

## Learning Religious Studies in the Context of a Smart City

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**Abstract:** Learning means accumulating, thinking, and applying knowledge, skills, and complex perspectives, and advancement of communication technologies in the late twentieth century was beginning of dramatic changes in all aspects of human life. One of the concepts that has changed due to technological advances in communication is the concept of city. These new technologies have allowed city to move beyond physical geography and its local ties and to enter in a new realm and geography. Accordingly, the city has gained this opportunity to become virtual or smart like other domains. The smart city is emerging as a new way to solve many educational problems. This article has done analyze of learning of religious knowledge in the context of the smart city through library and documentary based method. The achievements and results of this research include development of friendly environments, changing educational pattern, promoting quality of formal and informal education.

**Key words:** education; pattern; religion; smart city; learning

**JEL code:** I

### 1. Introduction

In general, education is one of the most important tools in development of human life, and one must be involved in education so that achieve educational goals throughout life. Education is a tool for humanity to benefit from religious knowledge in addition to adapting to the environment and living better. Today, traditional methods do not prepare people for their needed skills. With the advent of new technology, new ideas, tools, ideas and thoughts are emerging every day in various fields, and these methods are being published and used. Moreover, there are significant developments in the field of education and lifelong learning which are same informal educations, has known as an emerging theory in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and has gained a special importance.

### 2. Education

Education is a set of events that facilitate learning, and in regards to rapid technological changes in different dimension of life, human deals with large amount of the needed information in order to survive. Increasing information and since they are in line with large and rapid changes, have made information unstable. Thus. In case of absence of continuous learning and active adaptation of what they have learned to dynamic living conditions,

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there will be failure in updating data and information. Therefore, Islam emphasizes on lifelong participation of Muslim so that achieve to their Islamic identity. And this requires a lifelong learning process (Shakerin Shari & Jamaledin, 2012). Teaching and learning are divided into two types of formal and informal, and informal education which is known as lifelong learning is a new synonym for learning and is the achievement of the exponential growth of information (Brahami, 2007). Development of knowledge, skills, interests and learning opportunities in life will be preserved in the process of lifelong learning by individuals. This type of learning involves the process of learning from the cradle to the grave without imposing force and with individual's desire (Paterson, 2004) It which is known as boundless learning and information literacy (Brahami, 2007). The real nature of this type of education is training human to learn know his desires and thoughts and show them. Human is primitive existence who will be flourished only by benefiting from education which is in line with permanent and multi-dimensional learning (Ahmadi Tavana, 1392, p. 44). Therefore, lifelong learning will be presented as a set of guiding principles for developing educational institutions.

### 3. Religion

Religion which is known as ceremony and faith, in word means the way and method (Ragheb Isfahani, 1412 lunar, Vol. 1, p. 323), accordingly it can be interpreted as the way and method that human chooses for their lives. Moreover, religion is also a worldview and a set of beliefs that attempts to present an explanation for a range of questions that arise throughout human life, such as how things and animates came into being, possible quality of beginning and end of every things, and way of living. The word religion is one of the concepts that has always been among various opinions and ideas of experts and there is no common agreement about it, in a way that even some researchers do not consider it definable. Anyway religion can be defined as follows: Religion is a set (system) of harmonious and proportionate facts of intellectual systems (beliefs and studies), value system (laws and rules) and educational system (moral and social orders) which are deliver in realm of individual, social and historical dimensions on behalf of the God in order to care and guide human on path of divine growth and perfection. In other words, it is a set of beliefs, laws and regulations that both consider the intellectual principles of human and speaks about the principles of his inclination and covers his ethic and moral of his life (Tusi, 1987, p. 127). Various definitions of religion have been presented. For example, the great Islamic scholar and esteemed commentator of the Shia religion, Allameh Tabatabai, defines religion in this way.

1) Religion is composed of two foundations of belief and system which are systematic religious beliefs and also he defines religion as a system that contains divine laws that have been established to regulate and manage life of all human beings (Tabatabai, 1387, Vol. 2, p. 228; Tusi, 1366, p. 69).

