

# Application of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in education

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## Abstract

Most philosophical counseling models are Western-based. However, Ali Safaei Haeri's model is assumed to be a religious model. This qualitative and analytical-descriptive study aimed to examine the applications of this model in education. Ali Safaei Haeri follows a self-refinement approach based on truth-centered self-transformation. His philosophical counseling model is part of his educational system. In this model, the evaluation, familiarization, and grounding process is followed by construction and the initiation of an intellectual flow by asking fundamental questions. He emphasizes the importance of contemplation, thinking, and reasoning. According to him, a counselor should engage in purification, education, and reminding. He also believes in rational education and free-spirited and logical thinking. Intellectual materials, thinking requirements, and the form of thinking are of great importance. If a person reaches true knowledge through correct thinking, their tendencies are also directed to a correct path. Paying attention to the client's moods and emotional signals is important in the counseling process. In religious education, truth-oriented self-transformation leads individuals to know themselves, the creation, and their role in the creation. If individuals consciously choose the path of truth, then they act according to their divine duty. Training a righteous and reformed person also affects the community.

**Keywords:** Education, Philosophical counseling, Islamic counseling, Safaei Haeri

## 1. Introduction

Philosophical counseling is a type of counseling that tries to understand and analyze an individual's worldview. Worldview is an individual's overall attitude toward life (Sharaf, 2021: 204). A person needs to know whether their self-knowledge is genuinely true or whether such self-knowledge has been influenced by the environment and others (Raabe, 2019).

Regarding the significance of philosophical counseling, many thinkers consider a wide range of mental and psychological diseases and discords to be the result of defects and inefficiency in the individual's belief and value system and believe that a philosophical focus on this system will contribute significantly to solving the emotional and psychological problems faced by individuals (Raabe; as cited in Sharaf, 2021: 207).

Also, for many philosophers, including Mulla Sadra, Suhrawardi, Zakaria Razi, Albercamo, Pirhadou, and some other contemporary thinkers, philosophy has been presented as a method and approach to life; who have paid attention to the practical aspects of philosophy in life and spiritual and philosophical exercises. (maftouni, 2017: 44)

From the perspective of philosophical counseling, the mind or soul is something distinct from the body and is the place where the individual's beliefs and values are formed (Sharaf, 2021: 204). In philosophical counseling, the client plays a fully active and conscious role in changing their worldview and beliefs (ibid.). Our understanding of the world will make our expectations of the world more realistic, and such realistic expectations reduce our suffering and bring us greater peace (Alavi, 2014b). In his book "A Philosophy of Boredom", Lars Svendsen (2015) writes that the crisis of the present century is the crisis of boredom, suffering, and sorrow. Suffering is not about not achieving one's desires, but rather the suffering of achieving desires and not being satisfied.

Accordingly, based on religious principles, human life is not limited to the material possibilities and limitations of this world. Thus, there is a need for a philosophical counseling model based on the principles of anthropology and religious ontology. A model that is effective for the true peace and happiness of man in both worlds. It seems that the models that have been presented in recent years have

been mostly developed based on the ideas presented by Western thinkers.

Since, according to Islamic teachings, the purpose of human creation is convergent, harmonious, and even identical to the purpose of his education (Alavi, 2014a), using the ideas of a religious scholar who is an expert in Islamic education and the philosophical and doctrinal foundations of human education could contribute to developing such a model.

Some philosophers, thinkers, and education professionals, including Ali Safaei Haeri, consider thinking to be the cornerstone of human education and growth (Safaei Haeri, 2007). He is known as one of the top Islamic education professionals and has written valuable philosophical books (Safaei Haeri, 2009a, 2009b, 2007d, 2004a). Ali Safaei Haeri's intellectual comprehensiveness and his possession of a coherent intellectual system are evident in his works.

Given the essentiality of philosophical counseling based on Islamic principles, we have recently conducted a study on Ali Safaei Haeri's works, focusing on Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in two recent articles (Mohammadabadi, Alavi, & Yari Dehnavi, 2024; Mohammadabadi, Alavi, & Yari Dehnavi, 2024, in press). The present study aimed to examine the application of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling approach and model in some areas of education: (1) rational education, (2) emotional education, (3) religious-moral education, and (4) social education.

