# Avicenna's Vision of Upbringing: A Philosophical Framework for Children's Spiritual Formation

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1. Corresponding Author, Assistant Prof, Farhangian University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: nahidheidari@cfu.ac.ir
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| Article Info | ABSTRACT |
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| **Article type:**<br>Research Article<br><br>**Article history:**<br>Received: 31 May 2025<br>Accepted: 10 August 2025<br>Published online: 4 September 2025<br><br>**Keywords**:<br>Avicenna,<br>Child,Spiritual Formation,<br>Upbringing. | The present research is a metacognition of children's religious upbringing based on Avicenna's thoughts on education and upbringing. The qualitative research method of descriptive-analytical type is employed to address the author's main concerns. Religious upbringing in Avicenna's thoughts and writings represents teaching religious concepts and beliefs resulting into intellectual persuasion, true acceptance, and inner commitment. Religious upbringing, on the other hand, will guarantee the individual's existential perfection and material and spiritual salvation (in this world and the next one). The qualitative findings suggest that religious upbringing seek various goals consisting of two main parts: ultimate goal and intermediate goals. Exploring Avicenna's thoughts indicate this important issue that the ultimate goal is to achieve proximity to God Most High. The intermediate goals in religious upbringing are multiple and have different areas, including the development of one's religious attitudes, the promotion of religious affiliations, increasing the level of familiarity with the Holy Book of the Quran, and compliance with religious rules and teachings. Religious upbringing has comprehensive principles that Avicenna took into consideration. From perspective, these principles include human purposefulness, monotheism, and the strategic principle of moderation. Following the goals and principles, religious upbringing is taken into account as it affects education. Heredity, marriage, and nutrition some of the areas that can affect an individual's upbringing. Avicenna's educational thought indicates that it is important that religious upbringing has content stemming from Tawhid (monotheism), Akhirah (resurrection), prophecy, and imamate. Avicenna believes that religious upbringing requires stages and that success in individuals' upbringing cannot be achieved without going through different stages. The upbringing stages in this regard include upbringing at home and upbringing in school. In a summary of Avicenna's thoughts, one can come to realize that in Avicenna's educational thoughts, a child needs religious upbringing, but in order to educate children, it is necessary to pay attention to various principles, components, and stages in which moderation is considered in the process and the educator should not go beyond moderation in the upbringing process. |

**Introduction**

The upbringing and shaping of children's personalities are the main focus of parents' and families' concerns. A successful approach in this field requires convergence between educational teachings based on religious values and new findings in educational sciences and developmental psychology. The process of education and upbringing is multifaceted and continuous in nature that requires detailed design of educational goals and strategies. Empirical evidence and interdisciplinary studies show that the mere transfer of Western educational models to different cultural contexts is not effective enough in solving the educational and moral challenges of non-Western societies. Hence, it is necessary for education and upbringing experts in Islamic countries, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, to adopt an innovative approach that, while preserving cultural and value originalities, meets the educational needs of the present time. This new paradigm in upbringing should be based on the principles of religious education and at the same time benefit from scientific achievements in the fields of educational and developmental psychology. Such a comprehensive approach could serve as a practical guide for parents and educators in raising a powerful generation that can act compatibly in the face of challenges in the contemporary world, while being rooted in fundamental cultural and religious values (Ziba Kalam Mofrad, 2001).

Considering that in the Islamic society, we sometimes witness some neglect and misunderstandings of religious education, proper scientific studies and research should be conducted in this field due to the sensitivity of the matter and the key role that religious upbringing plays in the individual and social life of people, especially children so that by introducing the correct indicators of religious upbringing, the country's formal and informal educational institutions can benefit from it. Require upbringing to adhere to religious principles and issues is the key to achieving happiness and success in both worlds. Upbringing is a permanent and continuous matter that should be considered during childhood and even before that, because it is associated with many individual and social achievements. Nevertheless, highlighting religious and psychological teachings does not mean that the process of an individual's growth and upbringing is limited to their childhood, but rather, education and upbringing is an issue that people constantly face until the end of their lives. Upbringing provides a suitable ground for the development and creativity of an individual at different times in their life. Awareness and vigilance of families and education officials about the stages of growth and its characteristics makes it possible to achieve educational goals (Fazli, 2011).