Or some Western scholars have said: religion is belief in spiritual beings. Or others have said: religion is an integrated set of beliefs and practices related to the sacred things through which a group of people are related to the ultimate issues of human life. Others have said: religion is the belief in an eternal God. It means belief in this that divine government and will govern the world. And others write: The essence of religion is feeling of absolute dependence. However, each of the Islamic and Western scholars and religious scholars have tried to provide a complete definition of religion based on their attitudes and beliefs. For this reason, they have emphasized various aspects in the perception of religion. Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of religion according to the above explanations which are derived from the Qur'an is definition which is presented by the great Allama Hassanzadeh Amoli in a treatise which is called Science and Religion: Religion is the real plan and the real order that preserves

the human's limit and border and can achieve eternal happiness for him, and all its etiquettes and texts are pure knowledge and right action. Hence, compilation of such a program is made by no one but the creator of man. The hand and pen that wrote the evolutionary book of the system of existence of the universe and man in such a beautiful way that it cannot be imagined more beautifully. He has given a religion and rule to each part of its existence which there is no distortion, discrepancy, inadequacy and inadequacy in them even as much as a micron to achieve his ultimate goal and ultimate perfection. Every religion consists of at least two parts: 1) An opinion or beliefs that have a ruling on its basis and root. 2) Practical instructions that are appropriate to the ideological basis or foundations and arise from them. Therefore, it is quite appropriate to call the section of beliefs in any religion "principles" and the section of practical rules "sub-sections" of that religion.

#### **4. Smart City**

Smart city is a word from which different interpretations are presented. The following difference are in three of the existing definitions for smart city which the main points of which are as follows:

A) A smart city is formed based on the intelligent exchange of information among different systems.

B) A city is a smart city that guarantees permanent growth of high quality of life by investing in human and social capital, traditional and modern infrastructures of communication and information technology. This is not possible except with intelligent management.

C) A city that optimizes the efficiency and effectiveness of necessary processes, activities, and services, and a city that modifies its behavior in response to changes (Rastegari, Yousef, Hassan Haghghi and Seyedeh Zahra Sajjadi, Content Analysis with the Aim of Strategic Planning of Smart Tehran, Tehran, Shahid Beheshti University, 2015).

This term influences on all dimensions of personal to social life of nations based on the smart growth approach of developmental decisions in order to overcome lateral factors of development of smart growth strategies to help maintaining and developing healthy, safe, comfortable and attractive urban environments (Karadag, 2013).

#### **5. Learning**

E-learning is one of the types of online learning and has different meanings for different people that is done through the Internet and is defined by the following features: Including content related to the learning goal, using interactive methods such as examples and images to present text, Developing new knowledge and skills related to individual learning goals or related to improving organizational performance that includes several elements in definition, including e-learning courses that include content and training methods which help people to learn content. And these courses are done through computer and with the aim of achieving personal learning goals. Dividing learning into lifelong learning means continuous growth and improvement of knowledge and skills which are needed for personal employment and realization through formal and informal learning opportunities. So learning is a part of life that occurs anywhere and anytime.

Learning in different eras and over time has achieved definitions and become more complete and acceptable than before. In a way that advanced teaching methods have changed learning and there is no longer a need for physical presence in environments (Fatahnejad, 2007). These different definitions of learning do not indicate a lack of comprehensive and uniform definitions. Some believe that learning is a change that occurs as a result of

experiencing or training in living behavior. In this type of (lifelong) learning, a person is engaged in lifelong learning. In this learning, people continuously increase their knowledge, skills and interests in life. Informal or lifelong learning is a process of acquiring knowledge from cradle to grave without limiting it to a specific period of time or a specific school and organization (Richardson L. D. and Wolfe M., 2003).