## **2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

The history of philosophical dialogue and counseling goes back many years. For example, Prophet Abraham (AS) talked about the impermanent and destructible nature of the moon and the sun in a philosophical conversation with the people of that time (Shahabadi, 1981) and made them think about and understand the eternal essence of God (An'am: 78). Nahj al-Balagha of Imam Ali (AS) is also full of philosophical conversations and doctrinal and ideological questions. In addition, some traces of philosophical counseling can be observed in the Socratic dialogue and the methods of other philosophers and thinkers. In addition, in contemporary times, several theories have been proposed about philosophical counseling. Considering the infancy of philosophical counseling, there is still no precise separation of actions taken based on it (Ghaedi & Pooragha, 2021). However, in a relatively comprehensive summary in his book, Peter Raabe (2019) has discussed most of the methods and techniques used in philosophical counseling. An example is the 'beyond-method' method proposed by Achenbach (the founder of

the modern philosophical counseling movement). He is an advocate of an open-ended approach that involves continuous reinterpretation of oneself and the world. Achenbach considers any kind of discussion and dialogue to be philosophical counseling and does not even consider the goal-oriented approach to be correct (Achenbach; as cited in Peter Raabe, 2019). However, there are serious problems with his theory.

Nevertheless, according to Peter Raabe, the competency and authority of the counselor are very important, and almost none of the texts written on philosophical counseling have explained the deterrent and preventive power of philosophical counseling, while this feature is considered an important distinction between philosophical counseling and psychotherapy. Peter Raabe's four-stage model involves (1) free-floating, (2) solving the current problem, (3) teaching reasoning as an intentional (conscious) act, and (4) transcending the current problem (Raabe, 2019).

In addition to Peter Raabe's book, there are other books on philosophical counseling, including "Foundations of Philosophical Counseling" by Ghaedi and Pooragha (2021). After defining philosophy and analytical philosophy as well as philosophical counseling and counseling, this book discusses the goals of philosophical counseling, attitudes, methods, techniques, training required for philosophical counselors, some challenges, and also some practical aspects.

The book "Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy" (Cohen & Zinaich, translated by Farajipak & Fakhrai, 2021) presents some of the important approaches to philosophical counseling. The books "Philosophy for Counseling and Psychotherapy" (Howard, 2000; translated by Esmaili & Kiani Nejad, 2018) and "Wisdom Therapy" (Kordnoughabi, 2021) are other books related to philosophical counseling.

Although the book "Principles of Psychotherapy and Counseling with an Islamic Approach" (Janbozorgi & Gharavi, 2016) does not bear the term philosophical counseling in its title, it covers subjects such as anthropology, ontology, insight building, divine worldview, self-knowledge, and also wisdom that are related to philosophical counseling.

Some books can also contribute to expanding and developing some stages of philosophical counseling, including "Applied Logic" (Khandan, 2000), which practically teaches and introduces a large number of fallacies that are essential for clients in the conscious education stage.

Moreover, some articles published in Persian have addressed philosophical counseling: “Philosophical Counseling: a New Ground for Education and Research in Educational Fields (Ghaedi, 2017)”, “The Differences and Similarities of Philosophical Counseling with the Rational Emotional Approach of Ellis (Pooragha, Ghaedi, Pigleren, & Zarghami, 2017)”, “Question and its Place in Philosophical Counseling, a New Ground for Educational Research (Dibavajari, 2016)”, “Explaining the Necessity of Philosophical Counseling in Logotherapy (Sharaf, 2021)”, and “Educational Counseling through Philosophical Dialogue” (Dibavajari, 2015).

Furthermore, an article published in English, “What is Philosophical in Philosophical Counselling?” (Lahav, 1996), first provides a brief description of the nature of philosophical counseling, and then suggests that philosophical counseling can contribute to philosophical self-examination.

Louw (2021) seeks to resolve the definitional crisis for philosophical counseling. He proposes twelve conditions for philosophical counseling to remain within the realm of philosophy as an end in itself. Several approaches may be proposed for philosophical counseling, including the philosophical counseling method based on monism and nondualism in traditional and ancient Indian philosophical teachings with the idea of merging the individual with the planet (Bhagabati, 2021).

In answering the questions of what philosophical counseling is and how it differs from psychological counseling, and considering the different goals of philosophical counselors, Sivil and Clare (2018) attempted to classify philosophical counseling into four categories. The book “Philosophising the Dialogos Way towards Wisdom in Education: Between Critical Thinking and Spiritual Contemplation” takes an innovative approach to practical philosophy as a way to facilitate wisdom-centered education and provides examples of transformative group philosophical conversations (Helskog, 2019).

The book “Philosophical Assumptions of Psychotherapeutic Paradigms” addresses the common misconception that, in the minds of some professionals, psychotherapy belongs to a purely scientific field and has nothing to do with philosophy; whereas philosophical paradigms are sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit, but they are always present (Marica, 2015).

