

A Comparison of Western and Islamic Conceptions of Reason and Rationality

Document Type: Conceptual paper

Ali Fallahi Saifuddin*
Maryam Maleki Sadeghi**

Received: 2020/09/11

Accepted: 2020/11/31

Abstract

“Reason” and “Rationality” have been the most controversial subjects in human thinking. Question of reason is faced not only with questions about the capacity of reason to discover truth, the possibility of choice, and the decisive role of reason in epistemology, but also it deals with questions about thought, freedom, and the nature of thought. Reason is a common point among all human beings; therefore, there is no difference between people in the amount of intellect, but the differences are due to the dominant epistemological paradigm in each period and the impact of historical, social and cultural conditions on the interpreting of that paradigm of intellect. In the last few centuries, the concept of reason and rationality has encountered major challenges. Western epistemological approaches such as post structuralism and methodological approaches such as genealogy, seek to find gaps of this concept in the historical process. On the other hand, the concept of reason in Islamic thought and its relationship with religion has always been controversial. Some contemporary Muslim thinkers, by giving originality to reason and respecting Western modernity, have a critical approach to traditional society and the way to achieve an ideal society with new outlook such as pluralism, critical religious rationality and democracy in a religious society based on rationality. Some other Muslim thinkers, by proposing views such as the theory of rationality and spirituality, go beyond the modernist approach to religion, seeking a way to avoid religious intellectual contradictions. This article tries to examine both Western and Islamic perspectives on reason and rationality.

Keywords:

Reason, Rationalism, West, Islam, Thought.

* Assistant Professor, Faculty of Political sciences, Islamic Azad University, Khorramabad, Iran (Corresponding Author) alifallahi84@yahoo.com

** Ph. D. Student, Faculty of Political Science, Islamic Azad University, Khorramabad , Iran malekisadeghi@gmail.com

Introduction

The subject, possibility, tools and credibility of cognition are among the first and most important concerns of human thought, and from the very beginning of thought, the role of reason has been fundamentally significant. Reason in each period as a set of common principles, foundations and presuppositions was very effective in the epistemological structure of that time and was considered an important factor in differentiating discourses. In every historical era, a special perception of reason has been dominated that has been closely related to human view of the status, value and nature of reason.

Foucault believes that the concept and function of reason has changed from the past to the present and the role of reason in making decisions in society has changed too. He does not believe in the progress of reason and knowledge in the en route of history, and for this reason he refrains from any evolutionary analysis in this field and believes in the rupture of each of these periods, he think that every rational system will collapse after a while and give way to another rational structure; Because he considers truth and rationality arise from power and emphasizes that truths are nothing but something made by power. Rationality also has no meaning other than the organization of thinking in the form of a discourse (Haghighat and Norouzi, 2014: 78). He denies the formation of thought outside the influence of a complex network of social factors, stating that it is social institutions that affect in understanding people and the meaning of things. Reason through creating dominant narratives and defeated images through general concepts and their perception, definition or analysis, judgment and reasoning, unifies the imperfect and makes claims about the truth in order to replace the truth. Therefore, the analysis of rational, irrational and anti-rational processes in the formation of our experience and consciousness is the responsibility of the intellect itself, which has the

character of self-regulation (Alam al-Huda, 2012: 215). The last and key point that should to be mentioned here is the difference between reason and rationality. Rationality means "belonging to reason" that means the authority and rule of reason. Therefore, due to the closeness and similarity between these two meanings, they are used interchangeably with each other.

1. Theoretical Framework: Genealogy as a Method

Deconstructive and post structural approaches, as a large part of the postmodern current, provide an effective tool in the radical, non-sympathetic, and de-construction reading of thinkers' ideas. Therefore, the use of this paradigm helps a lot in conducting research in order to reconstruct the concept of rationality by relying on differences and not on similarities and natures. Post-structuralism, by attacking the main beliefs, foundations and assumptions of Western ontology, especially Kant's "I know", rejects its subjective thinking and destroys stable structures with a de-construction idea (Sarup, 2003: 200-74). Post structuralism holds that true meaning never emerges, and that meaning is created more by the prohibition, exclusion, or marginalization of certain words that are not a direct reflection of the truth itself. Therefore, all texts and interpretations must be de-construct (Haghighat, 2008: 110-91). This is because post structuralism emphasize the existing differences and believe that create gaps and instability within the system (Abbasloo, 2012: 78).

Foucault, as one of the most important poststructuralist thinkers, introduces a form of cognition in the form of paleontological and genealogical methods, which aims to deconstruct the epistemology of knowledge and its claims of conventional objectivity. Archeology is the method of historical analysis of systems of thought or speech, and genealogy discusses the rules of this speech such as what can be said and what cannot be said in speech, which

statement is true and which is false, which should be suppressed and which should not, etc. (Bahyan, 2010: 22-1).

