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Title of research article

Moral Autonomy, Rational Faith, and Pedagogical Transformation: Reassessing Immanuel Kant's Philosophy of Religion and Education in the Enlightenment Context

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Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive examination of Immanuel Kant's philosophy of religion and education, with particular attention to his critical distinction between moral religion and historical religion. Kant's claim that authentic religion must be grounded in morality and reason rather than revelation is explored in depth, alongside his argument that the moral law, embedded within human consciousness, serves as the only valid foundation for faith. By rejecting ritualism, ecclesiastical dogmatism, and external authority, Kant reframes religion as an ethical project centered on moral autonomy and rational duty. The paper also investigates Kant's educational philosophy, which he conceives as a lifelong process of cultivating character, freedom, and the capacity for rational self-legislation. Education, for Kant, is both a moral and practical necessity for guiding humanity toward its highest destiny—progress toward enlightenment and moral perfection. The study situates Kant's thought within the broader intellectual currents of the Enlightenment, emphasizing his enduring influence on modern pedagogy, secular ethics, and debates on the relationship between faith and reason. By reassessing the integration of religion and education in Kant's critical system, this article argues that his philosophy remains a cornerstone for understanding the ethical foundations of religious practice and the transformative aims of education. It also highlights the contemporary relevance of Kant's ideas for discussions on moral education, civic responsibility, and the inseparability of ethical life from both individual autonomy and collective progress.

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Introduction:

Religion is regarded as one of the most significant social realities present in all human societies, as no stage in human history, past or present, has known a community devoid of religion. Religion is a fundamentally human phenomenon, fulfilling psychological and social functions indispensable to both the individual and the collective; moreover, it is essential for the continuity of society. Religion is not limited to worship, integrity, and uprightness but encompasses all that contributes to the realisation of good within society. It functions as one of the forms of social organisation that regulate human relationships with one another, as well as their relationships as individuals with metaphysics. Religious responsibility is inherently individual, a fact that has prompted societies to place great emphasis on religious teachings because they influence personal behaviour and their role in shaping groups and subcultures. Religion is thus considered one of the most crucial components of culture. From this premise, the following question may be posed: What is the relationship between religion and education, particularly within the rational and practical framework of Western civilisation?

1. Nature of Religion

Definitions of religion vary from one philosopher to another, each according to his perspective and field of expertise. This diversity arises from the multifaceted nature of religion: on the one hand, it is connected to both the individual and the community; on the other hand, it is linked to the metaphysical realm, which human reason cannot fully comprehend. The diversity of religious manifestations and forms has led to the proliferation of sects and denominations. Religion is also characterised by a sacred quality that grants it exceptional sanctity, rendering it even more enigmatic and making such matters difficult to address. Consequently, metaphysics has been concerned with determining the veracity of religious beliefs and uncovering their truths, whereas the role assigned to religion within society and its influence on social life in all its dimensions fall within the scope of sociology.[1]

Moreover, any attempt to establish a single definition of religion requires us to approach it as being connected to all aspects of humanity, particularly those related to conduct. For this reason, religion is found in every human society, and its presence in life stems from its distinctiveness, unlike other human concerns, in that it is innate, as indicated in the Qurʾānic verse: "So set your face towards religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the nature of God according to which He has created people. Let there be no change in the creation of God. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know" (Qurʾān 30:30, Saheeh International). Here, "the nature of God according to which He has created people" refers to that innate awareness, springing from the depths of the soul, that this existence has one God who has control over all things and, by His will, ordains all matter.[2]

This is what we also find in Western thought, particularly with René Descartes, who believed that the human self is marked by deficiency, as evidenced by its awareness of a perfect Being, namely, God. A definition from *Larousse* states, "The religious instinct is shared among all human races, even among those most primitive and closest to animal life. Interest in the divine, or perhaps in what transcends nature, is one of humanity's eternal universal tendencies. This instinct does not vanish; it weakens or fades only in periods of excessive civilisation and then only in a very small number of individuals."[3]

Gustave Le Bon states, "Thanks to beliefs, which sometimes destroy yet more often create, nations and the foundations of true civilisation are established. Without these beliefs, nations cannot survive. From strong belief is born an unshakable conviction, and from such conviction stem the most significant events."[4]

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[1] Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad Rashwān, *al-Dīn wa-l-Mujtamaʿ: Dirāsa fī ʿIlm al-Ijtimāʿ al-Dīnī* [*Religion and Society: A Study in the Sociology of Religion*] (Alexandria: Markaz al-Iskandariyya lil-Kitāb, 2004), 3.