**Literature Review**

Various and diverse research and studies have been conducted on the goals of religious upbringing from the perspective of Islamic thinkers, in particular Avicenna. A study by Dana Ramezani (2012) shows that Avicenna believes that the ultimate goal of religious upbringing is to draw closer to God and achieve true happiness. In this case study, she emphasizes the importance of including the Quran and Hadiths in children's curriculum. Nosrati et al. (2013) concluded that the main goal of religious upbringing is to achieve true happiness by individuals. The findings of this joint research are very similar to those of Khalili et al. (2015). They concluded that, according to Avicenna's thought, achieving happiness and perfection for individuals and society is the main goal of religious upbringing and education. In addition to the aforementioned studies, Khalili et al. (2015) highlight that from the perspective of this great philosopher, achieving moderation and moral virtues are considered strategic goals of religious upbringing. The findings of this joint research suggest that a comprehensive and multidimensional approach to religious upbringing could be inferred from Avicenna's perspective and that his approach is not one-dimensional and considers various goals for religious upbringing. These studies generally emphasize the importance of religious upbringing in the spiritual and moral development of individuals and society and provide a theoretical framework for designing educational programs based on the principles of religious upbringing.

**Method**

The approach of this research is qualitative and is considered a descriptive and analytical study. In other words, qualitative content analysis is intended by the author, and theoretical inference is made. Regarding content analysis, it is worth mentioning that this qualitative method refers to identifying and highlighting the main axes of the text or work under study, and the attempt is to provide the audience with descriptive analysis after completing the above tasks (Saroukhani, 1999). The content analysis method is employed to find the relationship between various concepts and to recognize the relationship and conceptual networks. One of the important features of qualitative studies is theorizing instead of focusing on theory testing. For this reason, content analysis with a qualitative approach is used in various studies. Using this research method, the researcher strives to "mentally interpret the data and content within the text through systematic classification, coding, and theme-making or pattern-designing of processes" (Iman, 2013, p.172). In the present paper, the researchers categorized the themes of religious upbringing using written and published works of Avicenna. This approach led to the selection and use of qualitative content analysis to answer questions and explain qualitative data. The researchers, with the aim of explaining the concept of religious upbringing from the perspective of its goals, principles, and stages, try to infer functions for Islamic religious upbringing. The theoretical analogy method is also employed to achieve these functions.

**Results**

**1. Concept of Religious Upbringing Based on Avicenna**

According to Avicenna, religious upbringing means teaching religious concepts and beliefs, resulting into intellectual persuasion, true acceptance, and inner commitment (Avicenna, translated by Yasrebi, 1998). Avicenna believes that every individual should have a comprehensive understanding of the entire universe and existence, including the levels of existence, both descending and ascending. This understanding of the entire existence should be such that one can understand the overall structure of existence and the relationship between its components well. According to Avicenna's writings, man should know the system of existence from the first origin, which is God Most High and Absolute Beauty, to the most distant levels of existence and realize the goodness overflowing throughout existence. Moreover, man should be aware of divine providence and its quality and realize what kind of existence Transcendent Essence, who precedes all beings, has and how He should be known in a way that it is not subject to any multiplicity or change. He emphasizes that one needs to understand the relationship and position of beings with respect to the Supreme Being and the ultimate causes of general movements. As the human insight in these areas increases, his ability to take steps on the path of happiness also increases (Avicenna, translated by Yasrebi,1998). Accordingly, the entire existence, the way it is, is reflected in the mirror of the human conscience and the human mind becomes a full-fledged mirror of the external world. This is possible through the acquisition of knowledge and the transformation of the unknown into known, elevating the human intellect from the monstrous stage to the actual and acquired intellect (Avicenna, translated by Yasrebi,1998). From an upbringing point of view, Avicenna emphasizes the importance of educating and training children and adolescents. He believes that they should be educated and raised in such a way that their personalities are consistent with the religious goals set forth in the Quran and narrations. The ultimate goal is for an individual to reach such a level of knowledge and education that s/he can be called a true Muslim (Ahmadi Zadeh, 2012, cited in Avicenna). Upbringing should be such that one can gain a deep understanding of the existence system and their place in it and achieve true happiness. Avicenna, as he was a Muslim and had religious beliefs, paid great attention to the religious upbringing of children with a religious approach. Thus, according to Avicenna, upbringing, especially religious upbringing, is an essential and obligatory matter; because following the person who is raised with religious upbringing, not only that person but also the society and community would benefit from the existence of such a person. He considers the most important and fundamental concept of religious upbringing to be the attainment of happiness and perfection for the individual and society. According to him, religious

upbringing is what cultivates the mind, promotes the growth of intellect, and paves the way to reach God.

