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The Transformative Power of Idealism: Rebirth of a Philosophy Based on Quranic Allegory of Companions of the Cave

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Abstract:

This article explores the concept of idealism and its potential to transform society into a more equitable, just, and compassionate world. Idealism if equals to the highest standards becomes a burden, but for the developing world, such burdens may function as a transformer. By examining historical and contemporary examples, philosophical theories, and practical applications, the article argues that idealism, when grounded in realistic and actionable goals, can drive significant social change. We also provide an interpretation of the Quranic anecdote of the companions of the cave (seven sleepers) to a rebirth of the enlightened ones in the right time.

Keywords: Idealism, Seven sleepers, Mahayana

Introduction:

Idealism, the belief in pursuing noble goals and envisioning a

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perfect society, often faces skepticism in a world dominated by pragmatism and materialism. However, history demonstrates that idealistic visions have the power to inspire movements, shape policies, and create lasting change. This article examines how idealism, rooted in ethical and philosophical principles, can lead to the betterment of society. The notion of paradise, as an ideal world is skeptically intriguing. In such a heightened standard a simple mistake may ruin the philosophical system of the paradise. We already discussed the evolution of consciousness and the allegory of Adam and Eve (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024) which concerns the role of suffering in a deep learning education. Experience and the authenticity of a being stands in opposite of idealism. Empirical studies which builds a life are building blocks of the reality. While theories remain in the realm of paper universe. The quest of every philosopher is to examine his/her theory at the right time and right place, although 100 years away from the birth, a philosopher quests for rebirth in his ideas. Immanuel Kant discussed the timeless nature of philosophical inquiry in his works, emphasizing that philosophers often engage with ideas that transcend their immediate historical context. Friedrich Nietzsche often reflected on the cyclical nature of philosophical ideas and their resurgence in different eras. G.W.F. Hegel emphasized the historical development of ideas and the notion that philosophy continually revisits and reinterprets past concepts. Alfred North Whitehead famously said that "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."Martin Heidegger discussed the idea of "repeating" the origins of philosophical thought to uncover its essential truths.

The Philosophical Foundations of Idealism:

Idealism has deep roots in philosophical traditions. Plato's theory of forms posits that the material world is an imperfect reflection of ideal forms, suggesting that striving for these ideals can improve reality (Plato, 380 BCE). Kantian idealism emphasizes the role of human reason and morality in shaping a just society, advocating for actions that respect the intrinsic worth of individuals (Kant, 1785).

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Historical Examples of Idealism in Action:

Throughout history, idealistic visions have driven social movements and reforms. The abolition of slavery, led by figures like William Wilberforce and Frederick Douglass, was fueled by the ideal of universal human rights and equality (Hochschild, 2005). The civil rights movement, spearheaded by Martin Luther King Jr., drew on the ideal of racial equality and justice, profoundly transforming American society (King, 1963).

Idealism in Modern Social Movements:

Contemporary social movements continue to be guided by idealistic visions. The environmental movement, epitomized by activists like Greta Thunberg, advocates for a sustainable and ecologically balanced world, urging immediate action to combat climate change (Thunberg, 2019). The pursuit of gender equality, championed by organizations like UN Women, seeks to dismantle systemic sexism and promote equal opportunities for all genders (UN Women, 2020).

The Role of Idealism in Policy Making:

Idealism also plays a critical role in shaping public policies. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, embodies the ideal of universal human dignity and rights, providing a framework for national and international laws (UN, 1948). Policies promoting universal healthcare, such as those seen in Scandinavian countries, reflect the ideal of equitable access to health services, leading to improved societal well-being (Kangas, 2010).

Challenges to Idealism:

While idealism has transformative potential, it faces significant challenges. Critics argue that idealistic goals are often unrealistic and impractical, leading to disillusionment and failure. Additionally, the pursuit of ideals can sometimes result in

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unintended negative consequences if not tempered with pragmatism and careful planning (Berlin, 1990).

Balancing Idealism with Pragmatism:

To effectively harness the power of idealism, it must be balanced with pragmatism. This involves setting achievable goals, employing evidence-based strategies, and remaining adaptable in the face of challenges. The Nordic model of social democracy exemplifies this balance, combining idealistic principles of social welfare and equality with pragmatic economic policies to create prosperous and equitable societies (Andersen et al., 2007).