[2] Ibid., 400.

[3] *Larousse*, Paris, vol. 5, 997.

[4] Gustave Le Bon, *al-Ārāʾ wa-l-Muʿtaqadāt* [*Opinions and Beliefs*], 145, cited in: Sulaymān al-Khaṭīb, *Usus Mafhūm al-Ḥaḍāra fī al-Islām* [*Foundations of the Concept of Civilisation in Islam*], 73.

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In view of the diversity and variety of definitions of religion, we have chosen to classify them into three categories:[5]

1. **Definitions Based on Inner Contemplation of Religious Sentiment**

   Among the leading figures of this approach is Herbert Spencer, who said of religion: "It is a sense that we are floating in a sea of mysteries and a belief in a power whose temporal and spatial limits cannot be conceived."

   Max Müller considered religion "an attempt to express the inexpressible and to conceive the inconceivable; it is our awareness of the infinite, our love of God, and our longing for Him as absolute perfection."

   Friedrich Schleiermacher stated that religion is "our sense of absolute need and dependence, and our submission to a Being higher than ourselves."

2. **Definitions Based on Intuition**

   For example, Immanuel Kant defined religion as "the recognition of all our duties as divine commands." Henri Bergson, on the other hand, viewed religion as "a defensive reaction initiated by nature against the dangers that intelligence might introduce disintegration for the individual and dissolution for society."[6]

3. **The Third Category: Definitions Based primarily on Objectivity**

   This category reflects a positivist approach to religion. Proponents of these theories rely on comparative analysis between different religions, ancient and modern, primitive and advanced, living and extinct. We also find that Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) rejected arguments that are detached from the world concerning the existence of God. He considered religion the essential force binding individuals together, regulating their relationships, guiding their conduct, and serving as an effective means of distinguishing between human error and truth, a role he saw embodied in Christianity.[7]

Baruch Spinoza affirmed that religion is one of the necessities of society.

Auguste Comte (1798–1857) held that his "positivist religion" should realise its central principle of universal brotherhood and promote love. Religion, for him, is the instrument through which this love is achieved, and harmony between heart and mind is established. Thus, the mission of religion is to create both spiritual and material bonds among human beings under the motto "Live for others," as a means to overcome individual selfishness and attain an ideal social life.[8]

3. Linguistic definition of religion

Among the linguistic definitions, we refer to that of al-Rāzī, who wrote:

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[5] Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad Rashwān, *al-Dīn wa-l-Mujtamaʿ: Dirāsa fī ʿIlm al-Ijtimāʿ al-Dīnī* [*Religion and Society: A Study in the Sociology of Religion*], 8–10.

[6] Ibid., 10.

[7] Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad Rashwān, *al-Dīn wa-l-Mujtamaʿ: Dirāsa fī ʿIlm al-Ijtimāʿ al-Dīnī* [*Religion and Society: A Study in the Sociology of Religion*], ibid., 12.

[8] Ibid., 13.

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"*Tadāyanū*: to engage in transactions on credit; *ista dāna*: to borrow. *Dāyantu fulānan* means I dealt with him, giving him a loan and receiving a loan from him. *Al-dīn* (with kasra) signifies custom, practice, and status. *Dānahu—yadīnu-hu* (with kasra) means that he subdued him and enslaved him, so he became *dān*. In the ḥadīth: *Al-kayyis man dāna nafsahu wa-ʿamila limā baʿda al-mawt* ('The intelligent one is he who subdues his soul and works for what comes after death'). *Al-dīn* also denotes recompense and reward. One says: *dāna yadīnu-hu dīnan* ('he recompensed him'), as in the saying, *kamā tadīn tudān* ('as you deal, so you will be dealt with; as you act, so you will be treated'). In addition, in the verse of the Qurʾān: *A-innā la-madīnun* ('Will we indeed be brought to account?') [Q 37:53], meaning 'We shall certainly be recompensed and held accountable.' From this comes *al-dayyān* as an epithet of God Most High; *al-madīn* meaning 'the servant'; *al-madīna* ('city') for a people subdued by labour, as if governed by authority. *Dānahu* means 'he owned him'; it is said that, from this root, the word *madīna* ('city') is derived. *Al-dīn* also signifies obedience: one says, *dāna lahu yadīnu dīnan*, meaning 'he obeyed him,' and *dayyanahu tadyīnan* ('he entrusted him to his judgement')."[9]