In an article titled “Philosophy Therapy Centers”, Mladin (2014) states that philosophical counseling can be an alternative to psychological therapeutic interventions such as CBT and, with the help of Socratic dialogue, etc., find a suitable philosophy for the

individual and help them rationally understand the world and practice philosophy in life.

Spiritual counseling (Sandua & Carasb, 2014) can also be related to philosophical counseling in that it does not consider salvation to be worldly, but rather considers the highest success to be sharing in the mystery of divinity; by changing the individual's worldview, it explains the ultimate goal of man based on Christian belief.

Furthermore, an article titled "Theory and Practice of Philosophical Counseling: A Comparative Approach", which deals with the basic principles, approaches, tendencies, and schools of philosophical practice, is a relatively comprehensive study to determine the role and place of philosophical counseling in modern culture (Valentinovich, 2018).

Most of the studies on philosophical counseling appear to have been conducted from the perspective of Western thinkers. Focusing on the works of Ali Safaei Haeri as an Islamic thinker, the present study aims to explain his approach and model and its applications in education.

### **2.1. A brief look at some of the approaches in philosophical counseling:**

Overall, there are two main approaches to philosophical counseling. The problem-solving approach, focuses mainly on solving the current problems faced by the clients, while the second approach is the refinement approach, which goes beyond solving current problems and deals with the worldview and philosophy of life of individuals (Lahav, 2020).

Lahav's self-transformation approach belongs to the second category (Lahav, 2021). He believes that through philosophical reflection, one can escape from the peripheral prison of thoughts and from one's own Plato's cave and connect with and cultivate one's inner dimension (Lahav, 2020).

Jopeling introduces the approach of authenticity of truth in philosophical counseling. He believes that the work of philosophical counseling is not limited to providing philosophical tools for clients' self-assessment. Because this may lead to confusion between self-knowledge and self-deception. In his opinion, truth is important in philosophical counseling and the counselor should guide clients to move on the path of accurate, defensible, guiding, and true self-understanding (Jopling, 1996).

Despite the opinion of Achenbach and Lahav, Jon Mills believes that philosophy cannot be separated from psychotherapy and that

philosophy itself is a psychological activity. In his opinion, different philosophical and psychological methods should be combined to treat different groups (Mills, 2021).

In his logic-based approach, Elliot D. Cohen (2021) helps clients to formalize arguments and avoid falling into fallacies. Shlomit S. Schuster, in her self-diagnostic approach, believes that the relationship between the philosopher and the client and their intellectual interactions are more important than making a diagnosis. With the help of a philosophical counselor, the client understands and receives what can be provisionally called “philosophical self-diagnosis” (Schuster, 2021: 153).

Tillmans believes that life is inherently problematic and that philosophy is not about solving life’s problems, and that life cannot be reduced to specific psychological, emotional, or intellectual issues. Instead, she emphasizes learning through conversation (Tillemans, 2021: 156). Brian T. Rutter, in his Emotional Life Clarification Approach, believes that people often experience emotions in their lives that they do not have a clear understanding of. Rutter discusses Rogers’s reflection of emotions and how reflection of emotions can clarify the client’s emotional life (Rutter, 2021).

## **2.2. Ali Safaei Haeri’s approach and model in philosophical counseling:**

Ali Safaei Haeri’s approach is a refinement approach based on truth-oriented self-transformation (Jopling, 1996) with free-spirited logical thinking. Thinking is the basis of human guidance. In his approach, an individual can achieve self-transformation and worldview reform based on truth through refined thinking (Mohammadabadi, Alavi, & Yari Dehnavi, 2024).

Safaei Haeri’s model also involves some stages, the main stage of which is construction. The stages of his model include: evaluation and identification, friendship and familiarity, attraction and intimacy, and grounding and construction. The construction stage is initiated by posing a question or grounding for the question to arise within the audience, and then includes teaching reflection, reasoning, and thinking, and also involves reminders and notices.

## **2.3. Research Methodology**

This basic and qualitative study was conducted using a theoretical approach. It also adopted a descriptive-analytical method in which the researcher describes specific cases as they are presented in books and writings and then analyzes them (Alavi, 2017).

The data in this study were collected using library techniques. By analyzing and summarizing the data, Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling approach and model were explained and then the applications of this model in various areas of education were examined. The data were collected from books, articles, websites, software, and paper and digital notes. The data were analyzed using classifications, inferences, analyses, and explanations.