## 2. Goals of Religious Upbringing According to Avicenna

From Avicenna's perspective, goals of religious upbringing can be divided into two categories: ultimate goal and intermediate goals.

### 2.1. Ultimate Goal of Religious Upbringing

Avicenna believes that the ultimate goal of religious upbringing is the realization and achievement of true happiness for a person and society. Happiness, according to him, is a category that is inherently desirable. Accordingly, what is inherently desirable and other things become desirable because of it is superior to something that is desired because of other things. Happiness, from an upbringing perspective, is a concept that is deemed valuable and desirable per se. In other words, what is proposed as the ultimate goal in human upbringing is something that other goals and values become meaningful because of it. In this regard, happiness as the ultimate goal is the point that man seeks to achieve, and guidance towards this happiness is considered the highest type of guidance. Because the value of guidance is rooted in the goals to which it leads. In this context, true happiness lies in proximity to divine truth and values, and other desirable things are less important in comparison to it. Therefore, educators and trainers should pay special attention to this type of happiness and try to guide people towards this ultimate goal. Divine sages have also shown that they have a greater desire and enthusiasm to achieve this type of happiness than to achieve material and physical happiness. This approach can help to educate people with deep and purposeful insight who are in search of truth and spiritual values. (Arafi, 2015, cited in Avicenna).

Avicenna clearly introduces happiness, which means proximity to God Most High, as the uppermost goal of human activities. He believes that guiding others towards this happiness is the highest type of guidance and that the sciences and knowledge related to this goal are the best ones. In the context of upbringing, this viewpoint means that all educational efforts should be directed towards the realization of human happiness. Avicenna believes that achieving true happiness requires a deep understanding of oneself and the world around us (Avicenna, translated by Malekshahi, 1988). This understanding not only helps an individual choose the right path in life, but can also lead to the upbringing of a conscious and purposeful generation that is in search of truth and spiritual values. Therefore, in educational sciences, paying attention to these goals and values can help in the formation of transcendent and balanced personalities. In the philosophy of Avicenna, the concept of proximity to the Divine Essence is of particular importance. He considers this path to be associated with the growth and flourishing of the human rational soul. From the perspective of this great philosopher, the development of the rational soul is a process through which a person achieves a deep and comprehensive understanding of the structure of existence. Avicenna spotlights that in this path, the human mind gradually transforms into a world of concepts and meanings. This mental world is an exact reflection of the real world in such a way that all the layers of existence, from the highest to the lowest levels, are reflected in it. He describes this state as a mirror revealing the entire existence with all its complexities. In this view, the process of understanding and awareness is the key to opening the doors of knowledge. Man progresses step by step on this path by constantly trying to discover the unknown and transform them into the known. This ascending process leads to the development of intellectual powers. Avicenna believes that the human intellect goes through various stages in this process from the initial state in which mental abilities exist only potentially to more advance stages in which these abilities become actual. Ultimately, intellect reaches a stage that Avicenna calls "acquired intellect", a stage in which an intuitive and profound understanding of the truths of existence is achieved. This philosophical perspective presents a dynamic and evolutionary picture of human spiritual and intellectual development and shows how striving for knowledge and understanding can be a way to draw closer to the Creator of the universe (Avicenna, translated by Yasrebi, 1998).

### 2.2. Intermediate Goals of Religious Upbringing

Avicenna believes: "Religious upbringing is one of the important and fundamental areas of religious education, and it has three main goals: developing knowledge, developing true acceptance, and

developing true love" (Davoodi, cited in Avicenna, 2015). At this stage, there are four types of goals concerning religious upbringing for children:

