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Ali Şafāei Hāeri's Approach to Philosophical Counseling

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ARTICLE INFO		ABSTRACT
Article History: Received: 29 October 2023 Revised: 20 December 2023 Accepted: 25 January 2024	SUBJECT & OBJECTIVES: This study discusses some main approaches in philosophical counseling and explains Ali Şafāei Hāeri's approach based on his works.	
Key Words: <i>Truth-Oriented</i> <i>Self-Transformation</i> <i>Counseling</i> <i>Philosophical Counseling</i> <i>Şafāei Hāeri</i>	METHOD & FINDING: This fundamental and qualitative study adopted a theoretical descriptive-analytical method. Ali Şafāei Hāeri's approach can be called a truth-oriented self-transformation approach based on logical and refined thinking. The difference between his approach and others is that he draws a coherent thought system in which each sub-approach has a specific place. Moreover, he does not consider human life confined to short-term material life.	
DOI: 10.22034/imjpl.2024.9505	CONCLUSION: In his approach, thinking should be freed from deviations, and human knowledge should start from immediate perceptions by raising fundamental questions. In the right raw materials, deliberation is done, the power of thought makes conclusions, and the results are compared with the power of reasoning and emulation. The power of perfectionism determines the best goals and the best way to reach them while man chooses with his own free will. Using these cognitions, man reaches the correct worldview and understanding based on the truth about human beings, existence, creator, purpose, and role of humans. These bits of knowledge are developed through reminders and exercises, and the philosophical advisor plays his role in all these stages.	
		
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Introduction

Throughout history and thousands of years ago, many thinkers, including prophets (*The Qur'an, 5:76*), philosophers, and some thinkers, have used philosophical thinking to answer the most fundamental human questions, solve life problems, and guide people. The movement of philosophical practice was founded in Germany in the early 1980s by *Gerd Achenbach*. Indeed, he was the first to establish an association with the same name for this activity and considered it a separate field (*Lahav, 2021*). According to some scholars, this movement is rooted in the Socratic tradition (*Nagaraj, 2022*).

Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

Currently, helping people to examine their lives and to understand how their manner of living is good is considered a kind of philosophical counseling (*Raabe, 2001*). Philosophical counseling is a type of counseling that makes a person's worldview understood, criticized, and examined. A worldview is a person's general attitude toward life (*Sharaf, 2021*). In the past several decades, philosophers have turned to

using philosophical counseling methods for everyday problems and troubles such as decision-making, interpersonal conflicts, job dissatisfaction, the search for meaning, etc (*Lahav, 1993*). Now, some believe that counseling has become the most widespread cultural trend at the turn of the new millennium (*Frunza, 2022*).

According to *Shlomit Schuster*, philosophers do not use therapeutic methods and do not diagnose. The philosophical practitioner initiates a didactic philosophical process in their interlocutor, enabling the interlocutor to become an authentic thinker and ultimately arrive at philosophical answers themselves (*Schuster, 1991*).

Ran Lahav also believes that what makes philosophical counseling philosophical is that it helps the counselee in philosophical self-explorations (*Lahav, 1996*).

In the field of philosophical counseling, there are various approaches, most of which are based on the philosophy and worldview of Western thinkers.

However, since anthropology is based on the divine worldview and the Islamic worldview, there is a comprehensive approach to man, and man is not limited to a material and short life in this world, we were interested in extracting the approach followed by an expert thinker in the field of Islamic instructions about philosophical counseling and developing a model of philosophical counseling based on it.

As an Islamic thinker, *Ali Şafāei Hāeri* has many works in the fields of philosophy, Islamic education, family (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2009*), and other fields related to philosophical counseling. Among Islamic thinkers, *Ali Şafāei Hāeri* is known as one of the best experts in Islamic education. In addition, he has written valuable philosophical books such as critical books including the criticism of schools of philosophy, the ideal evolution, existentialism (*Ibid, 2019a*), the criticism of the ideal evolution, Marxism (*Ibid, 2019b*), a critique of the philosophy of religion, God in philosophy, the

hermeneutics of the Qur'an and the tradition (*Ibid, 2004*), and many other books.