## **2.4. Research questions**

Given that philosophical counseling helps individuals solve their mental, spiritual, and psychological problems by modifying their beliefs, values, and worldview systems, this type of counseling can be considered a type of educational activity whose main goal is to help clients freely modify their beliefs, values, and worldviews. Accordingly, the present study aims to examine the applications of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in various educational areas. *To this end*, the following questions are addressed in this study:

١. What are the applications of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in rational education?
٢. What are the applications of the mentioned model in emotional education?
٣. What are the applications of the mentioned model in religious-moral education?
٤. What are the applications of the mentioned model in social education?

## **3. Findings**

### **3.1. Application of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in rational education**

Given that knowledge and awareness lead to interests and tendencies, and tendencies, likes, and dislikes create behaviors, the key issue in education is knowledge (Alavi, 2014). In his philosophical counseling model based on religious and educational foundations, Ali Safaei Haeri considers thinking to be the cornerstone of human construction and believes that thinking leads a person to knowledge. A person begins to think by asking questions so that by asking basic questions, the person can come up with reliable knowledge. Safaei Haeri's model is based on a self-transformation approach, so a person must start growing from the inside and reach true knowledge through thinking, rather than having pieces of knowledge injected into him/her in a packaged form. Such knowledge will be permanent and fundamental. Thus, as the counseling process focuses on the power of reflection, thinking,

and reasoning, and since the techniques that develop things are taught by the counselor, this counseling process has direct implications for rational education.

Like the LBT approach in philosophical counseling (Cohen, 2020), Ali Safaei Haeri also emphasizes teaching the correct reasoning method so that the individual can correctly apply logic and the correct form of reasoning along with the intellectual materials and thinking requirements. Safaei Haeri reminds us that “It is true that philosophy is the mother of mysticism and science, but education is the core of philosophy, and the logic of philosophy is not epitomized in formal logic, and the method used to gain knowledge precedes knowledge itself; this method focuses on both thinking materials and forms and thinking requirements” (Safaei Haeri, 2006a: 13).

According to Safaei Haeri, the best method of education is to induce questions in the client’s mind. The client must be led over the bridge of doubt and skepticism and brought to certainty. The counselor must give the client a chance to think and then help him to find an answer to the problem step by step with the counselor’s hints. This technique allows the client to gain critical power and to be able to analyze the issues logically.

The client’s curiosity must be aroused, not suppressed. The power of criticism must not be taken away from the client, as if they think that a desired client for the counselor is someone who never objects and does not say anything against him/her. The client must be given the courage, opportunity, and possibility to express their judgment on the issues, not to analyze social issues according to the counselor’s preferences.

The counselor must sincerely explain to the client that the purpose is to discover the truth, even if it is for or against the counselor or client. The client’s opinion must be taken seriously, even if it is wrong so that they feel they have both the power to give an opinion and the right to do so. The client should not feel that the counselor is indifferent to their statements, actions, desires, and life.

The advisor should ask the client to ask him/her for arguments and proofs” (Safaei Haeri, 2007: 24-25). “There are two ways to stimulate the mind, which is the cornerstone of human growth and the first line of their education: one is argumentation and the other is asking well-informed questions. Arguments weigh heavily on the mind. One must do something to make the client find and grasp the arguments. Anyone with eyes can see, and one must remove the veils with well-defined questions to find the truth and see the beauties. The client himself/herself must reach the arguments, find them, recognize them, believe them, and move forward” (Ibid.: 33).

Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model seems to be effective in rational education, especially in the following areas:

- **Promoting philosophical thinking:** According to this model, the client gains the skill for analyzing fundamental and existential issues by facing fundamental questions, thinking about them, and learning the logical way of thinking.
- **Strengthening critical thinking:** This philosophical counseling model encourages clients to think freely about humans, existence, and the role of humans in existence by freeing themselves from prejudices, imitations, and intellectual deviations, and to criticize opposing ideas and achieve knowledge based on truth.
- **Improving decision-making:** According to this counseling model, the client can make the right decision by reflecting on suitable raw materials, thinking logically, and learning criteria for distinguishing right from wrong reasoning under suitable intellectual conditions with the help of the power of deduction, assessment, and perfectionism.
- **Enhancing problem-solving thinking:** According to Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model, the client learns that many of life's problems have fundamental roots and can find radical solutions to them. In addition, by practicing the power of thinking, the client can analyze and solve everyday challenges and problems of life.
- **Strengthening forward-looking and strategic thinking:** By learning the logical way of deliberation and inference and by comparing goals and finding the best way to achieve them, the client develops a discernment power that can, with proper planning, correct goal setting, and predicting future outcome based on current analyses, adopt a macro and truth-based strategy for their future life and prevent the waste of talents and infliction with future troubles.
- **Strengthening reciprocal thinking:** In a community with contradictory ideas, the client can understand and analyze opposing opinions and assess and compare them with their knowledge by listening to and analyzing different opinions and comparing them with their immediate knowledge acquired through an intellectual process.

