

A Model for Cultural Progress Based on the Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.)

Reza Morshedlo¹

1. Faculty Member, Department of Quranic and Hadith Sciences, Faculty of Theology, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. Email: rmorshedloo@um.ac.ir

Article info

Article type:

Research Article

Received:

2 November 2024

In Revised form:

23 November 2024

Accepted:

17 December 2024

Published:

20 December 2024



Abstract

Cultural progress, as a fundamental axis for societal excellence, requires a comprehensive and indigenous model aligned with religious values. This research aims to formulate a model for cultural progress based on the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.) using a descriptive-analytical method. The findings indicate that the proposed model, based on the conduct and statements of Imam Reza (A.S.), rests upon six key components. The first component is “Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil,” which, as a form of social oversight, provides the grounds for the reform and advancement of society. The second component is “Attention to the Family Institution,” which, centered on strengthening religious sentiment, attending to individual talents, and avoiding imposed education, plays the most fundamental role in nurturing the next generation. The third component is “Preventing Corruption and Immorality,” achieved through practical strategies such as timely marriage, promoting a culture of work and healthy recreation, and disseminating a culture of modesty and chastity. The fourth component is “Combating Consumerism and Extravagance,” which, by emphasizing contentment, prudent management of livelihood, responsibility, and optimal use of resources, leads to the preservation of national wealth. The fifth component is “Promoting Positive Ethical Traits,” a prime example of which is compassion as a factor for creating social unity and warding off calamities. Finally, the sixth component is “Expanding the Culture of Tolerance,” which, as a link between differences, provides the grounds for adapting to the plurality of opinions and attracting individuals towards Islamic teachings. The results of the research indicate that the establishment of this six-dimensional model not only lays the groundwork for cultural progress but also, by creating a healthy cultural foundation, guarantees the stability and dynamism of other social, economic, and political spheres.

Keywords: Culture, Progress, Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil, Family, Positive Ethical Traits, Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S).

Reference: Morshedlo, Reza. (2024). A Model for Cultural Progress Based on the Teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.). *Imam Reza (A.S.) and Contemporary Sciences*. 2(5). 128-166.

Publisher: Imam Reza (A.S.) International University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22034/ijs.2025.428178.1191>



1. Introduction

Cultural progress, as a fundamental axis for the elevation of society, requires an indigenous and comprehensive model that is aligned with religious values and the cultural context of the society. In the present era, imitating Western models of progress not only fails to meet the cultural needs of the Islamic-Iranian society but has, in numerous instances, led to identity and cultural conflicts. Therefore, formulating a model that is, on the one hand, rooted in authentic Islamic foundations and, on the other hand, possesses operational capability in various cultural fields has become a necessity. In this context, the teachings of Imam Reza (A.S.), as a concrete symbol of Islamic civilization and a model of monotheistic life, constitute a rich source for extracting such a model. This research, aiming to fill this theoretical gap and provide a systematic model for cultural progress, seeks to extract and explain the components of cultural progress from the conduct and statements of Imam Reza (A.S.).

2. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is the “Formulation of a Model for Cultural Progress Based on Razavi Teachings,” which includes the following:

- Explaining the theoretical foundations and identifying and extracting the key components of cultural progress from the conduct of Imam Reza (A.S.).
- Delineating the interconnected network of components and providing practical strategies for its realization in contemporary society.

3. Methodology

This research has been conducted using a “descriptive-analytical method” and by employing “thematic analysis” of religious texts. The research data were collected through a “library” method by deeply studying primary Shiite narrative sources (such as *Usūl al-Kāfī*, *‘Uyūn Akhbār al-Riḍā*, *Tuhaf al-‘Uqūl*, and *Biḥār al-Anwār*). In the analysis process, after conceptualizing the main keywords (Model, Progress, Razavi Culture), themes related to cultural progress were extracted from the texts, categorized, and organized into six key components. The validity of the analyses was ensured through continuous review and cross-referencing of the findings with the Holy Qur’an and other authoritative narrative sources.