Foucault introduced four methodological principles (Reversality, Discontinuity, Specificity and Exteriority) in order to present a different cognition of existing historical Western knowledge and return speech to its true character. (Mohammadpour, 2010:533) Therefore, using this method requires examining historical discontinuities, exposing unusual and obvious structures, revealing order and balance, and generally dissecting historical and social processes related to power and justifying epistemological claims. The motto of genealogy is to oppose depth, purpose and introspection; Do not trust in equality and continuity in history, because they are just masks and aspirations for equality (Mohammadpour, 2010: 534). Hence, the subject of genealogy is neither the path of history nor the intentions of historical subjects, but the multiplicity of factors, strategies, forces, events and dispersions that are the product of conflicts, interaction of forces and power relations (Bahyan, 2010: 186).

In general, genealogy is one of the methodological-theoretical traditions that examines phenomena in their real historical evolution and by identifying the historical formulations of phenomena and their acting forces, creates a suitable critical position for understanding their current conditions and which presents the hidden and unconscious rules of discourse formation which shows the common rules in a society in a certain period (Khatami, 2012: 491-470). A unique feature of the theoretical framework - genealogical method, is the historical view of the phenomenon, because every cognition is rooted in the life, society and language that make up history (Foucault, 2009: 26). By writing the present history, the researcher goes to the cessation of the usual practical and mental habits and to create instability in the obvious beliefs and

established scientific and intellectual traditions of the age "(Kachoyan, 2003: 14). Then genealogist in his archaeological stage, goes back to identify the first formulation of the phenomenon, but the genealogist does not stop there, but goes backwards to the present, so much so that at a certain historical time (at a breaking point) gradually new rulings and propositions about the phenomenon appear, different from the previous ones, appears that form its new formulation and discourse. This process of going back to the present continues until the identification of subsequent formulations and discourses that the genealogist has his problem in it (Kochian, Zairi, 2009: 30-7). One of the main aspects of genealogical analysis is the nature of power. "The unit of analysis of this method is" power relations "which are formed through the" political technologies throughout the society "(Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2008: 316-314). It should be note that power brings resistance and the two together are "the permanent face of human interactions" (Hindes, 2001: 115). The last step of this method is "present critique". Relying on the previous stages and identifying historical discourses and formulations, the genealogist shows that the phenomenon (rationality) has other forms that have been eliminated or changed due to the interference of non-discourse matters, including the factor of power and influence of social forces and its current configuration has been obtained. This path destroys the foundation of the existing phenomenon and offers a new image of it to social actors, which is in different with the existing image (Kuchian, Zairi, 2009: 7-30).

2. Reason and Rationality in Western Thought

The emergence of the human intellectual revolution was not sudden but gradual. In ancient Greek thought, humans and gods had a common ancestry, and fusion. Over time in ancient Greece the absolute domination of the gods declined. Then, with the humanization of the theological intellect of ancient

times, the ground for the emergence of philosophy was prepared. Philosophy, by transcending the pluralism of myths and by abandoning the ancient superhuman destinies, empowered reason and made it available to man. Philosophy, by focus on human reason, evolved over time from the early myths and paved the way for the emergence of humanism in the new age (Mohammadi and Qahi, 2020: 165-170). As Gadamer puts it, We are surprised when we find that the doors of the most important construction of human thought open at this very beginning (Gadamer, 2005: 15).

In ancient Greece, reason is a general concept equivalent to the logos. A concept that transcends reason and encompasses all goodness, virtue, and happiness. In this view, reason has been the center of rational and abstract logical arguments equal to the knowledge and discovery of truth. Hence, it is considered as the only valid knowledge, a transcendental concept and free from error, and there is no distinction between the theoretical and practical application of reason. With these interpretations, there is no limit in terms of the possibility of growth and strengthening. Acquisition of power and existential, social and political superiority of individuals depends on the extent to which they enjoy the power of reason (Sajadi and Banhan, 2014: 32).

With the advent of Christ (PBUH), the spirit of Greek intellectual thinking was broken and the truth appeared in another form (Madadpour, 2005: 27). From then on, the intellect was placed next to faith in the production and defense of faith, and sometimes even the position of faith went beyond reason; Philosophy and science became the subjects of religion and the intellect served the faith. Therefore, reason had a hierarchical concept. Partial intellect was the recipient of sensory images, and general intellect was considered to be responsible for abstracting general concepts from sensations. However, reason became a material concept and was not immune from error, and since reason

was a pretext for establishing the power of the church, it lost itself as an absolute and original knowledge and truth (Sajadi and Banahan, 2014: 32-28). In other words, the medieval intellect belongs to the theological view in ontology and the Bible, and its sovereignty is only within the boundaries set by God Almighty in his book, and therefore the meaning from beginning to end is in the book. There is no longer possible for something new to be discovered until the end of time (jebraeili, 2014: 74-57).