### 2.2.1. Development of Religious Viewpoints

In the context of children's religious upbringing, Avicenna presents a comprehensive and purposeful perspective. According to him, the development and evolution of religious beliefs is one of the important intermediate goals in the upbringing process. This Islamic thinker believes that the reform and refinement of the soul is the first and most important step on the path to achieving this goal. From an upbringing perspective, Avicenna considers the ultimate goal of religious upbringing to be raising children who are deeply connected to religious teachings. However, it should be noted that this connection needs to be in such a way that children not only believe in religious principles and teachings, but also apply these religious and doctrinal principles and teachings to their daily lives; in other words, they should act on the religious beliefs emanating from the Islamic school. This upbringing approach emphasizes that children should understand Islam as a constructive and important school. For this reason, Islamic teachings should be presented in a way that is attractive and inspiring to children, so that they internalize these teachings as original and motivational thoughts. Avicenna emphasizes that in order be successful, religious upbringing needs to guide children on a path that can shape their present and future lives based on the worldview and philosophy offered by religion. Simply put, religious upbringing should not remain only in the realm of beliefs, but should be taken into account in all aspects of an individual's life and, in other words, be a guide to an individual's actions. In Avicenna's upbringing perspective, this process should begin at an early age and gradually deepen and expand. The ultimate goal is for a child to become a person who accepts Islamic values and principles not only outwardly but also deep within himself and implements them in his life. This upbringing approach emphasizes that religious teachings should be presented in accordance with the child's level of understanding and developmental needs so that he can gradually gain a more profound and more practical understanding of religious concepts. Eventually, the goal for religious upbringing is to lead to the formation of a coherent and meaningful identity in a child, an identity that is rooted in religious teachings and is reflected in all aspects of his life (Badkoobe, cited in Avicenna, 2009).

### 2.2.2. Strengthening the Religious Sense

From Avicenna's perspective, childhood is a crucial stage in the formation of individuals' religious and spiritual identity. He believes that at this age, children have a profound need to understand divine and spiritual concepts, which is an essential part of their psychological and emotional development (Avicenna, translated by Abar Dana Seresht, 1937). This great philosopher emphasizes that this period is a key time for establishing religious insight and beliefs. At this stage, children, with inherent enthusiasm and curiosity, seek answers to their fundamental questions about the world and their place in it. This search is part of their effort to achieve a coherent religious identity that can give meaning and direction to their lives. He emphasizes that children's numerous questions about intellectual and religious issues indicate a deep inner need. He warns that children should not be left alone in this path of discovery and search. Rather, it is the duty of parents and educators to help children find proper answers by providing suitable resources and creating a space for discussion and exchange of ideas. From an upbringing perspective, Avicenna suggests that children should be helped to enlighten their minds regarding religious issues by introducing books appropriate to their age and understanding as well as holding discussion sessions. This approach not only contribute to children's spiritual development, but also paves the way for the formation of a lasting and meaningful religious identity in the future. Finally, Avicenna highlights the importance of good accompaniment and guidance at this sensitive stage of a child's development, so that he can achieve a deep and personal understanding of religious concepts that will be helpful at all stages of his life (Etrek, cited in Avicenna, 2014).

### 2.2.3. Familiarity with the Quran

Teaching children to recite the Quran is considered one of the fundamental duties of parents in the religious upbringing of their children. Avicenna believes that when a child is physically and mentally ready to learn, the Quran, religious concepts, and the Arabic language should be included

in his educational program. He recommends that these teachings should begin with simple topics so that the child can easily understand them and gradually continue learning (Avicenna, Translated by Naghdi, 1968). According to him, teaching the Quran to children is highly effective in understanding the principles of religion and gives them a deep and lasting attitude towards religion. Also, familiarity with the Quran, both in terms of recitation and understanding its concepts, helps children to gain a true and profound understanding of God and the order of the world. Finally, he stresses that due care must be taken in choosing a teacher and educator to teach the Quran to children. The teacher must be wise, religious, and familiar with religious principles, and also possess qualities such as dignity, honesty, and probity, and have the ability to establish appropriate social relationships (Avicenna, Translated by Naghdi, 1968).

### 2.2.4. Familiarization of Children with Religious (Islamic) Concepts and Beliefs

In addition to reciting the Quran, it is necessary to teach our children its meanings and concepts, as well as the stories and examples included in the Quran. Furthermore, it is important for them to be familiar with the narrations and hadiths of the Fourteen Infallibles so that we can provide them with a practical model for their daily lives. In this regard, the key topics that should be taught to children are as follows:

a) Knowing God: Introducing God and His attributes, examining the justice and wisdom of God in the creation of the world, and explaining the problems and trials of life.

b) Knowing the Guides: Familiarizing with the prophets and the philosophy of prophecy, as well as knowing the Imams and their roles in guiding society.

c) Concepts of resurrection: Examining topics such as resurrection, judgment, purgatory, the grave, and reward and punishment in the afterlife.

d) Knowing human: Analyzing the relationship between man and God and the world, divine supervision over human behavior, and the concept of human caliphate on earth (Avicenna, translated by Yar Shater, 1953, p.189).

e) Avicenna's goal in religious upbringing of children is to raise religiously-minded people who will be helpful first in their families and second in their communities, and who will bring happiness to themselves and their communities. Avicenna, on the other hand, considers the first issue in religious upbringing to be the knowledge of God, which is the principle of Tawhid.