Research Method

This fundamental and qualitative study adopted a theoretical descriptive-analytical method. In a descriptive-analytical study, the researcher describes issues as they are presented in books and writings and at the same time analyzes the issues based on his/her scientific ability (*Alavi, 2017*).

The data in this study were collected using library techniques and a review of books, articles, software, and websites. The collected data were analyzed through categorization, analysis, inferences, and explanation.

Main Approaches to Philosophical Counseling

1. A General Classification

According to *Ran Lahav*, there are two dominant approaches to philosophical counseling, namely critical thinking (problem-solving) and refinement. Most of the philosophical counseling perspectives fall under these two categories.

A more common approach in the philosophical practice of the world is the critical thinking approach. The main idea behind this approach is that philosophy is a critical examination of fundamental issues. It is possible to use this thinking tool to help clients analyze and solve their life problems, behavior, beliefs, and emotions (*Lahav, 2021: 100*).

The most popular function of critical thinking is problem-solving, which refers to helping clients define and solve their problems in life. Thus, this subset of critical thinking can be called a problem-solving approach to philosophical counseling (*Ibid*).

Another group of thinkers believes that philosophical thinking can be used to enrich and deepen our lives. In this approach, philosophical counseling is considered not an attempt to solve personal problems but a journey to gain wisdom and obtain more meaning.

Counseling in this approach is a continuous process and counseling does not end after

solving the client's problems. This approach to philosophical counseling can be called the refinement approach. (*Ibid, 102*)

2. Philosophical Counseling and Self-Transformation

Ran Lahav believes that his approach to philosophical counseling (self-transformation) belongs to the second group, i.e. the refinement approach (*Ibid, 103*).

Lahav believes that one of the main ways to do this is through philosophical reflection. Philosophical reflection is a free-thinking and unrestricted exploration of the root of the basic issues of life without considering pre-accepted assumptions (*Ibid*).

Ran Lahav believes that philosophical exercises can connect us to the guiding principle within us and allow us to be wise and peaceful people who are actually in harmony with the universe (*Ibid: 104*).

We usually follow fixed, automatic, and superficial emotional patterns in our lives. *Lahav* calls this form of life a limited, dry, and superficial set

around the person. Like the allegory of *Plato's* cave, the prisoners do not realize that they are confined to a small part of their lives (*Lahav, 2021: 105*).

Lahav calls the person's understanding of life, the person's surrounding world or "worldview" for short. A worldview is the implicit "philosophy of life" of every person.

According to transformative philosophers, self-transformation is the same as going beyond one's surroundings or coming out of *Plato's* cave and communicating with the inner dimension and cultivating it (*Ibid, 2016*).

3. Truth Versus Self-Interpretation (David A. Jopling): Originality of Truth in Philosophical Counseling

Ran Lahav and others claim that clients' ways of answering basic questions cannot be evaluated by the counselor at their face value, but only to find out whether they reflect the client's independent choice of self-expression.

Jopling argues that this view makes the distinction between self-knowledge and self-deception

problematic. When clients are given interpretative and normative authority, and when personal, pragmatic, and aesthetic considerations take precedence over truth value, then clients often tend to provide the most convenient moral interpretation that fits their current needs. *Jopling* defends the view that "truth" is important in philosophical counseling. Philosophical counselors, then, bear an important burden of responsibility to help their clients achieve accurate, defensible, guiding, and "truth-oriented" self-understanding (*Ref: Jopling, 1996*).

4. Philosophical Counseling as Psychotherapy (Jon Mills)

Gerd Achenbach insists that there is a clear line between philosophical counseling and psychotherapy. *Lahav* also believed that philosophical counseling is not psychotherapy (*Cohen & Zinech, 2013*).

However, *Mills* believes that philosophy cannot be separated from psychology because philosophy itself is a psychological activity (*Mills, 2001*).

According to *John Mills*, if philosophical counseling reduces its activity to the level of advice and guidance or teaching philosophical thinking and reasoning, this is no longer counseling, but a private class teaching philosophy or logic and will have an educational nature. However, he states that not all forms of philosophical practice are psychotherapy (*Mills, 2001: 125*).