4. Findings

The research findings indicate that the model of cultural progress based on Razavi teachings rests on six main components, each of which, while having relative independence, interacts and is organically linked with the others:

1. Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil: This religious obligation is analyzed as an “integrated monitoring system” that, by combining “inner control” (faith) and “outer supervision” (social responsibility), directs society towards self-reformation.

2. Family-Centricity: The family, as the central nucleus for nurturing the generation and transmitting values, through strengthening religious sentiment, indirect upbringing, and avoiding imposed education, lays the foundation for cultural progress.

3. Preventing Corruption and Immorality: Practical strategies such as “timely marriage,” “promoting a culture of work and wholesome recreation,” and “disseminating a culture of modesty and chastity” can dry up the breeding ground for corruption.

4. Combating Consumerism and Extravagance: Emphasis on “contentment,” “measuring livelihood,” “responsibility,” and “considering national wealth a trust” provides a model for optimal consumption and economic justice.

5. Promoting Positive Traits (Affection): Affection as a fundamental social value with divine origin fosters social unity, wards off calamities, and strengthens social capital.

6. Expanding the Culture of Tolerance: Tolerance as the “hallmark of social rationality” and a “political-civilizational strategy” is a tool for managing diversity, reducing tensions, and generating “soft power” to attract individuals towards Islamic culture.

5. Conclusion

This research, aiming to formulate a model of cultural progress based on Razavi teachings, identified six key components that, within an interconnected framework, provide a comprehensive structure for achieving a dynamic and exalted culture. These components are: “Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil” as an integrated monitoring system, “Family-Centricity” as the nucleus for nurturing the generation, “Preventing Corruption and Immorality” through preventive strategies, “Combating Consumerism and Extravagance” with an emphasis on contentment and responsibility, “Promoting Positive Traits,” especially affection, and “Expanding the

Culture of Tolerance” as the axis of social rationality. Each of these pillars plays a role not only in the cultural sphere but also in strengthening other social, economic, and political levels.

Based on the findings of this research, cultural progress in the Razavi model is considered a self-reliant process arising from the cultural context of Islamic society, which, by creating an organic link between different spheres, provides the necessary dynamism and stability for achieving a modern Islamic civilization. This model, by emphasizing the pivotal role of “inner control” and “outer supervision,” “indirect upbringing,” “resource management,” and “constructive interaction,” demonstrates that the realization of cultural progress requires a comprehensive and systematic transformation encompassing the smallest social unit (the family) to the largest governance structures.

In final summary, it can be claimed that the six-dimensional model extracted from the Razavi conduct is not only an indigenous and effective solution for the cultural progress of the Islamic-Iranian society but, by establishing a healthy and sustainable cultural foundation, will guarantee the elevation and balanced growth in all social, economic, and political spheres. This model is a fundamental step towards formulating a coherent theory for “cultural engineering” based on pure Islamic knowledge, capable of addressing the challenges facing contemporary society.

Suggestions

-Operational Suggestion: Policymakers and cultural institutions can use this model as a “roadmap” for designing macro-cultural programs, redefining the Iranian-Islamic lifestyle, and countering cultural invasion.

-Research Suggestion: Conducting field research to measure the degree of conformity of the current cultural situation of society with the components of this model, as well as designing executive protocols for each of the six components at the micro, meso, and macro levels, is recommended.

course, have played an unparalleled role in expanding Islamic civilization, fostering scientific development, and deepening the culture of Shi’ism in Iran, presenting an enduring model of the mutual influence between “thought” and “geography».

Conduct similar studies on the influence of the discourse of other Imams (A.S.) on urban and regional geography.

Utilize the model extracted from this research as a framework for contemporary cultural-environmental planning in Iran’s religious metropolises.

Research the role of the endowment (Waqf) institution as a sustainable tool in spatial development planning.

Keywords: Imam Reza (A.S.), Intellectual Discourse, Geography, Environmental Planning, Mashhad al-Reza, Endowments (Mawqūfāt).