### **3.2. Application of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in emotional education**

Given that knowledge creates emotional tendencies and inclinations, as implied by Ali Safaei's model, if we want feelings to be not superficial but deep-rooted, they must originate from true

knowledge. Superficial feelings and emotions are transient and pass just as quickly as they develop, but if love is developed from knowledge, it will be lasting and can contribute to constructing more stable behaviors (Safaei Haeri, 2006b: 34).

The heart is the source of feeling and movement, not just the means of awareness and knowledge. Thus, we cannot come up with artistic or emotional knowledge or a heartfelt path at the same time. There is an association between this source of feeling and the source of awareness in humans in such a way that when you recognize and choose the best option, this source of feeling gives you the power to move and propel you forward (Safaei Haeri, 2009a: 85). Moreover, according to Safaei Haeri's philosophical and educational counseling model, gaining awareness and establishing intimacy before construction and before reaching knowledge are of great importance. Establishing intimacy that occurs with some components, can emotionally contribute to better communication with the counselor and better use of the counselor's guidance. According to this religious model, reaching monotheistic knowledge and receiving God's love create faith and emotional relationships among people, people become eager for each other, and the grounds for perversion are eliminated (Safaei Haeri, 2004b: 90) In a faith-based community, if behaviors are committed based on knowledge, then whatever they are, they will be rational, emotional, and humane (Ibid.: 86)

Safaei Haeri suggests that the counselor should develop, prepare, and pose questions by knowing the spirits of each client. When a method is adopted based on this philosophical counseling model and in line with the client's mood and spirit, the cognitive and emotional impact of the adopted method will be significant (Safaei Haeri, 2007a). According to Safaei Haeri, meeting the client's emotional needs requires familiarity; and attention, admiration, praise, and complaints each has a limit and requires consultation and experience (Safaei Haeri, 2009c: 24)

He believes that knowledge and awareness should be induced in the client's brain and love and interest in the goal and path in their heart (Child Education: 72). When dealing with younger clients who sometimes display extremely maladjusted behavior with conflicting desires, the counselor needs to broaden their vision to the extent that their desires are not confined to limited interests, but rather to the infinite where there is no friction. The love of God should be induced in their inner character so that they can develop a sense of forgiveness and sacrifice for the sake of God and His love (Safaei Haeri, 2011).

Some of the factors contributing to the growth, inactivity, and moral decline of individuals (Safaei Haeri, 2011), are associated with the emotional aspect of human training and education. These factors provide a good means for philosophical consultation in the process of self-guidance of the client and their correct orientations. Counselors must reach a high degree of intimacy, faith, and honesty, such that they truly feel that the client is their child, their companion, and their confidant (Safaei Haeri, 2007e: 24-25). Overall, it seems Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model can contribute to the following areas of emotional education:

- **Promoting self-esteem:** The model in question places a great emphasis on personality and contributes significantly to strengthening self-esteem and a sense of self-worth in clients (Educational Research and Planning Organization, 2024).
- **Emotional flexibility:** When the client goes through an intellectual process and comes up with a true understanding of the world, he/she will perceive that material possessions are not the criterion for pride and that failures and successes are relative and transient and are measured by efforts and motivations. When the client understands the vastness and greatness of existence, then he/she does not lose hope when faced with adversity and hardship and finds the ability to recover and adapt to failures and emotional challenges.
- **Conflict resolution, effective communication, and empathy:** When a person truly understands themselves, creation, and their true role in existence, and when he/she sees the whole existence and others as connected working towards a sublime purpose, he/she seeks to improve loving and perhaps supportive and even empathetic relationships by understanding others, participating in their feelings, and helping to direct and guide others.
- **Ability to regulate emotions:** According to Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model, assessing a client's mood and providing effective counseling fitting their mood can help the client come up with a correct understanding and regulate their feelings and preferences. Thus, clients' feelings are controlled and managed in a logical, positive, and constructive way. A client who develops a correct understanding of their feelings and emotions is more likely to experience more logical emotions.
- **Stress control:** When a person recognizes the purpose of the creations and the criteria for true honor based on deep philosophical knowledge and takes steps on the path to eternal happiness, then he/she does not easily get stressed

by a few fleeting obstacles and adversities, and does not easily lose his/her emotional control with the superficial and short-term problems in this world.