5. Logic-Based Therapy (LBT) Approach and Its Advantages (*Elliot D. Cohen*)

Logic-based therapy (LBT), which is a relatively new form of rational emotive behavioral therapy (REBT), is a psychological method that assumes people's behavioral and emotional problems are mainly caused by irrational beliefs that they have accepted (*Cohen & Zinech, 2013*). *Cohen* believes that corresponding to each of the main fallacies, there is a transcendent virtue that overcomes it. (*Ibid: 132*)

LBT counselors help clients formulate arguments, then help them look for illogical premises

and conclusions that they have argued to confuse themselves (Cohen & Zinech, 2013).

6. Philosophical Self-Help and Self-Diagnosis Approach (Non-Clinical Practice) (*Shlomit C. Schuster*)

Schuster believes that the relationship between the philosopher and the client and their intellectual interactions is more important than recognition. With the help of a philosophical counselor, the client understands and receives something that can be temporarily called "philosophical self-diagnosis" (*Ibid: 147*).

There are two types of self-diagnoses in philosophical counseling:

1. Clients who have a certain level of self-knowledge, but need dialogue tools to analyze such knowledge and find new solutions.
2. Clients who have vague complaints and need help to clearly state their problem (*Schuster, 1998*).

7. Approach To Understanding the Unique Self and Others Through Dialogue (A More Non-Clinical Approach)
(*Maria Davenza Tillmanns*)

According to *Maria*, philosophical counseling is never about solving problems. She believes that life is inherently problematic. Rather than focusing on solving problems, *Tillmanns* emphasizes learning about life through conversation (*Tillmanns, 2005*).

Tillmanns does not consider philosophical counseling as an activity that is more focused on rationality (*Ibid: 156*).

Buber also emphasizes the necessity of talking with another because he believes that it is through the process of engaging with another that we can meet our inner context and we should not seek to understand the context before interacting with another because such action will only cause mistrust (*Ibid*). *Buber's* idea contrasts with many psychological and sociological theories that emphasize the importance of creating structures for understanding (*Ibid: 158*).

8. Clarifying Emotional Life (An Eclectic-Philosophical Approach to Psychotherapy)
(*Brian T. Rutter*)

According to *Rutter*, people often experience emotions that do not have a clear understanding of the meaning and context of their emergence, as well as how they ultimately affect their daily lives. *Rutter* talks about *Rogers's* reflection of emotions and how the counselor's mirroring of clients' emotions illuminates the client's emotional experience.

Rutter also shows how *Rogers's* reflexive view of emotional life can be extended to include *Martin Heidegger's* ideas about being in the world (*Rutter, 2021*), and how the client's emotional world be reconstructed in the treatment room during a bilateral and hermeneutic process between the client and the therapist (*Cohen & Zinech, 2013*).

9. Other Approaches

Carl R. Rogers (*Rogers cited in Frunza, 2022: 101*), and *Sandu Frunza* consider clients as dialogue partners in philosophical counseling as clients often turn to

philosophical counselors to solve their problems, grow personally, create a better world, and achieve existential peace. The client does not come to philosophical counseling as a patient. However, having therapeutic expectations is not wrong as dialogue has a strong healing power in itself (*Frunza cited in Frunza, 2022: 100*).

According to *Sandu Frunza*, one of the main values of Western culture is love, and counseling should also consider the client's culture. The importance of love in personal growth, understanding existential problems, and solving various metaphysical crises faced by the client is evident in all human dimensions (*Scruton cited in Frunza, 2022: 111*).

Ang and *Wayne Dyne* also believe that solving the problems that a person may have in most cases has not only a philosophical component but also relates to the culture in which he/she lives (*Dyne cited in Frunza 2022: 101*).

According to *Marinoff*, it is less likely to have an anti-psychiatry attitude, but philosophical counseling and the philosopher

do not need to implement a treatment plan or intellectual and behavioral rules. People need dialogue, not diagnosis (*Marinov cited in Frunza, 2022: 101*).

In his analysis, *Foucault* introduces us to *Socrates*, who tells the youth not to despair because they have not come to learn all the secrets of wisdom, but advises self-care and states: Know yourself (*Foucault cited in Frunza, 2022: 103*).