During the Middle Ages, Christianity, as the dominant ideology, sought to overthrow the Greek rationalist and polytheistic philosophy, which could be considered the descent of the divine intellect from the world of divinity to the world. This course of the descent and ascent of wisdom from heaven to earth and vice versa finally reappeared with the advent of the Renaissance, and man was placed at the center of existence and as the main subject of the knowledge of philosophy. The gap between the beliefs of the traditional world and the new world was created at the same time as the European Renaissance; A movement that, with the help of the legacies of thought, philosophy and culture of ancient Greece, along with a break from Christian thought, claimed to bring about a change in human civilization (Durant, 2006, a, c 5). With the success of Protestantism and the domination of rationalism, it grew into a secular and non-traditional civilization, that is, modern civilization. The history of the new age has had a decisive connection with the change of human status and personal development. Thinkers such as Nietzsche and Burckhardt explicitly read the history of modernity as the "evolution of the individual."

Whereas the post-Galilean English empiricist philosopher Francis Bacon was more in favor of scientific experience and inductive reasoning; Descartes (1596-1650) French rationalist philosopher valued reason more than experience. (Kant 1724 and 1814) He tried to reconcile reason and experience

and offer a single theory of the maturity of human knowledge (Creative Reason (Benton, 1997: 101)).

Modern man is the product of a break with the religious attitude and the establishment of definitive human authority over the sovereignty of God. Therefore, the measure and scale of everything becomes the order of the world. The God-given and representable order in a table is no longer considered, and for this reason the continuous relationship that connected man with other beings in the world is broken. Man, who was once a creature among other creatures, now not only deals with the world around him, but also seeks his own understanding (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 2008: 96). In fact, if in the Renaissance, man could not know himself because of being next to other parts of the world (principle of similarity) and in the classical era because of the representative of the world, but in the modern era became for the first time the actor and the subject of cognition (Zalizadeh, 2015: 225-214) because modern reason has inherent independence and knows no boundaries other than the limits it defines for itself (jebraeili, 2014: 74-57).

Thus, they found two substitutes for faith and revelation as human knowledge in medieval scholastic thought, which was reason and experience. It was in this direction that reason followed the experience of secularism, and the Renaissance humanist and rationalist movement paved the way for the development of capitalism, the formation of civil society, democracy, and liberalism. And perhaps that is why rationalism has largely evolved into individualism, instrumentalism, and utilitarianism. Bauman and Wilbert Moore point to the conflict of contemporary rationalism. The context of today's arguments is inherently mixed with conflict. On the one hand, it helps human beings to have more control over their own actions, and on the other hand, it may limit rational analyzes for individual selection. Thus the themes

of rationality are inherently incompatible with each other and institutionalize the contradiction in it (Bauman, 1990: 226).

The intellect, which in the modern age cultivates absolutism in its heart and claims to be comprehensive and universal, could no longer have a place. Therefore, in the postmodern period, there was doubt that rationality could provide a true and accurate knowledge and understanding of the phenomena of the universe, and humanist reason was deprived of its validity and authority due to epistemic failure. Postmodernists want to introduce a new order to the human epistemological structure. This new order is not necessarily rational because postmodernists advocate new rational horizons. Postmodern society in contrast to the modern age is the collapse of the discourse of development and progress, irrationality, pessimism and despair of the theory of absolute cognition. Therefore, the definite intellect and the truth atmosphere are extinguished (Mesbahi et al., 2016: 126-95).

In Western thought, conceptual and cognitive ups and downs along with historical developments have led to different divisions about rationality. In general, there are two different conceptions of reason: first, reason as an impersonal and absolute reality; second, the reason as an internal and personal matter (Alam al-Huda, 2012: 210). Although the main currents of pre-modern philosophy, such as Greek and Islamic philosophies, include both, modern philosophies were formed solely on the basis of the second. (Alam al-Huda, 2012: 211).

Weber to analyze rationality, first divides and defines actions. In his opinion, goal-oriented rational action actually pays attention to practical reason (Craib, 2003: 130). In this regard, he introduces rational-legal authority as a suitable model of modernism, which others described as instrumental rationality (Ibid: 55). Following Weber, Simmel then introduces rationality as

an objective culture and considers it as a function of objective criteria approved by the culture of society. These objective criteria are subject to historical conditions and the level of social development. Proponents of the critical theory analyze rationality as the product of the dialectic of history, thought, the individual, and the history of the social world (Benton, 1997: 108-107).

In critical rationality, Popper believes that scientific theories and any other claim to knowledge can and should be rationally criticized. By this description, this kind of rationality is an endless and forward-looking cycle of criticism in the production of conditional and temporary knowledge in science that challenges the concentration of economic power and tyranny in the political and social arena (Bennett, 2009: 369). In his view, this kind of rationality in its most advanced form of thought is the readiness to discuss oneself critically and correct them in the light of critical discussion with others (Saei, 2013: 180). Therefore, the possibility of a dogmatic interpretation of rationality will be minimum. He believes that in this approach, one can hope for peace, humanity, humility and effort to learn from his mistakes (Popper, 2005: 32). Habermas proposes communicative rationality (intersubjective interaction) as an alternative to freeing himself from the constraints of modernity and criticizing the one-dimensionality of purpose-oriented reason (instrumental rationality) and reducing the definition of reason to the unique property of the subject. This plan is a moral-normative mechanism to complete the project that the Enlightenment promised to do (Mohammadi, 2007: 53-66) to advance the idea of a positive and liberating process of communication and understanding in a society involves open conversation and discussion away from any coercion, urgency and fear (Ehsani, 2017: 65).