- **Feeling useful and not feeling absurd:** According to Safaei Haeri's model, when a client develops a rudimental knowledge of his/her role in existence, he/she is no longer worried and takes steps toward achieving transcendent goals, and this movement on the superior path is soothing for the client and gives meaning to his/her life.

### **3.3. Application of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in religious-moral education**

This counseling model that highlights the significance of liberal and non-judgmental thinking helps people come up with true knowledge that results in religious and divine love and hate and behavior. A religion that is acquired based on refined thinking and true and monotheistic knowledge is valuable and lasting. Argumentative and monotheistic religion is different from an imperative and impetuous religion. When monotheism is deep-rooted and based on true knowledge, religious education will not be superficial, imperative, and impulsive, which will lose its mission with a slight change in circumstances (Safaei Haeri, 2006: 38). An emotional religion is an emotion without knowledge and action (Safaei Haeri, 2010: 190).

An important thing to note is that religion originates from thinking. The resulting insight that makes up a worldview, leads man to a set of beliefs, and it is these beliefs that can tolerate systems and rulings. Thinking about humans and the world and man's role in the world can reveal the great talents of man and specify the vastness of the path ahead of humans. When thinking about themselves, humans can recognize their convictions and the ruler. Thus, humans develop an interest in divine existence and fall in love with him. When, they understand their sheer poverty, helplessness, ignorance, and predicament, they begin to develop a sense of attachment to Him who is rich and their love and interest in God can pull them toward whatever they wish (Safaei Haeri, 2007: 11). When smaller love and restricted lovers have drawn a person to great deeds and the carvings in Bisotun,<sup>1</sup> how is it that his love does not contribute to performing greater deeds and lifting heavier burdens?

Safaei Haeri believes that the counselor should help the client remove the veil of ignorance and reach the truth by asking well-developed questions. This process helps the client to achieve a

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<sup>1</sup>A legend by the Persian poet Nezami narrates the story of a man named Farhad, who was a lover of Shirin. To be allowed to marry Shirin, Farhad had to carve stairs into the mountain which he did.

deeper understanding of religious and moral issues through logical reasoning and analysis (Ibid.: 24-25).

By contemplating on their talents, people can understand that their main task is not eating, sleeping, and doing pleasurable things, because meeting such basic needs does not require all these talents imbedded in human beings. Moreover, reaching a comfortable life does not need a huge bulk of capital and all these needs can be met just through individual and social instincts. Thus, the main task of a human being is movement and going. When engaged in moving forward, the world becomes a path for people and they should not make a detour on this path and should not become an obstacle on this path. Moreover, a measurement of the extent of human talents will reveal the length of the path. Human talents show the path that should be traveled by them. Such a worldview and insight demonstrate the role of man in the creation. Taking this endless and vast world as a path, the man's job is moving across along this path. Thus, the man's role in the creation is to employ the laws imposed on the creation and align them with the movement toward growth. When a person sees this endless work, he/she will no longer wish to remain at one stage. When he/she sees his/her vastness, he/she will no longer be satisfied with small achievements. When a man sees the world as a path, not a destination, he/she will no longer remain on the path.

A person who, based on his knowledge, develops a love for work and moves, his first task is to build himself because as long as self-building is not completed, building others is not possible. Self-building is also possible when a person finds the courage to self-immolate and burn the dirt and impurities of his existence to find a new birth.

Alas, sometimes a person perfumes himself before cleansing himself of impurities and pretends to be a different person. When a person has not yet built himself and has not been freed, how can he free others? As long as a person is a slave to someone other than Him, he cannot bear the burden of God's mission. Thus, he must be freed from the rule of anyone other than Allah. In other words, man must first attain freedom; freedom from himself and others, and even freedom from freedom. If a man does not become a servant of the perfect, faultless, and unlimited God, his freedom is changing bondage at every moment on something chosen either with his limited intellect, his desires, or others' statements.