We find numerous meanings for the word "dīn," each of which varies according to its context in speech, ranging from recompense to obedience and other nuances. Ibn Manẓūr, in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, offers further meaning, which may be summarised as follows:

"*Dīn*: al-Dayyān is one of the Names of God, Mighty and Majestic, meaning Judge or Arbiter. Some of the early generations, when asked about ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him), said: *He was the Dayyān of this community after its Prophet*, that is, its judge and ruler. *Al-Dayyān* also means the Subduer, as in the verse by Dhū al-Iṣbaʿ al-ʿAdwānī:

'You, son of ʿUmuk, have gained no precedence in lineage over us, nor are you my Dayyān to subdue me!' meaning: you are not my conqueror, to govern my affairs. *Al-Dayyān* thus signifies God, Mighty and Majestic, the Subduer, Judge, and Arbiter. It is derived from *dāna al-nās*, meaning 'he compelled them to obedience.' One says: *danatuhum fa-dānū* 'I subdued them, so they obeyed.'

Al-Aʿshā al-Ḥaramzī addressed the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in verse:

'O Master of Mankind and Dayyān of the Arabs.'

In a report of Abū Ṭālib, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is quoted as saying: *'I want from Quraysh a word by which the Arabs will tadīn (submit) to them'*, meaning to obey and yield to them.[10]

Dīn also denotes the state or condition. Ibn Sallām said: *Al-dīn al-ḥāl*—'dīn is condition.' An Arab said: *'If you saw me in a dīn other than this,'* meaning 'in a condition other than this.' Thus, *dīn* signifies circumstance and condition, possibly because religion is a purely human affair and a uniquely human state. Religion is a social system; animals have no religion because they lack this system and, as Hegel observed, they cannot rise above the level of sensation to that of thought, nor ascend through reason to the Absolute."

From an Islamic perspective, the statement that animals are "without religion" does not mean that they are devoid of faith, for the Qurʾān states: "And there is not a thing except that it exalts Him with His praise, but you do not understand their way of exalting" (Q 17:44, Saheeh International). Religion is a human concern because prophets are human; however, according to the Qurʾān, religion is also addressed to the jinn.[11]

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[9] al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣiḥāḥ* [*Selected Lexicon of al-Ṣiḥāḥ*], 91.

[10] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* [*The Tongue of the Arabs*], vol. 13 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār Ṣādir), 166–167.

[11] al-Khashshat, Muḥammad ʿUthmān. *Madkhal ilā Falsafat al-Dīn* [*Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*] (Cairo, Egypt: Dār Qibāʾ li-l-Ṭibāʿa wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2001), 12.

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Thus, religion depicts the human condition within its social framework and clarifies one's status as shaped by faith and religious observance. This quality is what distinguishes humankind from all other creatures.

Al-Jurjānī held that *sharīʿa* (divine law) is called *dīn* insofar as it is obeyed:

"*For the sharīʿa, insofar as it is obeyed, is called dīn; and insofar as it gathers people together, it is called milla (community of faith).*"[12]

The *philosophical dictionary* of Jamil Ṣalībā, in its linguistic treatment of religion, does not depart from what we have outlined above:

"*In Arabic, dīn signifies custom, condition, way of life, policy, opinion, judgement, obedience, and recompense as in the Qurʾānic verse Mālik yawmi al-dīn ('Master of the Day of Recompense,' Q 1:4) and in the proverb kamā tadīn tudān ('As you deal, so will you be dealt with').*"[13]

Referring to André Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*, we find that the etymology of the word *religion* has been widely debated. Most classical authors (Lactantius, Augustine, Servius) derive it from *religare* ("to bind"), seeing in it the idea of connection, whether the bond of obligation toward certain practices, the bond uniting people to one another, or the bond between humans and deities. Cicero, on the other hand, derives it from *relegere*, meaning "to go over again with care," from *revoir avec soin*. The Latin *religia* initially expressed a feeling of fear and conscientious regard for duty toward the gods. Among the ancients, there was no singular term *religia*; instead, they spoke of *religiones*, denoting "forms of worship." The singular term later came to designate "religion" in general. Thus, the word expresses three principal ideas:[14]