### 3. Principles of Religious Upbringing

### 3.1. Tawhid

In religious upbringing, the first principle is calling for *Tawhid* (monotheism) and avoiding polytheism. This comes before other moral and religious matters. In other words, in a child's religious upbringing, the first step is to teach beliefs. Thus, after *Tawhid*, the issue of *Akhirah* (resurrection) is the most fundamental belief according to the teachings of the Quran. Just as Luqman the Wise, after advising his son on the issue of monotheism, reminded him of the issue that every man would be held accountable for their deeds on the Day of Judgment (Avicenna, translated by Abardana, 1936). What is worthy of attention in this regard is the attention of parents and educators to the extent of children's understanding and awareness of religious concepts and belief.

It is of great importance to know God because it has profound impacts on individual and social lives of humans. Belief in God and understanding the divine attributes affect human motivations, intentions, and behaviors and shape their personalities. Hence, one of the fundamental needs of life is to understand the type of relationship human has with God. Avicenna considers "Tawhid" to be the main root of the Islamic religion and the essence of the teachings of the Quran, and introduces it as the most important principle in religious upbringing. Tawhid means believing that God is the Lord of all beings and that man must submit to His will in all aspects of his life and perform his actions only for Him (Avicenna, translated by Abardana, 1936). A person who believes that God is the ultimate director of the universe will never reach out to others when in need and will not be impatient in the face of problems (Avicenna,

translated by Abardana, 1936). This attitude towards monotheism transforms human thinking and creates a strong motivation in him to observe morality and achieve goodness.

### 3.2. Purposefulness of Human

One of the key principles in religious upbringing according to Avicenna's wisdom is children's awareness of the purposefulness of human existence and the achievement of an ultimate goal, which means achieving happiness and perfection. Perfection refers to the flourishing and manifestation of hidden talents in man, while happiness refers to a lasting pleasure that is superior and more durable than other pleasures in terms of quantity and quality. In the Quran, the main goal and perfection of man is defined as achieving deep awareness and personal recognition of God Almighty, which means drawing close to God truly and it can only be achieved through making efforts and self-realization. According to Avicenna, the happiness of man, who is a composite being of soul and body, means the realization of physical and spiritual good. Obviously, man has diverse desires and tendencies that he cannot meet all of them. In a correct religious upbringing system, all the desires and tendencies of a person are focused on a valuable and meaningful goal which is to achieve satisfaction of God and closeness to Him. This process not only helps in personal growth, but also leads to the creation of a meaningful and purposeful life. (Avicenna, Bi Ta).

### 3.3. Moderation

Moderation is the third principle of religious upbringing according to Avicenna. This principle is known as one of the pillars of religious upbringing and means placing all aspects of education and upbringing in the middle ground of two extremes. It is essential to consider moderation so as to achieve virtue in every action and feeling. Plato and Aristotle, two famous philosophers of ancient Greece, are the founders of the theory of moderation. Moderation is known as a permanent and effective way of religious upbringing, and the health of the individual and society depends on balanced upbringing. Avicenna believes that moderation is not limited to traits and behaviors, but also includes beliefs and desires. In this context, moderation is crucial for human salvation and achieving happiness. He believes that in order to implement moderation in religious upbringing, the sense of hope and fear must always be kept alive in the learner, because excessive hope can lead an individual to self-centeredness, and excessive fear may also hinder one's spiritual connection with God (Avicenna, Translated by Naghdi 1968).

Avicenna holds the impression that the value of any attitude and belief depends on its balance and moderation. Any extremes can cause a trait to be deprived of its positive characteristics, and it can lead unpleasant traits to be attributed to it. Positive beliefs can bring desirable results and help society only if they remain within the limits of moderation; otherwise, they will have negative and harmful consequences (Avicenna, Bi Ta). In Avicenna's opinion, the animal soul originates from the material world and is a combination of four main temperaments (sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholic) that are related to the elements of water, fire, earth, and air. Temperamental balance depends on changes in heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. The goal of medical science is to maintain this balance in the animal soul so that it can function as a means for the human soul. The human soul is from the higher world and the gem of the angels, and its entry into this world is kind of strange. However, this strangeness is for the purpose of benefiting from the guidance of its original source (Avicenna, Bi Ta).