3. Reason and Rationality in Islamic Thought

Islamic thought and socio-cultural geography and the presence of components of tradition, Western philosophy, religion and modernity have created a special attitude and analysis in the semantic evolution of rationality, in other words, the formation of rationality in Islam has been appeared by the interaction of these elements. Different conceptions of reason have been presented in Islamic thought. The main principle in Islamic thought is that rationality is one of the goals of God in the creation of man and many religious texts have considered reason as a divine revelation, a wonderful creation and the advantage of man and the capital of worship (Mardiha, 2001: 159). Humanism and rationalism in Islam were associated with religious and metaphysical orientations and had a moral and theoretical range that ultimately propagated piety. In other words, in the traditional view, unlike the modern worldview, the more it goes beyond the circle of human reason, the more real it becomes. In fact, in Islam, the more abstract the symbols, the more rational they are (Malekian, 2001: 390).

The rationality underlying the essence of Islam (the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet of Islam and the ijtihaads performed by Muslims) is a function of the rationality in the Qur'an and the prophetic experience (Arkun, 1991: 8). Therefore, Muslims' initial perceptions of reason have two salient features: first, reason is related to morality, and second, reason is the criterion for distinguishing faith, and in other words, reason is associated with faith. The concept of reason and its semantic implications in the first texts of Muslims refers to the continuity of ethics and law and the entanglement of the realm of rationality and faith. Another interpretation of reason is devoted to the wisdom of Khaleda (Aristotelian philosophy) in the historical tradition of Islam, which analyzes the most metaphysical and universal level of discussion on the

theoretical rationality of Muslims. In the third interpretation, there is the issue of *ijtihad* rationality and jurisprudence, which is formulated by the necessity of preparing a peaceful life as a part of the intellectual independence of Muslims in some opinions of the medieval and constitutional jurists. In other words, rationality is the most practical part of Muslim civic wisdom. The meaning of practical rationality is that the necessity of preparing the objective conditions for good governance by paying attention to the interests of social forces and the government (Najafzadeh, 2018: 26). Some thinkers such as Khajeh Nizam-ol-Molk, Abu Ali Muskavieh Razi, Abolhassan Ameri, Khajeh Nasir Tusi, and Abolfazl Kashani believe that "Tadbir" is the basic element of civil policy science (Kramer, 1996: 54-48)

Although from a historiographical point of view there is nothing meta-historical, Islamic reason is considered meta-historical by Muslims. In criticizing this view, Arkun, the contemporary epistemologist, does not believe in the possibility of the originality of reason or the ultimate truth because truth is changeable and reason changes from one era to another (jebraeili, 2014: 74-57). Rationality in the West, opposite to traditional thinking and appropriate to the world of capitalism and modernity appears. This trend left a very deep and wide impact on scientific and philosophical thought. However, what has happened among religious thinkers and philosophers is a mixed rationality. Rationality, which is more theoretical than practical, focuses more on the nuclei than the necessities. Like Farabi, that considered Aristotle's active intellect to be the revelation of the Qur'an in order to deduce civil policy from it. These efforts have faced serious challenges (Bukharaei, 2017). In later views, Detachment (Tafkiki) school in the Islamic thought has emerged, which seriously rejects the use of reason and philosophical arguments in understanding religious propositions, claims, and

beliefs. The followers of this school believe that the philosophical rationalist approach to the understanding of religion is completely contrary to religiosity and faith, and limit the correct knowledge of religion to the way of revelation. Detachment (Tafkiki) refers to the separation of religious texts, philosophical texts, and mystical texts from modern rationality, which emphasizes the incompatibility of philosophical and mystical terms with Qur'anic and hadith truths. Some other intellectual tendencies by proposing the theory of relativity of religious knowledge and the efforts of its theorists to maintain the link between science and religion in the field of theory on the one hand and trying to defend the effectiveness of religion in the field of social rationality on the other hand, offer theories such as Theoretical Contraction and Expansion of Religion. The concept of rationality in the minds of Muslim thinkers can be categorized by two paradigms or patterns; A) Philosophical rationality: Farabi was the first Muslim philosopher to introduce philosophical rationality following Greek philosophy. It includes three types: theoretical, scientific and active. This pattern continued among Islamic philosophers and mystics until it reached its peak in Transcendent theosophy. B) Secular rationality: B) Secular rationality: After the acquaintance of Muslim thinkers, especially Iranians, with the modern Western civilization, a kind of confusion arose among the thinkers. Some accepted secular rationality and distanced themselves from philosophical rationality which has a religious character. This rationality, which was introduced in the modern era by Western thinkers, is based on features such as the denial of fixed facts, the impossibility of understanding truths, distrust of revelation, self-sufficiency of reason, and trust in customary rationality. (Fasihi, 2005: 273-267)