1. The Concept Encompasses:

1. The idea of affirming a theoretical doctrine or a set of intellectual convictions.

2. The idea of a collection of ritual acts of worship.

3. The idea of a direct and spiritual relationship between the human soul and God.

The Terminological Definition of Religion

Religion has been defined in numerous ways within the scholarly literature, including in dictionaries, works of Arabic linguistics, and Islamic writings. Among these is the definition offered by Jamil Ṣalībā in his *Dictionary*:

"Religion, according to our ancient philosophers, is a divine ordinance guiding rational beings towards goodness. The distinction between *dīn*, *milla*, and *madhhab* is as follows: *sharīʿa* (divine law), insofar as it is obeyed, is called *dīn*; insofar as it unites, it is called *milla* (faith community); and insofar as it is a reference point, it is called *madhhab* (school of thought). Another view holds that *dīn* is attributed to God Most High, *milla* to the Prophet, and *madhhab* to the jurist, although these terms are often used interchangeably. Thus, it has been said that they are essentially one but differ in consideration. The term *dīn* is applied to the divine law or the *sunna* that is what God has legislated for His servants in terms of laws and ordinances."[15]

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[12] al-Jurjānī. *al-Taʿrīfāt* [*Definitions*], 1st ed. (Egypt: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Khayriyya, 1306 AH), 47.

[13] Ṣalībā, Jamil. *al-Muʿjam al-Falsafī* [*The Philosophical Dictionary*], vol. 1 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1982), 572.

[14] Lalande, André. *Mawsūʿat Lālānd al-Falsafiyya* [*Lalande's Philosophical Encyclopaedia*]. Translated by Khalīl Aḥmad Khalīl. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. Beirut–Paris: Manšūrāt ʿAwīdāt, 2001, 1204.

[15] Ṣalībā, Jamil. *al-Muʿjam al-Falsafī* [*The Philosophical Dictionary*], vol. 1, 572.

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Alternatively, it is a divine ordinance that calls upon rational beings to accept what has been brought by the Messenger; or it is a divine decree guiding those endowed with reason, through their own choice, towards goodness in itself; or it is God's true religion, free from doubt, veil, or deviation a disclosure by the Almighty to His servant of His manifest sovereignty, evident in and over all creation, and of His hidden majesty, which no name can fully denote nor form encompass, yet which is the source of all existence.[16]

These definitions converge in articulating the concept of religion, as agreed upon by many scholars concerned with this subject, who concluded that it is a divine ordinance guiding the attainment of goodness. The pursuit of goodness is an essential human aspiration that is sought for the sake of happiness, and it inclines humanity toward peace, tranquillity, and both spiritual and physical well-being, which humans strive and struggle to achieve. Religion, as a heavenly gift for the service of humankind, necessarily fulfils this purpose.

2. Kant's Philosophy of Religion

Kant distinguishes between two kinds of religion: moral religion, which he regards as the one true faith grounded solely in morality, and historical religion (the revealed religion). He discusses historical religion only in relation to moral religion, which is based entirely on pure reason in its practical use. Its laws are a priori independent of any empirical reality or historical events. The person governed by this moral law and moved by it believes in a single God without the need for revelation or proof.

Historical religion, by contrast, is founded upon a transcendent form of knowledge, namely, divine revelation. In this framework, morality is the result rather than the foundation. Kant views all forms of historical religion as having their origins in prophets, who served as the first teachers. Instruction in historical religion does not rest on the concepts and notions of pure reason but rather on knowledge of historical facts, such as revelation and miracles. All historical faith presupposes revelation, and its dissemination depends on the confirmation of its truth. Thus, its legitimate method is rooted in tradition and transmission, whose purpose is to preserve the miracle of revelation and to perpetuate it as sacred commandments taught to humankind so that they become established instructions for every generation.