Nietzsche's solution, under the pressure of relativism, leads the client to the idea that everything is only interpretation and that one can have real access to the reality of his/her life as it is constructed in the interpretation (*Nietzsche cited in Frunza, 2022: 103*).

Ali Şafāei Hāeri's Approach to Philosophical Counseling

1. A Truth-Oriented Self-Transformation Approach Based on Refined Logical Thinking

In short, *Ali Şafāei Hāeri's* approach is truth-oriented self-transformation based on

thinking, which starts from immediate cognitions and reaches to a deeper knowledge of oneself and one's talents and knowledge of the origin and other types of knowledge from immediate and direct perceptions (insights) which are understandable for everyone. The outcome is genuine knowledge based on truth. The mind should be refined and freed along with thinking before reaching knowledge to avoid intellectual deviations. According to *Ali Şafāei Hāeri's* counseling model, fundamental questions are asked about the key components during contemplation.

During counseling and after the client's self-transformation and reaching true knowledge, the counselor or instructor should remind the client to avoid forgetfulness and neglect.

Ali Safaei Haeri considers thinking to be the cornerstone of human education and growth. Accordingly, his philosophical counseling focuses on contemplation, thinking, and free reasoning. Contemplation

means providing the necessary raw materials and conducting the necessary studies for thinking, and thinking means concluding raw materials and abstraction and generalization. Reasoning also means evaluating and comparing the goals and solutions reached through thinking. These outcomes are achieved through thinking free from whims, prejudices, habits, imitations, etc.

Ali Safaei Haeri emphasizes the three factors of fostering thinking, freedom, and character in childhood. Fostering thinking can develop the ability to reason and infer well in adulthood. Moreover, strengthening freedom helps the child learn to accept his/her mistakes in the face of a better idea. Finally, strengthening character and self-esteem in childhood helps the person not retreat from sound ideas with the influx of false thoughts in adulthood, even if they are the mainstream (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2016*).

2. Self-Transformation After Intellectual Maturity

Ali Safaei Haeri believes that deliberation, thinking, and reasoning are the foundations

of human guidance, and a therapist or philosophical counselor has the three following main duties;

- 1- Refining or freeing thought and cleaning it from deviations,
- 2- Education or training,
- 3- Reminding, as will be discussed below.

- **Deliberation**

Deliberation is to provide raw materials for thinking and inference. It involves exploring the problem, incident, or scene that happened and evaluating the signs that have emerged. Raw materials include contemplation in nature, incidents, humans, destinies, and even various studies. Deliberation means careful contemplation and learning from incidents through a holistic and top-down view (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2007b: 105*).

- **Thinking**

It is thinking that brings a person to know himself/herself, his/her capital, talents, his/her work, and his/her role, and to know existence, the world, and God. Using the superior power of thinking, humans can conclude

and reach great results from their limited information (*Ibid: 115*).

Humans have commonalities with animals in senses, perceptions, feelings, emotions, memory, and intelligence. Intelligence is the ability to understand the situation, thinking is the power to conclude, and reason is the power to evaluate, compare, or measure.

Despite some commonalities between humans and animals and the animals' rich emotions, an animal cannot draw conclusions based on its perceptions and discover unknowns through knowns. The animal cannot abstract and generalize and cannot reproduce information and draw conclusions.

Moreover, an animal cannot evaluate its information and measure it consciously. Furthermore, an animal cannot choose consciously. Guided by its instincts, an animal can find the best option. This is not an informed choice, but an instinctually guided action.

Human is forced to have free will since his/her internal composition and structure have created this free will inside him/her. The conflicts and competition of

instincts with the power to conclude and evaluate lead to self-awareness and choice (free will) that are formed deterministically in humans (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2007b: 114, 115*).

- **Reasoning**

Reasoning is the power of evaluation and comparison. It means evaluating the goals and finding ways to achieve them. The thought arranges the raw materials that were thoughtfully packed inside us, sucks their juices, and throws out their excrement (*Ibid: 116*).

Then, it concludes experiences and knowledge and discovers new findings and unknown knowledge. Afterward, reasoning evaluates and compares the goals and solutions discovered through thinking and chooses the best ones.