The main manifestation of secular reason in the minds of Muslim thinkers is a tendency to modernize religion and entrenchment of customary and secular

reason in the interpretation of religion. This idea accepts all the principles of modernity, including modern and secular rationality, science, progress, and secularism (ibid., P. 278). The theorist of this theory, including Soroush and Malekian, considers modern reason as a method that leads man to truth and his acceptance has no negative consequences. In this context, Mujtahid Shabestari speaks of religious-critical rationality. What he means by critical-religious rationality is that in his religiosity, man constantly transcends the boundaries of critical propositions and does not stop anywhere. According to this view, no theological proposition, no fatwa, no theory in critical religious rationality is the last word and new speech is always allowed. In today's societies, if religious rationality does not have a critical character, either secularization occurs, or it lead to religious formalism. The critical nature of religious rationality, on the one hand, gives religious people the opportunity to accept and participate in social change, while maintaining the ultimate judgment of religion in social life. If secularization occurs, there will be no judgment of religion in social developments, and if religious formation prevails, adaptation to the necessary social developments will not be possible (Mojtahed Shabestari, 2003: 104-107).

4. Reason and Rationality in the Thought of Contemporary Muslim Thinkers

Abdolkarim Soroush, as a religious intellectual, is a follower of the neo-Mu'tazilite school who is influenced by Ghazali, Feyz Kashani, Rumi, Hafez, Iqbal Lahori, Imam Khomeini, Shahid Motahari, Kant and Popper in his religious and philosophical thoughts and beliefs. Soroush considers Western knowledge as a suitable tool for analyzing tradition, religion and social issues. Including; Rationalism, the separation of knowledge from value, falsificationism, his definition of science, and the separation of philosophy

from science are all examples of the supremacy of the foundations of Western philosophy over his thought. Soroush did not reform the foundations of modernity in order to consider it necessary to follow the path to modernity, but turned to religious reformism because of his concern for religiosity. This thought of his was manifested in the form of modernization or secularization of the interpretation of religion by different readings of religion and reduction of religion to religious experience. These two types of interaction with religion are in fact due to considering the necessity of modernity and the way between the religion of modernity and giving importance to modernity.

Soroush has always tried to offer a new interpretation of Islam in the form of religious pluralism which can be called the intersection of modern and postmodern reason. This interpretation contrasts with traditional Islam. Influenced by mystical teachings and Western philosophy, Soroush proposes a formulation of religious pluralism; Religiosity is epistemology, subsistence thinking and experience thinking (Soroush, 2005: 89). According to Soroush, religion goes through three stages in order to change from a complete religion (which exists only with God) to a worldly understanding of religion. An important difference must be made at each stage: in the first stage, the Prophet must understand religion and speak in his own language (the difference between form and content). In the second stage, the situation and events of the time have influenced the development and birth of religion and in the third and final stage, human beings must understand and comprehend religious texts (difference between religion and religious understanding) (Soroush , 2009,: 5) Each of these stages transforms religion and makes it more humane and reduces its sanctity. In each of these stages, religion moves away from the perfect religion and gets closer to the present and existing religion. Soroush emphasizes that ordinary people cannot understand the perfect religion and

religion has no meaning without interpretation (Soroush, 2009: 5). According to Soroush, jurists should present new principles in accordance with the modern world and interpret the sub-principles based on past principles. He also acknowledges that jurisprudence has a socio-political nature and according to Ghazali, jurisprudence is only worldly (Soroush, 1999: 21-14).

Soroush claims in works such as the *Theoretical Contraction and Expansion of Religion and the Expansion of Prophetic Experience*, that all human knowledge and human inferences from religion are historical and subject to error. In a controversial interview, he said that the Qur'an is not only the product of the specific historical context in which it was formed, but also the "mind of the Prophet of Islam" and all his human limitations. He calls the role of the Prophet of Islam pivotal in the production of the Qur'an. (Soroush, 2009) According to Soroush, the most important message of the Qur'an is to liberate the intellect. The purpose is not political freedom, but the freedom of the intellect from mental illnesses such as arrogance, selfishness and the like. A human being who has such a free intellect can both think correctly and can act as a free human being in society (Soroush, 2007: 45).

Soroush mentions two types of concepts for the intellect; one is the intellect as the purpose and the other as the way. The former sees reason as a repository of truths and believe that its job is to store and maintain truths, full of truths and free from falsehoods, and the other sees the intellect as a moving who, in every way of truth-seeking, crosses dangerous and rightly paths. (Rocher, 1996: 100)

Soroush accepts the second meaning of rationality that result to the secularization of ideas and motives in the individual field and liberal democracy in the political field and progress in social development (Freund, 2009: 31). According to Soroush, the Sealing the Legislative Prophethood

means accepting the independence of rationality and human method from revelation in advancing the socio-economic and political affairs of society. So, the scope of revelation is limited to the private sphere, which every religious person must deal with independently. The task of religion is not to make the human world better, but to address the Hereafter and strengthen man's relationship with God.