Informal learning is about conscious and unconscious daily processes that lead to the acquisition of competencies. Informal learning occurs at individual and organizational levels, and this learning is more random and may not be recognizable by learner (Allandrin, 2010, p. 260). And this type of learning has characteristics includes being predominantly self-directed and guided by the learner. It means that the learner make his or her own learning activities and situations (Gibbles, 2010; Tannenbaum, 2010). Informal learning includes proceed and activity and the person actively performs an activity and they will be integrated with everyday life (Klaus, 2010; Marsik et al., 1999, 2010). This type of learning is stimulated by internal and external stimuli and is not consciously. In this type of learning. Learning management is the responsibility of the learner and the person learns how to learn.

Learning, responsibility and management of learning shall be borne by the learner and person will learn method of learning himself/herself.

Learning religious studies is a science that learner can learn to have a happy life.

1) What is the meaning of religious sciences and why should it be taught?

2) How important are these sciences and how many people and at what level should they study these sciences?

But the answer to the above questions will be as follows:

The science of religion refers to any knowledge that leads to a better and more accurate knowledge of religion. Some parts of this knowledge can be directly related to religious topics and are exclusively in the field of religion, such as the knowledge of interpretation which is directly related to the Qur'an, the book that is the most important source for the study of Islam. Sciences such as jurisprudence and theology can also be studied in this section. Another part that can be taught as the premise of religious knowledge are various disciplines of Arabic literature. Although it is not directly related to religious sources, but needed to better understand religious sources. although the benefit of learning such sciences is not exclusively for the knowledge of religion, but since the formal language of our religion is Arabic, anyone who decides to study and explore the religion of Islam will be obliged to learn such a part.

Of course, in different condition other fields and perhaps seemingly unrelated fields can be learned which are related to religious sciences (such as learning other languages or computer science by benefiting from them).

But why should we learn religious science?! It seems logical to answer this question when we consider the principle of our and society's need for religion matter as certain and then we have ambiguity in learning religious sciences. In other words, the need for religious sciences is a subset of the need for religion. If a person mistakenly believes that man does not need religion, it will be completely useless to talk to him about religious sciences, but the reasons for man's need for religion must be stated firstly for such a person.

But if a person considers the principle of religiosity necessary but doubts in the importance of learning the religious sciences, we ask him what will be the way of becoming religious if we want to be religious? How can we know religion and understand our ambiguities about different aspects of religion and find answers to our questions? And are there more than three ways in this regard?

A: Ourselves; we must be in touch with the unseen world like the Prophets and the Imams to receive our

answer directly from the God, or after proving their mission and Imamate with miracles and visions, making them our guide and adhering to whatever they command.

B: Or in any case have science without any background in studying and educating the science of religion; and considering our personal opinion correct or ask our questions of the first seemingly religious person we met; And without knowing the extent of his knowledge and accept his/her opinion which is not clear according to what style and framework it is expressed.

A: And finally, either we learn the science of religion ourselves and we can get the answer to our question by learning the ways of knowing religion, or we can ask people who have followed this path to find our ambiguity.

And there will be no fourth way.

Now we will analyze the above mentioned cases:

A: The first case can be the most accurate way, but with the end of the prophecy and the absence of the last Imam, such a possibility does not exist for us. By the way, we know that even during the life of such leaders, they did not have possibility to have direct contact with all its followers due to the lack of advanced means of communication and a large part of the propagation of the religion was carried out by persons who had already received the necessary training from these leaders. Even now, some people claim to have a direct relationship with God and the infallibles, but such a claim cannot be accepted due to lack of sufficient and necessary documents especially if people do not have the necessary religious knowledge and make such a claim the only way to attract their followers and their purposes!

B: If any fair person considers the second way, he will come to the conclusion that acting in such a way will end in nothing and any religion will be basically remain as a single religion, and each person will have a separate religion and it will be different from others and religious deviations as well as superstitions will spread in the society! The invalidity of such a method is so obvious that it needs no further argument.