After choosing the best goal, the perfectionist instinct makes the human move forward. Thus, he/she is freed from the previous path and chooses a new goal freely (*Ibid: 59*).

3. The Three Main Duties of a Counselor Towards Clients

Refinement (purifying and freeing the thought), education (training),

and reminding (advice) are the duties of a philosophical counselor towards the clients.

- **Refining And Freeing the Client's Thoughts from Deviations**

Although thinking underlies development, there are some even with a great power of things who fail to find the truth and thus are deviated or disappointed. Sometimes, thinking is influenced by habits, prejudices, imitations, interests, and instincts. Thus, humans should be freed from these distortions to think logically (*Ibid: 73,74*).

A counselor's role is to free thoughts from the constraints of education, heredity, environment, etc., and inform clients about contradictions (*Ibid: 60*).

If a container is contaminated, it will spoil the sweetest drinks poured into it. Thus, contaminated thoughts must be cleansed so that the truth can be perceived well.

Curiosity and truth-seeking powers are effective in freeing thoughts from prejudices, instincts, and personal interests.

Curiosity moves the thought to seek the truth, and truth-seeking controls the thought so that it does not go astray. Promoting self-esteem and a sense of self-worth in the clients prevents adhering to unreasonable habits and imitations.

Moreover, some teachings, such as recognizing the greatness of humans and their talents, knowing the vastness of existence and the ways ahead of humans, knowing the pain and sufferings of the world, knowing God's mercy, etc., are among other solutions for freeing and refining humans (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2007b: 73-80*).

- **Education**

Instead of leaving the client in dangerous trials and errors, a knowledgeable counselor can guide him/her through effective instructions. Thus, the client can consciously make effective decisions.

Thus, a counselor's role is to teach the right way of thinking and perception (*Ibid: 60-61*).

Following *Ali Şafāei Hāeri's* approach, a wise counselor can help clients come up with a correct understanding of themselves and their talents, goals, and existence

by asking fundamental (not superficial) questions. As long as man is unknown to himself, he cannot understand his goals, how to live, and how to die.

A person who can find answers to fundamental questions about their existence and talents, being humans, human needs, the purpose of life, and so on can realize the purpose of life and their role and function in life.

The counselor must prepare raw materials for the vast human thinking and must teach the clients how to effectively think, draw conclusions, and interpret incidents in their lives (*Ibid: 93*).

- **Reminding**

Humans need to confront contradictions, competitions, and enemies for their growth and achievements because these hidden and obvious enemies result in conflicts and these conflicts contribute to developing skills in humans.

However, these internal and external competitors and enemies devour our funds and diminish our talents. These internal and external forces help us know a friend from an enemy because a

true friend loves for our own sake but any enemy pursues his/her interests by interacting with us.

Moreover, human sensual desires sometimes lead them to a destructive and harmful path. The devil also deceives humans with temptations, incitement of instincts, and embellishment of the worthless manifestations of the world, wasting their lives and intellectual and spiritual assets. Some people may show sympathy for us, but they demand more in return and seek to take advantage of us to serve their interests.

A wise counselor must warn a person who is looking for growth and reaching the desired goal in life and remind him/her of things that may hinder his/her development and also procrastination (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2007a & 2007b: 100*).

The counselor's warnings can help a person better understand their great spiritual assets, unfathomable existence, human hardships, divine grandeur, enemies, deaths, pains, and sufferings. However, such warnings can lead to further developments and accomplishments if they are welcome and accepted by the client.

A person who has gained knowledge through thinking, this knowledge induces desire, inclination, and love, leading to action. However, some prearrangements should be made for further development. Some practices are also needed to promote practical skills. Thus, timely warnings and reminders can lead to effective action (*Ibid, 2007b: 103*).

- **The Necessity of Knowing the Client's Emotional State in Counseling and Education**

A good counselor should identify different emotional states of clients and ask questions that induce their stream of thought so that the clients are encouraged to seek the truth. *Ali Safaei* has introduced several emotional states and the way to address them, which are beyond the scope of this paper.