In another category, Soroush divides reason into two meanings, "reasoning power" and "content of this power", the first of which is merely the ability to measure, and the second, which is called rationality, is divided into two types of minimum and maximum rationality. He himself believes in minimal rationality and defines it as follows: "Minimal rationality means that every word that is said, all its parts should not be contradictory and paradoxical, but should form a system of harmony." That is why he considers mysticism rational (Soroush, 2003). The thoughts of Soroush and other religious reformers were directly related to the political project of reform, and the two influenced each other. It was after the theoretical and practical failure of the reform project that Soroush moved into the world of mysticism, which was a non-social, individual project, and at most a special group. Soroush's ideas were interesting for a part of the Iranian society, but today the presentation of the ideas of religious neo-thinkers in the society was limited and almost limited to the experts and a small group that follow the jurisprudential and mystical issues. In general, the narration of Soroush's rational thought has gone through historical paths and breaks in this way. Soroush discourse has played a major role in creating the cultural and political identity of a range of Iranians in the 1990s. This discourse largely precluded the possibility of returning or passing the modernity in social theory and political practice, so much so that his intellectual opponents and theoretical critics sought to

critique the teachings and his theoretical achievements before seeking a theoretical invention or a positive explanation of their theory. As a result, Soroush's intellectual role model was able to cross the subconscious level of society and achieve the unconscious collective identity of his followers through the production of epistemological and theological products that are widely used and mixed with modern concepts. At the same time, the dominance of this approach was challenged to a large extent with the decline of the resulting political movement, and the appetite of its audience and critics was slowed down by political deadlocks. Soroush's discourse faced a serious crisis due to globalization and the decline of the transcendental status and identity of the modern state. (Pour saeid, 2004: 115-87)

Another thinker is Mustafa Malekian, who is influenced by postmodern teachings and is a critic of religious intellectuals. The theory of rationality and spirituality is his important project. According to him, human civilizations have always failed to strike a balance between rationality and spirituality, and have often sacrificed one for the other. He has put an end to the imbalance between rationality and spirituality by prioritizing rationality in evaluating religious propositions (Diba, 2008: 90).

In his intellectual transformations, Malekian went beyond fundamentalism, traditionalism, modernism, and existentialism and reached the project of rationality and spirituality. In this project, rationality consists of three parts:

1- **Theoretical Rationality:** To make our adherence to an opinion commensurate with the amount of evidence and reasons that support that opinion. The sources of this rationality; It is the senses, memory, testimony, intuition, reasoning, and intellect that provide the first five sources of raw

materials for the sixth source to arrive at by analyzing and combining new knowledge

2- **Practical Rationality**: adapting the means to the goals

3- **Speech Rationality**: Our words must be free of ambiguity (Malekian, 2013: 56). The definition of rationality, in his view, is to follow reason and not to fall short of it in any area of life. While he considers worship as a pillar of religiosity that is not compatible with rationality, ie with self-thinking, judgment and independence (Malekian, 2006: 13). The spiritual part of Malekian theory is rooted in rationality. Because spirituality in his view is the commitment to rationality achieved for the person in the position of action (Malekian, 1998: 26-28) Malekian takes spirituality in the sense of rational religion and in a better sense, rational religion is based on an understanding of religion that is both right and expedient (Malekian, 2001: 28). According to Malekian, in this project, rationality not only precedes spirituality, but also spirituality comes out of the heart of rationality. In fact, the end of rationality reaches spirituality, and this is what faith means (Malekian, 2006: 13).

Malekian considers the society's need for modernity necessary. Therefore, he considers the combination of rationality and spirituality created by the combination of modernism and religion as a way to reduce human suffering and states that criticizing it along with increasing pain and suffering (Malekian, 1998: 18-26) Therefore, his goals from this first plan are to save human beings, not abstract matters such as culture and civilization, and secondly, to confront human beings with the truth as much as possible; Third, the reduction of human suffering; Fourth, increasing human tendency to goodness and charity (Malekian, 2010: 26-18) Malekian believes that the biggest problem of a society is culture and society and not the political regime that governs that society. The political regime that rules society, which is the

