responsibility, God's Attributes, Theoretical and Practical Unity

1 . Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

Re-examination of Islamic Educational Practice from the Philosophical Perspective of Critical Pedagogy

Yousef Rahath House¹

Abstract:

This study attempted to examine the possibility philosophical perspective of critical pedagogy in promoting the ideological values of Islamic education. In the present modern educational scenario, the term ‘critical pedagogy’ has become a central issue of discussion because of critical pedagogy’s fundamental commitment to the development of different culture of schooling that seeks to transform the authoritarian classroom structures and practices in order to highlight the value of social justice and human freedom. Even though most of the suggestions contributed by critical pedagogue do have close relationship with some of the Islamic values, Muslim scholars apart from few, haven’t given enough attention to the philosophical issues related to critical pedagogy. So this research is intended to explore the perception of Muslim critical pedagogue on Islamic educational practice in order to find some of the issues that should be highlighted in the Islamic educational practice.

1. International Islamic University Malaysia, Social Foundation and Educational Leadership

Abstract:

Before the emergence of the modernity, the terms “religious” and “spiritual” were commonly thought of as almost synonymous and therefore, coextensive. According to this traditional view a spiritual person never could be nonreligious. During the modern era, however, the two terms came to be gradually disconnected with each other so that nowadays we find lots of people identify themselves as spiritual but not religious. Thus, some modern thinkers are inclined to accept the possibility of a kind of spirituality which is entirely independent of religion and religious life. According to some more secular views there is an essential conflict between religiosity and spirituality. Consequently, we may distinguish between three relevant theses: i) the traditional *identity thesis* which says that religiosity and spirituality are the same property; ii) the *independence thesis* which claims that one can really be spiritual but not religious; and iii) the *conflict thesis* which asserts that spirituality and religiosity are inconsistent. In this paper I first present a sketch of the above theses and their foundations. Then I argue against the first and third theses respectively. My discussion gives some room for accepting the second thesis albeit with a modification: though some lower degrees of spirituality could be gained outside the religion, the higher degrees are only accessible within a religious life. The whole approach of this paper to the mentioned problems is theoretical and not experimental.

Keywords: Religion, Religiosity, Spirituality, Modernity.

¹ . Prof. of Tarbiat Modares University (Tehran – IRAN)

Abstract:

According to the moral arguments for the existence of God, we can infer the existence of God from moral features of our lives. Moral arguments, in general, can be divided into two groups: practical and meta-ethical arguments. Meta-ethical arguments purport to show that moral features of the world are best explained by God's existence. Practical arguments, many of which are Kantian in spirit, aim to show that, in order for our moral lives to be rational, we need to have a belief in God's existence. In this talk I am going to discuss Kant's own practical argument, and two other Kantian practical arguments for the existence of God.

Keywords: Moral arguments, Meta-ethical arguments, practical arguments,

1 . Prof. of IPM - Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences

Abstract:

Virtue Ethics has been on the rise during the last decades. The promises of virtue ethics are manifold. For one thing, virtue ethics might create a fruitful forum for intercultural and indeed interreligious exchange, since virtues as “thick concepts” can incite a dialogue about different yet communicable moral visions. Furthermore, virtue ethical theories conceptualize processes of moral maturation and thus provide orientation for educational theory. And yet in Christian (philosophical) thought as well as in empirical ethics, there has been significant skepticism with regard to the question whether human beings, as they are notoriously fragile in terms of their morality, are really capable of cultivating virtues. The paper will discuss these arguments and inquire for a critical virtue ethics that can subsist in the face of this critique. Critical virtue ethics, thus the paper will demonstrate, describes key competences like authenticity and compassion that human beings can acquire in spite of their own notorious moral imperfection.

¹ . Universität Paderborn, Institut f. Evangelische, jochen.schmidt@upb.de, www.jochen-schmidt.net

Essentializing the “Enemy” in Neo-Salafi Exegesis of Qur’an: The Case of the People of the Book

Mahmoud S. Pargoo¹

Abstract:

Numerous verses of Qur’an have been resorted to in Neo-Salafi tradition to justify its sheer hostility toward the People of the Book (Christians and Jews). Neo-Salafi approach to Qur’an exegesis, however, is in clear contrast to classical interpretations of Qur’an in which the latter emphasises on the historical context, intratextual meaning of the text and hadiths related to it whereas the former decontextualizes the text and tries to derive a general rule from literalist reading of the text. These two different approaches in understanding the text results in two widely different illustrations of the “Enemy”; While classical Qur’an Interpretations stress on hostility and conspiracy against Muslim community in setting the criteria of being an enemy of Muslims, the neo-salafi interpretations single out some essential characteristics like religious affiliation as the criteria of being an enemy of the Islam. So, for them being a Jew or Christian suffices to fall in the category of the enemy and be a subject of jihad. In its comparative analysis of these two approaches, this paper will select certain verses of Qur’an which deals with the subject and will show how the neo-salafi reading of the text has changed the consensual understanding of the Muslim community and has given a meaning to it which was rarely recognized as authentic throughout the Islamic history.