This faith is therefore grounded in external revelation and requires teachers. Historical faith is a taught faith, wherein religion is presented as dogmatic beliefs accepted through faith rather than subjected to reason, with each belief being offered as a truth taught to all people of every age. To ensure the continuity of revelation as a sacred command for humankind, revelation was accompanied from the outset by miracles. Historical faith holds that evil resides in the human heart and that no one is entirely free from it.[17]

Kant holds that this historical faith lies at the root of the fragmentation of humanity's unity, as competing and conflicting forms of belief view one another as being in error. From this arises conflict, which tears apart the bonds of human unity and strikes at the very foundations of global peace and security. Nevertheless, Kant acknowledges certain advantages to tradition and transmission, such as the promotion of language education, resilience in the face of major anti-religious revolutions, and the preservation of religious continuity.

In historical faith, commitment is characterised by mere compliance and passive obedience to divine revelation. People in this form of belief relate to God as although He was an earthly ruler demanding service and obedience, failing to recognise that in fulfilling their duties toward others, they are also carrying out God's commands. As a result, religion comes to be understood primarily as divine worship rather than as a pure moral obligation. Historical faith is thus a faith of worship, which cannot be regarded as salvific or redemptive because it is not moral faith; it is not grounded in a genuine disposition of the heart but rather in the assumption of divine favour

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[16] al-Khashshat, Muḥammad ʿUthmān. *Madkhal ilā Falsafat al-Dīn* [*Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*], 14.

[17] Ghīdān, al-Sayyid ʿAlī. "Falsafat al-Dīn ʿinda Kant" ["The Philosophy of Religion in Kant"]. *Majallat al-Rāṣid al-ʿIlnī* [*The Scientific Observer Journal*], no. 3. Beni Suef University, Egypt, (2016), 81.

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through worship. Such worship, in and of itself, lacks moral value and instead immerses people in a flood of empty rituals that foster fanaticism among nations, leading them to commit massacres and killings under the illusion of fulfilling a sacred duty and placing them in a state of perpetual hostility toward all other people.[18]

Kant firmly rejects this, for in his view, morality is the very foundation of religion, and revelation holds no epistemic status.[19] He thus set revelation aside and excluded it, not by denying the existence of God but by making God a moral postulate within the *Metaphysics of Morals*, which serves as the basis for pure rational religion.

According to Kant, morality rests upon three postulates:[20]

1. The existence of God.

2. The immortality of the soul.

3. The freedom of the will.

For Kant, rational religion is a moral religion that is entirely distinct from historical religions in general and from Judaism and Christianity in particular, which he considered borrowed garments for it. Rational religion is grounded in morality, and morality, in turn, rests on reason, unlike Christianity, a positive historical religion that grounds morality in the Kingdom of God.

Thus, pure rational religion is not something that precedes morality or merely supports it; rather, it is a religion founded upon reason, for it is grounded in morality, and morality itself is founded on reason, so it is built solely upon reason.

This understanding of religion overturns the prevailing conception of historical religions, which place absolute certainty in religious symbols. Such certainty, Kant argues, is unwarranted because the knowledge implied by these symbols transcends sensory perception and therefore cannot be possessed. Hence, the three postulates are not theoretical knowledge that can be demonstrated, in contrast to revelation, which aims to provide proofs. Instead, they are beliefs within pure rational religion that give meaning to ideas that theoretical pure reason can conceive but not prove.

These beliefs are therefore legitimate despite their lack of certainty. Moreover, they are not purely individual or subjective convictions, for reason itself has posited them as ideally suited to the human condition. Kant further argues that if we possessed complete theoretical certainty about God and immortality, it would be impossible to reject these ideas by an act of will; our morality would then be purely mechanical, reducing us to marionettes whose strings are pulled by fear and desire.[21]

Since, for Kant, moral action is not tied to its external outcomes, nor does it derive its worth from any pleasure sought, whether sensory or intellectual or from the pursuit of utility, whether private or public, its value lies solely in its being performed by the agent out of a sense of rational duty for its own sake. In emphasising this point, Kant denies true goodness to anything other than the good will, which he deems the necessary condition for an action to be moral. An action is good only if accompanied by goodwill, which is also an indispensable condition for a person to be worthy of happiness.[22]

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[18] Ghīdān, al-Sayyid ʿAlī. *Falsafat al-Dīn ʿinda Kant* [*The Philosophy of Religion in Kant*], 82.

[19] Ibid., 81.

[20] al-Khashshat, Muḥammad ʿUthmān. *Madkhal ilā Falsafat al-Dīn* [*Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*], 23.