### 4. Stages of Religious Upbringing

### 4.1. Stage 1 of Childhood: Upbringing at Home (From Birth to Six Years Old)

Avicenna considers the upbringing stage to begin from birth and does not consider the physical upbringing of children to be separate from other aspects of upbringing. In his book "*The Canon of Medicine*", he emphasizes the importance of pregnant women avoiding physical and mental stress, as they have a negative impact on the fetus. Also, in the section on child upbringing, he addresses issues such as taking care of a newborn, breastfeeding and feeding habits, choosing a wet nurse, children's diseases, and raising young children (Avicenna, translated by Yasrebi, 1998, pp. 350-365). Regarding the religious upbringing of children, Avicenna believes that the first step for at this stage of a child's life is to give the child a good name, to call the *Adhan* in

the child's ear immediately after birth, to breastfeed the child with *Wudu* (ablution), and to teach the child the Quran and the principles of religion once the child learned to speak so that this familiarity can be a prelude to learning in school (Avicenna, Translated by Najmi Zanjani, 1940).

## 4.2. Stage 2 of Childhood, Upbringing at School (Ages Six to Thirteen)

Avicenna believes that children's education should start when their physical conditions develop, which usually occurs after the age of five. In the book of "*The Canon of Medicine*", he mentions the age of six as the appropriate time to start education (Avicenna, Translated by Najmi Zanjani, 1940, p. 364). Meanwhile, Avicenna believes that children should not stay in the educational environment all the time because the physical development of young children requires rest and entertainment (Avicenna, Translated by Najmi Zanjani, 1940). The goal of religious upbringing at this stage is to strengthen young children's faith along with their growth and development of understanding and thinking and establish a good personality that believes in religious principles. Therefore, the teacher needs to familiarize students with religious values and beliefs (Balaghat, 2007).

## 5. Backgrounds of Religious Upbringing

### 5.1. Heredity

In the views of Avicenna, the factor of heredity is referred to as "*Irq*". *Irq* means that the beliefs and attitudes of parents are transmitted to children, but these transmitted traits do not exceed the limits of necessity. In other words, it does not deprive a person of choice and action (Avicenna, translated by Najmi Zanjani, 1940, p 131). Avicenna considers choosing a worthy spouse as one of the factors laying the foundation for the child's religious upbringing. He points out that children in the mother's womb are a collection of the physical and spiritual traits of their parents and distant ancestors (Avicenna, translated by Najmi Zanjani, 1940). Heredity can have beneficial or harmful effects on them. If all factors are good, the fetus in the mother's womb is happy, and if all or some of the factors are bad, the fetus in the mother's womb is equally miserable. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the happiness and misery of a child before birth in the mother's womb is not a definite fate, but other factors can establish or destroy them (Falsafi, cited in Avicenna, 1984, vol. 1).

Avicenna sees marriage as one of the areas of religious upbringing for children. He, of course, highlights that there are two types of marriage: righteous and vicious, and that religious upbringing of children should be taken into account through righteous marriage (Avicenna, Translated by Foroughi, 1987).

Based on Islamic teachings, families should pay attention to the upbringing of the child's soul and body long before birth. Since Islam attaches special importance to religious upbringing, it also has a broad attitude towards the principles and styles of upbringing. Avicenna believes that the effect of a righteous marriage on religious upbringing means that the human strength and inner qualities that are passed on from parents to children have an effect on their religious beliefs, attitudes, and insight, however, only in a pro renata manner, not in a causa adaquata manner. It is wrong to say that happiness and misery are two inherent things that never deviate from the essence or that they are eternal as they are related to a predetermined destiny. Happiness and misery in the mother's womb are not a definite fate, but the factors of upbringing and environmental conditions are the criteria for the disappearance or persistence of those desirable or undesirable traits. Thus, parents should pay full attention to choosing a worthy spouse before marriage (Avicenna, Bi Ta). In Avicenna's writings, it is stated that one of the greatest goals of a righteous marriage is to raise pure and worthy people (Dolati & Soleymangoli, 2015).

In Avicenna's approach to religious upbringing, special attention is attached to some of these precise points, which we present as the foundation of religious upbringing, including: Choosing a worthy spouse is one of the factors laying the foundation for the religious upbringing of a child from Avicenna's perspective. Marriage is a sacred and valuable covenant made between a man and a woman, by which the two become sympathetic companions and life partners.