1. Ph. D Student at Institute for Social Justice, Australian Catholic University-Sydney.

Abstract:

Considering the fact that the nature of morality can be, in some way, seen as not being derive from the religion, this paper aims to show the independence of morality from religion. This has been shown by asserting new insights from cognitive science, according to which morality could be explained based on the notion of embodiment, i.e. pre-conceptual patterns of our bodily experience. With regard to the results of the different studies on cognitive science, it could be demonstrated that our conceptions of a few 'root metaphors' creates our primary understandings of what morality comes from. According to this, the idea that morals stem primarily from religion cannot be accepted. This is not to say that we are unable to find moral statements in the language of religions; but to say that very notion of morality is grounded in human's cognition.

Keywords: Embodiment, conceptual metaphor, metaphorical Morality

1 . Iranian Association for Philosophy of Religion, Tehran

Abstract:

The state cannot accept any religion intolerant, because this would imply that the sovereign is no longer such and becomes a servant of the priests. In a historical context in which it would be impossible to revive the national religions (capable of ensuring greater unity and cohesion of the state) Rousseau inherits from Locke's "Letter Concerning Toleration" the prescription only tolerate religions that tolerate others. Every citizen as such must believe in the fundamental tenets to which it is bound by its own status as a citizen, but will adhere to a religion whose tenets, however, are not in conflict with those of the civil religion.

1 . Prof. of Sociology Department Trento

The Problem of Religious Experience in a Secular World

Terry Walsh¹

Abstract:

Do we really believe that in a secular world marked by unbelief in God and indifference to religion, it is still possible to experience the sacred? Could a secular culture's hostility or indifference to God constitute a genuine barrier to the divine's coming to appearance in the world? These are important questions because in the absence of experience, the wellspring of belief, God and religious concerns fade from consciousness and sink into oblivion. A culture's inability to take God seriously is due to its inability to acknowledge the importance and value of God for life. And this is due to the default of God from experience. But in the actual intellectual and cultural climate of the Western world, why should anyone value beliefs that are not accessible to experience? For what is beyond experience is simply beyond belief. And what is beyond belief takes on the appearance of the irrational. So it all comes down to experience. But how can we defend the claims of religious experience from the *prima facie* judgment of irrationality? In my paper, I shall argue that the problem of religious experience is in fact the problem of experience in general. As long as philosophy fails to examine the deeper dimensions of experience, we will not be able to develop an adequate account of religious experience to overcome the objections of either irrationality or irrelevance.

1 . Heythrop College, University of London

The Sacred, Sharia and the Secular: Strange Bedfellows or Reconcilable Actualities?

Thng Yi Ren¹

Abstract:

Implementing Sharia in the West is perceived as a far-fetched, even quixotic, scenario. Public sphere type arguments straddling dyads such as the sacred/secular or state/religion appear unrealistic if not patronizing. Attempts to remedy this include recognizing religiosity and the sacred as indisputable actualities, whether in the name of Rawlsian pluralism or Habermasian 'post-secularism'. Concomitantly, venerating the sacred *à la* Girard as a counterweight to profane and fragile political realities seemingly rehabilitates religion's contemporary relevance and depth of identity. Despite such theoretical brokerage, Sharia's implementation in modern political realities is fraught with hesitation if not militant rejection. Such hostility is indeed unproductive, indeed unconstructive, and hinders genuine resolution. In this talk, I identify the trajectories of Sharia within modern Sunni Islamic polities as experimental platforms for larger enterprises of integrating Sharia into western legal systems. Correspondingly, I adjudicate contemporary arguments of the public sphere to identify the components that facilitate the introduction of Sharia into western societies. Developing this, I re-examine the institutional separation of religion and the state vis-à-vis the *niyah/nifaq* nexus, arguing that the contours of religion in secular spaces include both possibilities of conformity and non-conformity i.e non-presumptive jurisdiction. As a corollary, I argue that the 'liberal paradox' collapses and particularized brands of individualism do emerge. I conclude by drawing some reflections on germane proposals of Sharia reform by contemporary Muslim theorists such as Iqbal and Rida, and comparatively assess how they compliment public sphere type arguments.

1 . University of Cambridge