A: Given that the first method is not possible and the second method leads to the destruction of the basis of religion, the only way that remains to receive religious concepts and issues is that learning the methods of exploiting and inferring them correctly using the experiences of past scientists according to the available sources; Such as Quran and Hadith. And in this way, we will preserve our religion and give it on to the next generations. There will be no fourth way and if you know any other way, please send it to us and it is appreciated. We will analyze it and let you know the result.

Given the important role that learning religious issues plays and passing them to others in protecting religion, the Holy Qur'an advises believers that even in times of war and jihad, a number of people stay in Medina to learn religious knowledge until after the return of their Mujahideen brothers to teach them what they have learned. However, this verse cannot indicate the exemption of a religious student from jihad, but according to Imam Baqir, it only observes the turn of individuals in sending to the fronts; That is at a time when jihadist forces are sufficient, but placing jihad and learning the religious sciences in one category separately will be sufficient for the importance of teaching such sciences and there will be no need for another reason.

Learning is either for practicing and performing duty of the learner or for teaching and educating others.

But learning to act and perform duty. In a general division, it should be divided into two categories:

The first category of rulings is related to all Muslims and has nothing to do with occupation, age and gender, but in the first place it applies to all obliges such as the rules of prayer, fasting, khums, etc.

The second category belongs to a certain stratum of society, so it is necessary only for the same stratum to learn it and not for the rest; Like merchants who trade rules for their business such as types of transactions, false

and correct transactions, types of options, right of termination, etc., or farmers who have to learn farming, masakat, etc., so, we see our scholars using verses and narrations says: It is obligatory for a person to learn the things that he often needs.

But about learning to educate others; It should be said that firstly: learning the sciences of religion is not exclusive and we do not consider the religious researcher to be limited to the students of the seminaries in which they are officially studying, but all religious people should meet the needs of the society without quitting their job and Learning about religion as much as they can.

Obviously, the type of education and the level of expertise of these people, depends on the amount of time and effort they put into it, in addition to innate talent. But given the spread of religious science, which naturally takes a lot of time to learn, people have to give up other affiliations and spend more time in this way. The number of these people and in which religious field they will study depend on the amount of society needs in relation to religious issues.

Second: Just as the principle of religion and being religious and belief in spirituality are necessary for human beings, so individuals must know the correct and accurate religion; They should be educated so that religion does not deviate from its true path and deals with deviations and superstitions, and this will justify the importance of learning religious sciences.

Finally, it should be noted that criticism and questions about the methods and types of sciences that are taught in this regard are not forbidden, for example, the question can be asked that whether a certain knowledge is considered as a religious science and does its teaching and education have any benefit or not? Or why more investment has been made in some fields related to religious sciences while the need of society for other religious fields is felt more? And should the method of propagating religion be limited to the old methods or should new methods also be tried?

Such criticisms have been voiced by religious scholars themselves, and many of them are initiating new methods of teaching and propagating religion.

But it should also be noted that criticism of anything must necessarily be accompanied by a practical proposal or a better method, otherwise it has weakened the old institutions with its criticism, while not replacing the new one with a better performance. We and such criticism cannot be considered constructive.

The Holy Qur'an considers education as one of the goals of the resurrection of the prophets, and says: God blessed the believers when He inspired a prophet among them to recite His revelations to them, and to purify them, and to teach them the Book and Wisdom, and of course "Before, they were clearly in error" (Al-Imran/164).

In another verse, in addition to teaching the Book and Wisdom, the teaching of "what they did not know" is also stated: As We sent a messenger among you from yourself to recite our verses to you and purify you and give you wisdom "Learn the book and wisdom and teach you what you did not know" (Al-Baqarah/151).

## 6. Conclusion

Learning based on formal and informal education has undeniable educational and moral features, but in the electronic course of formal education which is not about classrooms, boards, desks, etc., informal or lifelong learning of emergence and emergence and it is more and requires the development of friendly environments and patterns related to this change, and learning religious studies that require lifelong learning requires changes in the pattern that a person can easily Learn valuable religious sciences wherever he is, from home, offices and

organizations, and lifelong learning is in harmony with the characteristics of religious knowledge.

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