Hence, a man must first go through the stages of self-development that involve "self-knowledge (paying attention to himself), purification, discovering weaknesses and overcoming them,

discovering talents and strengths, and strengthening them to initiate an inner revolution” (ibid.: 11-14). “Who can control all his actions? The one who is a believer, because when a man sees the creation as a harmonious and unified entity and sees that no movement takes place in existence accidentally, he, who is part of this complex and turns towards the One God, cannot move aimlessly. A believer plans for every move and does not take a step without a purpose. Everything he does is in line with a single origin” (ibid.: 14-15). Overall, Ali Safaei Haeri’s philosophical counseling model has some implications for religious and moral education as detailed below:

- **Recognizing religious and ideological foundations:** According to Safaei Haeri’s model, self-transformation and perceiving the truth of the divine worldview significantly contribute to understanding religious beliefs and their permanence, as well as their connection with daily life and their impact on human tendencies and behaviors.
- **Ethical values:** When the philosophy of life and values are reformed, then accepting moral values such as honesty, justice, and compassion becomes easily possible for humans by reaching true knowledge.
- **Ethical behaviors:** Acquiring knowledge and reforming the system of beliefs and values helps in developing behaviors that are consistent with religious and moral principles and values.
- **Piety and abstinence:** Promoting the spirit of piety and restraint in individual and social life is one of the outcomes of valuable religious beliefs. When beliefs are well-established within individuals, they are effective in correcting and controlling behavior because avoiding evils is in line with the ultimate goal of man; a goal that has been discovered through philosophical reflection.
- **Worship and servitude:** Practicing and strengthening acts of worship and servitude to God are among the requirements for moving on the true path and reaching the ultimate goal. The model in question gives direction to acts of worship and provides some recommendations for worship exercises step by step.
- **The role of religion in life:** Someone who has come to the belief that religion is a human necessity without coercion or indoctrination and with inner development, understands that religion plays a primary but not a secondary role in guiding life and making moral decisions.
- **Respect for others, responsibility, and promotion of social behavior:** The purpose of creation determines the

direction of human movement and responsibility, regulates human relations with the entire existence and beings, and prescribes social behavior that is consistent with moral and religious principles.

- **Religious and ethical reflections:** Reflection and analysis of moral and religious issues to achieve a deeper understanding is essential for people who reach truths through philosophical thinking and reflection, because they have learned not to accept anything easily through indoctrination and imitation, without thinking, and with their eyes closed.

### **3.4. Application of Ali Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model in social education**

Following Ali Safaei Haeri's counseling model, a person can reach a deep understanding of himself, the creation, and his role in creation through thinking and self-transformation, then his goals and direction of movement lead to development and growth. His goal is not only the development of talents but also the direction of the developed talents.

For this transcendent movement, man has needs related to himself, others, the environment, and the community, and to meet these needs, his social talents are developed. Concerning others, he needs to identify, train, and organize forces and elements, etc., and he must start from a good starting point. Humans are also struggling with conflicts and contradictions in their association with the environment and to resolve them, they need some degree of self-transformation so that they can even benefit from the conflicts when moving towards their goals. A man who has discovered the necessity of movement and complex connections in the creation and the composition of his great talents does not stop, he moves towards his unlimited goal (Safaei Haeri, 2007b: 10-20)

According to Safaei Haeri, acquiring knowledge through thinking and making decisions based on the power of reasoning and assessment takes precedence over all issues, including social issues. In fact, with this insight, man develops a comprehensive plan about his role, and any of his actions and social relations will be unveiled (Safaei Haeri, 2007c: 25). "How did prophets guide the illiterate people by asking questions, leading them to reflect, remember, and reason, and how did they lead them to freedom and liberation by making them aware of their worth and value, and how did they turn them into worthy people through education, purification, and remembrance, and how did prophets develop educational, moral, social, political, economic, and legal systems by focusing on the

foundations and purposes and by using knowledge and beliefs, and how prophets inform people of the form, method, and procedure of action along with the responsive system, foundations, purposes, and requirements” (Ibid.: 164). The educational, moral, social, and governmental systems are placed one after the other in descending order (Safaei Haeri, 1386b: 150). The educational system, that is, education based on knowledge, thinking, and reason, precedes moral and social education and paves the way for them. The community will develop if the members are educated based on sound knowledge and through refined and fundamental paths of philosophical thinking. The effectiveness of Ali Safaei Haeri’s philosophical counseling model in social education can be summarized as follows:

- **Social responsibility:** When a person comes to the realization that he lives in a rule-governed and connected world and his worldview is corrected, then he cannot be aloof and bury his head in the sand (Safaei Haeri, 2007: 122).

**Social services:** Participation in voluntary services and activities to help others. In a social system that is formed based on the purpose and the role of man in creation, humans choose their jobs and roles based on this common goal and provide services to each other (Safaei Haeri, 2007: 127).

**Social leadership:** The ability to lead and manage social groups and organizations. According to Safaei Haeri's intellectual model, education is an important factor affecting the social domain, as he believes that “we need to educate and organize our skills and forces when interacting with others” (Safaei Haeri, 2007: 11). Hence, a person who develops his personality based on these ideas will acquire the ability to lead, manage, and organize other people and groups. In such societies that have a common goal but different tasks, leadership becomes necessary. Of course, in such a society, the ruler himself is the educator of humans (Ibid.: 130).