4. An Overview of *Ali Şafāei Hāeri's* Approach

The main focus of *Ali Şafāei Hāeri's* approach to philosophical counseling is on the client's free-thinking and self-transformation. However, the

client's flow of thoughts should be freed from distortions by asking fundamental questions or helping him/her to induce his/her flow of thoughts by asking thought-provoking questions. Clients should also be instructed on how to engage in rational thinking and making inferences through self-transformations. They should also learn how to formulate logical assumptions through contemplation of raw data.

For instance, asking key questions can help the client to learn more about human character, talents, and capabilities. Such knowledge helps the client discover the governing laws as all humans have some restrictions and they are subjected to and dominated by a set of laws. Understanding human subjugation helps to decipher the starting point of the universe. Every human may select a unique starting point for the creation. However, this starting point/origin cannot be rationally composite as a composite thing requires several components and is affected by such components that may have some existential

precedence. Furthermore, the origin cannot be restricted or demarcated by some boundaries as such an origin is dominated and governed by a set of laws. In simple terms, the origin should be endless and such endlessness requires endless knowledge and power (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2007b*).

Further, knowing human talents and composition can help us realize that human beings cannot stay stagnant and that they always need to move forward. A look at human composition shows that his actions involve movement. But in what direction? A direction not lower, not equal, but higher. And what direction is higher and more perfect than that infinite, needless, merciful, merciful one?

An analysis of numerous human talents shows that man is not restricted to this limited world, and if he were, he would not need so many talents. Thus, humans did not have intellectual powers for this material well-being in the world. As we know, bees can

provide the best welfare and social life with their instincts. Man is beyond this limited world and persists, and to move in a higher and superior direction against these complexities of the laws of existence and the infinite extension of existence, he needs a guide, ruler, messengers, and their orders and instructions.

For a person to be able to think rationally and know their goals based on the truth, they must be freed from distracting issues and restraints. The person should even be freed from this freedom itself, because a seemingly free person is sometimes trapped by lust, sometimes trapped by others, sometimes trapped by limited rationality, and sometimes trapped by ego. What is this freedom? The person is still trapped by many things. Thus, being trapped by restricted things will lead to loss and destruction.

A person who considers himself free from everything is inevitably forced to choose and make a decision based on some criteria in life; freed from past desires, he is now

forced to choose voluntarily. He may choose based on his impulses and instincts and may make a decision based on the limited intellect of some other thinkers, and sometimes based on his restricted intellect, which does not encompass the whole creation, and there is a possibility of making a wrong decision. This type of freedom is also a trap and the person may get trapped in many things. Thus, he must be released from this freedom. This type of freedom is "variable captivity" to fallible ego and the intellects that may not be sympathetic to us, and if they are, there is a high probability of making mistakes and incompatibility with the laws of the whole universe.

Thus, it would be better if free humans were freely the servants of the unlimited absolute ruler so that they could be happy and achieve real peace and joy in this complex and connected world. This would save the person from many difficulties and hardships. The goal is not only

to develop talents, but the counselor must guide the developed talents in the best direction. (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2021*)

5. Self-Transformation from Ali Safaei's Perspective

The difference between the type of self-transformation proposed by *Şafāei Hāeri* and those introduced by others is that in this type of self-transformation, the counselor does not trap the client with his/her limited intellect or leave him/her alone with some philosophical thoughts. Rather, by raising key questions and awakening curiosity and truth-seeking, the counselor encourages the client to start from immediate knowledge and reach deep knowledge.

Indeed, *Şafāei Hāeri* takes us out of our limited surroundings through self-transformation, but he does not leave us there to be trapped in another cave.

By asking key questions, *Şafāei Hāeri* makes the clients familiar with their real needs and when the clients understand their needs, they try to fulfill them. A person starts making

efforts from the moment he sees great needs in himself. Thus, he must be freed from obstacles and chains. Then he can find himself and understand his role, his relations with the creation and the community, and harmonize himself with the creation. (*Ibid: 197*)

Philosophical counselors who have reached truth-based philosophical values can take care of the client when searching for the truth and self-transformation, and where they see the client trapped, they can prevent them from being trapped again in the shackles of superficial and limited desires by asking fundamental questions.

This is true that a counselor should not impose their views on the clients, but having a neutral attitude toward the wrong answers means ignoring the achievements of humans from thousands of years of thinking.