fruit of the tree of culture; it is degenerate when culture is degenerate. Malekian refers to the culture within human beings (Malekian, 2010: 56-51). The feeling of incompatibility in religious beliefs with new scientific and philosophical achievements caused him to propose the theory of secular spirituality. Because in his view, the consistency and theme of religious beliefs is not rationality, but worship. Religious people have accepted their beliefs not for rational reasons but only by following the religious leaders and the Prophet (Sobout, 2019). The evolution of intellectual and political and social conditions in Iran after the revolution shows how, despite Malekian's emphasis in recent years on the originality and importance of human insides, how the political and social conditions of a seeker interested in traditionalist tendencies to individualistic thinking and originality think culture changes. Changing the position and the audience along with the general approaches of the theory of rationality and spirituality to the originality of culture, with the interpretation that Malikians offer of culture and the emergence of new Malekian, that has turned its attention to more general issues of ethics and psychology.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, rationality as the main feature of man has been considered by all thinkers and everyone recognizes it as the most important topic in the history of human thought. Recognizing the evolution of the concept of reason reinforces the hypothesis that in the conflict between reason, religion, and modernity, in the minds of some Muslim thinkers, it has been used as a tool to present a new reading of religion. In Malekian thought, the project of rationality and spirituality was created in this direction and in continuation of Western spiritualism to fill the gap caused by modernism. The aim of this theory is to reduce human suffering, which can only be achieved by combining

rationality and spirituality, which is created from a combination of modernism and religion (personalized religion, not traditional). This theory focuses on the inevitable components of modernity and confronts traditional religion, and while comparing these components with the main features of traditional religion, it rules the conflict between the two and does not consider the traditional understanding of religion in the modern world to be effective. On the positive side, this theory introduces a new understanding of religion that is compatible with the components of modernity. In Malekian and Soroush's thought, their main intellectual challenge has been the two issues of reflection in the Western philosophical system and the second has been re-reading and criticizing religious principles, so the epistemological foundations and philosophical claims of these two thinkers are constantly changing and up to that end, their theoretical foundations may be constantly evolving. Malekian and Soroush have focused on rationality either merely as a subset of the larger debate in philosophical and religious thought, or on wisdom and knowledge and the power that has been the normative and conscientious application. Therefore, less attention has been paid to this concept as an independent idea and concept.

References

- Abbasloo, Ehsan (2012), "Poststructuralism", *Ketabe mah*, No.71.
- Alam al-Huda, Jamileh (2012), " The Necessity to Redefine the Role of Intellect in Transforming the Education System, *Culture Strategy*, Vol.5, No. 17-18.
- Bahyan, Shapoor (2010), *Michel Foucault Methodology*, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 4, No. 8.
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1990)." *Philosophical Affinities of Postmodern Sociology*, *Sociological Review*. No, 38.
- Bennett, D. (2009). *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Benton, Ted (1997). *Philosophical Foundations of the three sociologies*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Bukharaei, Parsania, Abdolkarimi (2017), *Political Philosophy Meeting, Religious Philosophy, Conflict or Agreement*, *Philosophy of Social Sciences Department*, *Iranian Sociological Association*.
- Craib, Ian (2003), *Classical Social Theory*, translated by Shahnaz Mesmiparast, Tehran: Agah Publishing.
- Diba, Hossein (2008), *Religious and seminary intellectualism: motivations and perspectives*, *Political Science*, Vol. 11, No. 44.
- Dreyfuss, Hubert and Paul Rabinow (2008): *Michel Foucault, beyond structuralism and Hermeneutics*, translated by Hossein Bashirieh, Tehra, Nashre Ney.
- Durant, Will (1988) *The Story of Civilization: The Life of Greece*, Tehran: Islamic Revolution Publishing and Education Organization.
- Ehsani, Asadullah, (2017). *The Roots of Habermas Communication Rationality*, *Afghanistan Newspaper*, Sunday, April 25.
- Fasihi, Amanullah (2005), *Secular and religious rationality*, *Political Science*, Vol.8, No. 32.
- Foucault Michel (2010) *The order of things; an archaeology of the human sciences*, Translated by Yahya Emami, Tehran: Research Institute for Cultural and Social Studies.

- Foucault, Michel (2009), Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, Translate by Afshin Jahandideh et al. Tehran: Hermes Publishing.
- Freund, July (2009) Max Weber, translated by Abdolhossein Nikgozar, Tehran: Raizen.
- Gadamer Hans, Georg (2005) The Beginning of Philosophy, translated by Ezatullah Fooladvand, Tehran: Hermes.
- Haghighat Seyed Sadegh, Norouzi Mohammad Hossein (2014), The position of "Truth" and "Rationality" in Michel Foucault Genealogy, Journal of Political Studies, Year 6, No. 23.
- Haghighat, Seyed Sadegh (2008), Methodology of Political Science, Qom: Mofid University Press.
- Hindess, Barry (2001), Discourses of power: from Hobbes to Foucault, translated by Mostafa Younesi, Tehran, Shirazeh Publications.
- jebraeili, Mohammad Safar, Saeed Mottaghifar (2014), Mohammad Arkoun and the Damage of Religious Reason, Kalam Islami, Vo. 23, No. 89.
- Kachoyan, Hossein (2003) Michel foucault and the archaeology of knowledge. Tehran: Tehran University Press.
- Kachoyan, Hossein, Zairi, Ghasem (2009), Ten Basic Methodological Steps in Genealogical Analysis of Culture; Special Reference to Michel Foucault, Cultural Strategy, Vol.2, No. 7.
- Khatami, Mahmoud (2012), Introduction to Contemporary Western Philosophy, Tehran: Nashre-Elm.
- Kramer, Joel (1996), Humanism in the renaissance of Islam: The cultural revival during the Buyid age. Translated by Mohammad Saeid Hanaei Kashani, Tehran: Nashre- Daneshgahi.
- Madadpour, Mohammad (2005) An Introduction to Contemporary Thought, Tehran: Surah Mehr.
- Malekian, Mostafa (1998), New Seminary and World, Holiness, Rationality, Scholarship, Raheno, No. 13.