Philosophical Approaches to Idealism in Practice:

Several philosophical approaches provide frameworks for implementing idealism in practice. John Rawls' theory of justice as fairness advocates for structuring society based on principles of equality and fairness, promoting policies that benefit the least advantaged (Rawls, 1971).
Amartya Sen's capability approach emphasizes enhancing individual capabilities and freedoms, guiding development policies towards human well-being rather than mere economic growth (Sen, 1999).

Case Studies of Idealism Leading to Positive Change:

1. *Education Reform in Finland:*
   Finland's education system, renowned for its excellence, is grounded in the ideal of educational equity. Policies ensuring equal access to high-quality education, regardless of socio-economic status, have led to outstanding educational outcomes and reduced social disparities (Sahlberg, 2011).

2. *Healthcare in Cuba:*
   Cuba's healthcare system, despite limited resources, is based on the ideal of universal healthcare. By prioritizing preventive care and community health, Cuba has achieved impressive health indicators, such as high life expectancy and low infant mortality

rates (Feinsilver, 1993).

3. *Rwanda's Gender Equality Initiatives:*

   Rwanda has made significant strides in gender equality, driven by the ideal of gender parity. Through progressive policies and quotas, Rwanda has achieved the highest proportion of women in parliament globally, fostering inclusive governance and social progress (Burnet, 2011).

The Future of Idealism:

Looking ahead, idealism will continue to be a driving force for social change. The rise of digital activism and global interconnectedness allows for the rapid dissemination of idealistic visions, mobilizing individuals and communities towards collective action. By integrating idealism with technological innovation and global cooperation, societies can address complex challenges such as climate change, poverty, and inequality (Castells, 2012).

Spiritual rebirth:

We have already analyzed some Quranic narratives as metaphorical with more than advisory or historical meanings (Davoudpour, A.R., 2024b,c) . The story of the Companions of the Cave in the Quran[1] illustrates the contrast between individual spiritual knowledge and societal religion. After centuries, societal acceptance of their spiritual insights reflects a maturation in collective understanding. Those who embraced this knowledge initially sought refuge in a cave due to persecution stemming from societal ignorance. Upon their return, they found that society had eventually adopted these spiritual truths, with their precious knowledge having gained immense value over time (Sells, 1999).

An additional element in the narrative is the loyal dog, which embodies traits of fidelity and insight, transforming into a lion-like figure guarding the cave against intruders. From the amalgamation

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[1] Quran (Sura Al-Kahf) 18:9-28

of Quranic metaphors and teachings, one can extract profound insights akin to the Buddha's path to enlightenment within the Quran's complex layers (Saeed, 2006).

Enlightened Society in Buddhist teaching:

In Buddhism, Mahayana and Hinayana are two terms referring to the primary schools of this religion.

Mahayana: Mahayana means "great vehicle" or "large chariot." This school is one of the two main branches of Buddhism, advocating that salvation (nirvana) is attainable for all individuals, not just monks. Mahayana teachings emphasize compassion and aiding others in their journey to salvation. Bodhisattvas, those who are close to achieving enlightenment but choose to return to help others, play a central role in this tradition (Harvey, 2013).

Hinayana: Hinayana, meaning "small vehicle" or "lesser chariot," is commonly referred to as Theravada. This is another principal school of Buddhism, which believes that salvation is only achievable through individual effort and strict adherence to religious precepts. Theravada focuses primarily on monks and monastic life, staying closely aligned with the original teachings of the Buddha (Gethin, 1998).

The Mahayana in Buddhist teaching can be considered as a time when the great wheel starts to turn. While Hinayana explains a self-consciousness.

Conclusion:

Idealism, when grounded in ethical principles and balanced with pragmatic strategies, has the potential to transform society towards a better world. By drawing on philosophical insights and learning from historical and contemporary examples, individuals and policymakers can harness the power of idealism to create more just, equitable, and compassionate societies. In this article we tried to elaborate the meaning of Idealism, while trying to clarify the

concept of Idealism in a society. While the great wheels of Mahayana starts to turn, a philosophy, a dream of a philosopher and his theories becomes vivid and the society tends to clarify cons and pros of a paradise.

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