Avicenna has mentioned the selection of a suitable spouse, hygiene during pregnancy and breastfeeding periods, giving the child a good name, etc., all of which are aimed at creating suitable conditions for raising children (Avicenna, Translated by Qasim, 2015). Accordingly, Avicenna has mentioned the positive consequences of selecting a worthy spouse, including: raising a righteous child, achieving peace and tranquility, satisfying sexual needs, completing and developing the two opposite genders, social health and security, and meeting spiritual and psychological needs. In Avicenna's opinion, meeting spiritual and psychological needs is one of the most important goals of marriage in the religious upbringing of a healthy and righteous child. And the first steps in upbringing should begin with choosing a worthy spouse; because the most important factor in raising worthy children is the parents who have the greatest influence on the child in terms of heredity and environment. The influence of parents on a child's proper tempers, moods, and body is very important and significant in cultural, social, moral, emotional, and psychological aspects. Because parents transmit themselves to their children, and the children must live with those habits and traits for a lifetime. Based on this, one should be extremely careful in choosing a good spouse, because one's spouse, in addition to being a lifelong partner, will also be the father or mother of their children in the future. Avicenna emphasizes the proper performance of the duties assigned to a woman, and considers it appropriate for her to have the following qualities: wisdom, piety, modesty, intelligence, kindness, fertility, compliance, obedience, and chastity (Avicenna, Translated by Qasim, 2015). Based on the above mentioned, we come to the conclusion that from this perspective, Avicenna presents marriage as a factor that lays the foundation for religious upbringing, because the beliefs and actions of parents undoubtedly affect their children, but he does not consider this impact to be the governing factor in human destiny and believes that humans are capable of education and are obligated to do so regardless of their heredity.

## 5.2. Nutrition

According to Avicenna, the body and soul have a mutual relationship and each affects the other. Nutrition, type of food, and its quality are the factors affecting children's bodies, which should be considered in terms of its impact on their attitude, tendency, and performance (Avicenna, Translated by Najmi Zanjani, 1940). Avicenna believes that from the perspective of Islam, the truth of man is his spiritual and moral aspect. The goal of religious upbringing is also to cultivate religious sense and to help man reach spiritual perfection and to form Islamic insight and attitude. Avicenna advises mothers to pay attention to the type and quality of their nutrition in terms of its halalness after conception, during pregnancy and breastfeeding. A child who thrives on haram nutrition and spends his childhood this way will gradually lose his religious nature (Avicenna, Translated by Najmi Zanjani, 1940).

## 6. Content of Religious Upbringing

### 6.1. Tawhid

Tawhid is the first and most important content of religious upbringing that should be taught to children. According to Avicenna, the concept of theology is the principle and foundation in religious upbringing, and the rest are subsidiary to that principle. In this regard, he states "And God is not an "essence" that changes by accepting opposites. God Almighty is not an essence, as He cannot be described and has in common other things" (Avicenna, Translated by Hassan Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1998, p. 67).

Avicenna has repeatedly recommended in his works the issue of monotheism and its recognition and teaching of this individual duty to children. Avicenna considers the nature of God to be free from the idea of any kind of physical dimension for it. Based on Avicenna's monotheistic teachings and his efforts to establish evidence to prove the inherent monotheism of God, the real goal of human life is to achieve closeness and divine pleasure and to be ascribed to His attributes. Therefore, the truth of human existence is manifested only in the shadow of a monotheistic attitude, and all human actions and activities must have a monotheistic trace in them, otherwise they will be invalid (Avicenna, Translated by Hassan Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1998).

Avicenna gives the following evidence to prove Tawhid: Whenever one thinks about an object, the human mind recognizes two distinct qualities of it: one is essence, which comes in answer to the question "What is it?" and the other is existence, which comes in answer to the question "Does it exist?" Therefore, one of the foundations of Avicenna's philosophy is the distinction between essence and existence (Khansari, 2013, p. 99). Avicenna believes that the existence of an object is added to its essence and it is existence that gives truth and reality to every essence (Avicenna, Translated by Shakuri, 2011). This fundamental principle becomes the basis for another principle of Avicenna, namely the division of the existent into the Aseity and the possible. Because if the distinction between existence and essence, in other words, the rule of "*every contingent being is composite duality, composed of quiddity and existence*", is neglected, this division will not be possible; because mere existence without regard to mode can no longer be divided into the existent and the possible. Therefore, Avicenna benefits from this principle in arranging the system of existence. He emphasizes the status of the Divine Being, which is the same as the objectivity of existence and essence (al-Haqq al-Mahiyyah) and the limitation of possible beings. Therefore, Avicenna bases the teaching of monotheism on the principle of the existence of God's essence and strives to teach this monotheistic principle.