- Malekian, Mostafa (2001), Spirituality, Rationality, Rational Religion, Tabarestan Weekly, No. 30.
- Malekian, Mostafa (2001), A Way to Liberate an Essay on Rationality and Spirituality, Tehran: Negahe Moaser.
- Malekian, Mostafa (2006) Adaptation of Spirituality and Management, Shargh Newspaper, August 16, No. 152.
- Malekian, Mostafa (2010) In Search of Rationality and Spirituality, Mehrnameh No. 3,
- Malekian, Mostafa (2010) Rationality and Spirituality after 10 Years, Mehrnameh, April 17, No. 3.
- Malekian, Mostafa (2013), "The Fifth Malekian", Zahra Soleimani, Mehrnameh, No. 32.
- Mardiha, Morteza (2001), Defending Rationality: The Priority of Reason over Religion, Politics and Culture, Tehran: Naghsh-o-Negar.
- Mesbahi Jamshid, Parasto et al. (2016), The State of Reason, Religion and Science in the Postmodern Age and Its Considerations in Spiritual Education with an Anthropological Approach, Scientific Journal of Islamic Education, Vol. 24, No. 33.
- Mohammadi Vakil Mina, Bolkhari Ghahi Hassan (2020), Studying the Quality of Transformation in God-Man Concept: From Western Greek Myths to Humanism, Bi-Quarterly Journal of Religious Human Research, Vol. 16, No. 42.
- Mohammadi, Seyed Mohammad (2007), Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity, Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Philosophical Letter, 59, Vol. 3, No. 1.
- Mojtahed Shabestari, Mohammad (2003), The Rationality of Critical Religion and Civic Rationality as a Tool in Civil Society and Religious Thought, Mohammad Reza Majidi, Ali Dejakam.
- Najafzadeh, Reza (2018), The Three Rationalities, and Creating the Alternative Desired Future for Islamic Civilization, Journal of Iran Future Studies, Vol.2, No.3.

- Popper Karl Raimund (2005), *The myth of the framework: in defence of science and rationality*, translated by Ali Paya, Tehran: Tarhenu.
- Pour saeid Farzad (2004), "Modern Religious Identity and the Incomplete Project of Intellectualism: A Reflection on the Viewpoint of Abdolkarim Sorosh on Identity", *Quarterly Journal of National Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2(18).
- Rocher, Guy (1996), *Introduction a la sociologie generale*, translated by Homa Zanjanzadeh, Tehran, Samt.
- Saei, Ali (2013), *The Rationality of Scientific Knowledge: Critical Methodology*, Tehran: Agah Publishing.
- Sajadi, Seyed Mehdi and Banahan, Maryam (2014). Evolution of reason through ancient Greece and middle ages and its educational implications, *Journal of Educational Sciences*, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, Vol.20, No.2.
- Sarup, Madan (2003) *An introductory guide to post -structuralism and postmodernism*, translated by Mohammad Reza Tajik. Tehran Nashre-Ney.
- Sobout, Morteza (2019) *A Critical Note on the Theory of Rationality and Spirituality* Mostafa Malekian, Mehr News Agency, February 17.
- Sorosh, Abdolkarim (1994) *Fatter than Ideology*, Serat Publications.
- Sorosh, Abdolkarim (1999), "Jurisprudence on the scales, some questions from Ayatollah Montazeri, *Kian*, No. 46.
- Sorosh, Abdolkarim (2003), *There is no religious or non-religious democracy*, *Baztabe Andisheh*, No. 45.
- Sorosh, Abdolkarim (2005), *A Face to Faceless Conversation between John Hick and Abdolkarim Sorosh*", No.2, *Abdolkarim Sorosh Website*.
- Sorosh, Abdolkarim (2007), *The Case of Revelation and Quran*, *Abdolkarim Sorosh Website*.
- Sorosh, Abdolkarim (2009) *Sorosh and his latest controversy*, *Aftab News Agency*, September 7.
- Sorosh, Abdolkarim (2009), *Theoretical Contraction and Expansion of Religion*, Tehran: Serat Cultural Institute.

Soroush, Abdolkarim, (2007) *The Message of the Quran, Liberating the Mind*, compiled by Matin Ghaffarian, Islah Information Center.

Zalizadeh Massoud, Cheraghi Esmail, Rezadoost Karim, (2015). "Analyzing Michel Foucault's Attitude towards the Humanities", *Knowledge Studies in Islamic University*, Vol.19, No. 2 (63).