**Social justice:** Efforts to establish social justice and reduce inequalities are taken based on the goal of divine man, which is the same goal pursued by the prophets to establish justice for people (Safaei Haeri, 2007b).

**Developing interpersonal relationships and communication skills:** The ability to communicate effectively with others involves the skills of listening, speaking, and interpreting non-verbal signs. These skills are developed and promoted according to the necessities because when a person understands the necessity of

communication, guidance, and solving people's problems, he does not remain static.

**Collaboration and teamwork:** The ability to cooperate with others and work in groups to achieve common sublime goals.

**Conflict resolution:** The skills of managing and resolving conflicts in a way that maintains effective and constructive relationships.

**Submissiveness and tolerance:** Since all people are created by God, they should be cherished and respected. Thus, acceptance, tolerance, and a sense of responsibility for guiding others are essential.

#### 4. Conclusion

Considering that Ali Safaei Haeri's approach is a self-refinement approach based on truth-centered self-transformation by logical thinking. His philosophical counseling model focuses on the initial stages of counseling based on evaluation, identification, and grounding followed by thinking in the construction stage. Safaei Haeri believes that the counselor should make the client think by inducing questions in his/her mind and then help the client through the flow of thought to find the truth with timely guidance. However, the client's thinking must be purified from deviations to pave the way for logical thinking. Thinking must begin with direct and immediate knowledge and then lead to a more perfect understanding of man and creation and the role of man in the creation.

If philosophical counseling is provided based on this model, rational education can be efficiently provided in various fields because this model is principally based on logical thinking and knowledge. Since knowledge directs human tendencies and preferences, in the next step, after the client acquires true knowledge, his interests and preferences are also modified and redirected to a sublime path. Of course, according to this model, the counselor must be able to make decisions for counseling by recognizing different spirits fitting clients' moods and emotions. In addition, during the counseling process, the counselor must be aware of the factors contributing to the growth, inactivity, and moral decline of clients so that he can go through the counseling process by examining the client's signs in line with the client's spirit.

Since Safaei considers the goal of education to be the same as the goal pursued by the prophets, his model focuses on religious and moral education. By carefully examining his educational system, we find that his philosophical counseling model is a part of his

education and training system, and its goal is the same as the goal of education. Thus, if this counseling process is carried out correctly and the client reaches true knowledge and makes choices based on correct knowledge, then he will take action to fulfill his divine duty. The knowledge that is acquired in this process will be very deep and lasting and will not be superficial and fleeting.

Concerning social education, Safaei Haeri believes that the educational system takes precedence over other systems. As a result, when philosophical counseling is provided efficiently and the client is freed from confusion and achieves a divine and correct worldview, then he considers his duty to move in a superior direction. Thus, the client cannot be aloof to others and thus is encouraged to take on individual and social responsibilities. When an individual becomes righteous, the community is also reformed, because when an individual knows himself, the creation, and God, and understands the complex relationships with all of existence, then he feels responsible for all of existence, others, and the community and begins his social movement.

The philosophical counseling approach and the implementation and stages of Safaei Haeri's philosophical counseling model have been described in previous research (Mohammadabadi, Alavi, Yari Dehnavi, 2024).

If the stages of this model, which include identification, familiarity, intimacy, grounding, and most importantly, construction, are well followed in the case of individuals and clients, its impact in the areas of education will be significant.

Consequently, it can be argued that Safaei's philosophical counseling model, as a key part of his educational system, is very effective in all educational fields, bringing about profound and lasting outcomes based on a deep understanding of man and creation. Some models may be effective in different areas, but their effect is fleeting. However, Safaei Haeri's model with its special characteristics that are based on rational knowledge and self-transformation will have lasting effects.

As a suggestion, this multi-stage model can be implemented in counseling centers and various training centers individually and sometimes in groups and its effect can be observed and examined in practice. Although parts of this model, as a subset of his educational model, may have been used in educational centers to some extent.

However, as a coherent model of philosophical counseling, it is better to use it in counseling centers and help clients achieve thinking-based cognition.

Overall, it seems that this counseling model, which is based on refined logical thinking, is relatively comprehensive compared to some philosophical counseling models, so that in addition to identifying and providing appropriate contexts for clients, it leads them to true self-transformation by asking fundamental questions and thinking and analyzing them. This self-transformation is effective and constructive in various areas and even leads clients to think about their own growth and even impact on society.

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