## 6.2. Akhirah

Belief in *Akhirah* (resurrection) is the second principle of belief constituting the content of religious upbringing. In Avicenna's wisdom, it is stressed that the one Creator is worthy of obedience and people need to be aware of this. If respect for the Creator and the implementation of His commands are not taken into account, cruelty will await the individual and society (Avicenna, Translated by Yaserbi, 1998). In this regard, some people seek personal benefits and pleasures and, when faced with collective interests, emphasize individual and personal benefits. On the contrary, some people care about collective habits and enjoy divine rewards because of their respect for divine laws (Avicenna, Translated by Yaserbi, 1998). This requires a precise introduction and understanding of divine knowledge. Religious knowledge is necessary for exaltation and reward in the hereafter. In order to develop knowledge in humans, it is necessary to pay attention to worship, remembrance, and religious ceremonies (Avicenna, Translated by Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1998). Since God has established the resurrection as the scale of justice to control the human soul, it is crucial for children to perceive this religious principle and have control over their behavior and hold accountability for their actions.

## 6.3. Prophethood

Regarding the teaching of the prophethood principle, Avicenna believes that the religion originating from *Waḥy* (revelation) and is implemented in society by prophets is the most perfect religion, because it satisfies the material and spiritual needs of man and can lead him to happiness (Parsania, cited in Avicenna, 2012).

From Avicenna's point of view, once children get familiar with the principles of monotheism and resurrection, it should be made clear to them in their religious upbringing that society needs a guide and lawgiver (the principle of prophethood or the necessity of the existence of prophets). In his opinion, a prophet must have characteristics that distinguish him from others so that people will obey him. One of these characteristics is miracles (Avicenna, Translated by Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1998). "The miracle of the prophet is of two types; one is actual taking place at a certain point in time. The Quran describes many actual miracles for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), such as the speaking of pebbles and the determination of the Qiblah of Medina. According to Avicenna, an actual and temporary miracle is not enough, because its time will come to an end. Another type of miracle is a verbal miracle, such as the Holy Quran; the eloquence of the Quran in terms of its words, meaning, and style, and its news of the unseen, are all true and right" (Avicenna, Translated by Hassanzadeh Amoli, 1998, p. 112). Based on the above, it is inferred that children should be taught the principle of prophethood and that every society needs an infallible lawgiver and guide so that it can follow the path of guidance.

## 6.4. Imamate

After the Prophet presented the orderly rule of society and administration of people's affairs, there should be someone who succeeds him, who is either named by the Prophet himself or who is known to most of the people from his obvious deeds. They will find him to be far-sighted in directing the people. He is steadfast and better than all the people and knows the commands of God better than the people. No one else is as well-known as he is, and such a person must be chosen by the people to succeed the Prophet. He also mentions other characteristics for him, and from the last part of his speech, where he mentions the ascribed caliph after the appointed caliph, it is clear that his view of the elected caliph is that those who will take over the government of the Muslims in later periods. The philosophy of Imamate is based on establishing general and permanent laws and is not specific to certain years and includes the current and subsequent periods. By the elected caliph, he must have meant the rulers who came and will come after the Twelve Imams. And the condition is that the Imam must be more aware of the commands of God than all people. It is inferred from his view that those who take charge of the political affairs of the nation must be religious scholars. Hence, according to him, politics is included in religion (Avicenna, Translated from Yar Shater, 1953, p. 101). According to the above mention, it appears that by teaching the principle of Imamate, Avicenna meant the explanation of the ascribed caliphs who are the infallible Imams and the appointed caliphs who will be in charge of the Muslim community after the infallible Imams.

**Conclusion**

Based on Avicenna's views, religious upbringing means familiarizing a child with Islamic concepts and teachings in a way that is associated with inner acceptance and practical commitment. This process should contribute to forming positive attitudes towards religion and should begin at early age even before a child is born. The ultimate goal of religious upbringing is to achieve divine proximity. For this purpose, it is necessary to provide the required tools, such as strengthening the sense of religiosity and familiarity with the Quran and Islamic teachings. Parents and teachers should act as role models and adhere to religious principles themselves so that children can assimilate them. Additionally, parents and teachers should avoid extremes in religious upbringing, as this can pose serious harm to a child's personality development. Avicenna highlights the significance of striking balance in conveying the content of religious upbringing and suggests that parents should provide the basis for proper upbringing before marriage and pay attention to the effective factors after it.

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