It does not matter if the client has or does not have the same choices as the counselor. Rather, what is important is that the client becomes aware and

comes to know himself/herself. Finally, s/he is free to choose the path of growth, perfection, bliss, and eternal and infinite pleasure or select a limited, transitory, and superficial path. The most important thing for the client is to make a conscious choice. Imposing opinions and forcing a person to do something leads to human metamorphosis.

Humans, having the power of thinking and evaluation and striving for perfection, which originates from their construction and composition, cannot be satisfied with restricted accomplishments. Thus, humans start taking actions out of necessity and instinctually in search of a more perfect truth.

The counselor can clarify goals by paving the way for inducing a spontaneous flow of questions within the client by asking basic and precise questions. The counselor sometimes warns or reminds mistakes of clients.

A person's possessions are not a criterion, because the possessions require efficiency, and efficiency has no title because it needs to

be calculated. The motto of the school of existence which is very popular states that a person is nothing but action. However, it should be noted that a person is nothing but the direction of their action. The most important thing is the motivation or the driving force of actions and goals (*Şafāei Hāeri, 2007b: 232*).

According to Şafāei Hāeri, by thinking, a person gains knowledge, and this knowledge leads to affection and love, and affection and love lead to action followed by thinking, and this process repeats over and again (*Ibid: 43,44*).

Conclusion

Overall, it can be argued that *Ali Şafāei Hāeri's* approach is an integrated system and a coherent and continuous stream of thought, and a type of self-transformation based on free and refined thinking and reasoning that gives authenticity to the truth and emphasizes definite and immediate knowledge gained through raw information through explorations and studies. In addition, this thinking flows by

asking questions or by providing the context for asking questions by the counselor. However, thoughts must be freed from all kinds of prejudices, sensual desires, and imitations. In this approach, intellectual raw materials are extracted from immediate cognitions and are developed in other cases. After the client gains solid and definite knowledge and is in the process of correcting tendencies and behaviors, the counselor warns the client so that s/he does not go astray. Using methods, the counselor can identify the client's mental state and ask questions according to the client's needs and start the movement and flow of thought.

According to religious and divine teachings, human life is not limited to a few years of life and man continues living even after death. Thus, a philosophical counselor, even though may have a different belief, should consider the possibility of eternal life after death and help the client consciously and freely achieve deep philosophical knowledge

and a thorough worldview based on the truth that feeds on direct and definite knowledge. The counselor should not impose his/her ideas on the client and not confine the client to the thoughts of a few philosophers so that the client is trapped by the ideas expressed by philosophers. The counselor should expose the clients to contradictions so that s/he chooses the best alternatives through thoughtfulness, free will, and his/her instinct for perfectionism. Moreover, the counselor should guide the client, teach him/her logical thinking, and provide the adequate intellectual materials needed by the clients.

The common inner call of all human beings in *Ran Lahav's* view, which leads man to leave the peripheral cave, communicate with the inner dimension, and discover the truth, is similar to the concept of human perfectionism and idealism in the books of *Ali Şafāei Hāeri*. In addition, the inner dimension can be considered as the divine nature and construction of human beings. That part of his approach that

highlights the formulation of thinking and reasoning has some similarities with the LBT approach.

Ali Şafāei Hāeri also offers several solutions to understand the mental states and moods of clients through their perceptions and reactions, which can be considered somewhat similar to the approach of clarifying emotional life, although it has some differences.

However, a comprehensive attitude toward humans and existence is one of the distinctive points of this approach with many approaches. Moreover, the emergence of thinking i.e., free-thinking refined from deviations, from immediate knowledge, which a person can understand easily, and obtaining knowledge by giving authenticity to the truth followed by constant evaluation and comparison and informed and free decision-making are the key components of his approach to philosophical counseling, which is different from other philosophical counseling approaches.

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Author Contributions

The first author has been responsible for collecting, examining, and analyzing different views of philosophical counseling, as well as analyzing *Ali Şafāei Ḥāeri*'s view and comparing it with other approaches. The second author has been very influential in choosing the research topic and conducting the research. The third author provided suggestions for completing the study and its educational requirements.

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