[21] al-Khashshat, Muḥammad ʿUthmān. *Madkhal ilā Falsafat al-Dīn* [*Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*], 24.

[22] Ghīdān, al-Sayyid ʿAlī. *Falsafat al-Dīn ʿinda Kant* [*The Philosophy of Religion in Kant*], 85.

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Here, Kant transcends all prevailing religious notions of goodness, moral action, and reward or punishment, which he considers to be without intrinsic value, since goodness is understood as action arising from a good will bound by duty, its meaning shaped by reason alone.

The connection between religion and morality in Kant's philosophy is most clearly demonstrated in the postulate of God's existence, which he considers indispensable. This postulate is bound to the idea of human moral striving: our effort in the moral domain compels us to conceive of a perfect, benevolent being in whom all virtues are complete and who is capable of granting happiness to those who strive morally. God, therefore, is the ultimate guarantor of happiness and the end of moral action.

Thus, Kant underscores the profound relationship between morality and religion: morality necessarily leads to religion, pointing to a moral lawgiver beyond humanity itself, conceived as its ultimate end. He does not deny the moral depth of religion; without morality, religion has no value. In this way, reflection on pure morality culminates in the recognition of an active principle of God.[23]

Morality, in essence as Kant himself affirms, is the individual's submission to the universal and the belief that obedience to the universal is the highest form of freedom and supreme power. Thus, morality from its very inception contains a religious element.

Accordingly, Kant defined religion in moral terms, stating:

"Religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands. The religion in which I must first know something to be a divine command before acknowledging it as my duty...."[24]

For Kant, religion is present from the very beginning and at every stage of moral reasoning. The enlightenment in Germany, however, was less audacious than that in France. Although philosophers of both countries relied upon reason and refused to submit to any authority other than their own sovereignty, German thinkers were closer to acceptance than rejection. Humanity, nature, and God were regarded as almost one: God was seen as the final purpose in nature and as the author of moral law. This perspective can be discerned not only in Kant but also in Johann Gottfried Herder and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who, alongside Kant, represent the three pillars of German enlightenment philosophy.

In France, by contrast, Enlightenment thought was marked more by rejection than acceptance; reason there leaned more toward analysis than justification. Thus, a careful researcher will find that the problem of religion was deeply present throughout all stages of Kant's intellectual development before, during, and after the critical period. Religion was a guiding force for Kant, despite his evident engagement with modern science and his meticulous study of its development. Kant began his intellectual journey as a scientist rather than a philosopher. When he turned to philosophy, he did so from a scientific background heavily influenced by natural science and Newtonian mechanics, a context that shaped his philosophical inquiry through constant interaction with it.[25]

3. The concept of education

3.1. The Definition of Education: Linguistic and Terminological

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[23] Ibid., 85.

[24] Kant, Immanuel. *al-Dīn fī Ḥudūd Mujarrad al-ʿAql* [*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*]. Translated by Fatḥī al-Miskīnī. 1st ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Jadāwil li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, (2012), 243–244.

[25] Ghīdān, al-Sayyid ʿAlī. *Falsafat al-Dīn ʿinda Kant* [*The Philosophy of Religion in Kant*], 86.

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Returning to the classical Arabic lexicons, we find that the word *tarbiya* (education/upbringing) is derived from three linguistic roots:[26]

1. **First Root:** *Rabā–yarbū* (to increase, to grow), as in the Qurʾānic verse:

   "And whatever you give in usury to increase within the wealth of people will not increase with God" (Q 30:39).

2. **Second Root:** *Rabī–yurbī* (patterned like *khalfī–yukhfī*), meaning "to be raised or brought up."

3. Ibn al-Aʿrābī said:

   فمن يكن سائلًا عني فإني ***************** بمكة منزلي وبها ربيتُ

   English translation

   *So whoever asks about me, I am, indeed, ********** In Mecca is my home, and there I was raised.*

4. **Third Root:** *Rabba–yarubbu* (patterned like *madda–yamuddu*), meaning "to nurture, guide, govern, care for, and manage affairs."

5. Ḥassān ibn Thābit, as cited in *Lisān al-ʿArab*, said:

   ولأنت أحسن إذ برزت لنا********** ******** يوم الخروج بساحة القصر

   من درة بيضاء صافية   ********* ******** مما تربب حائر البحر

   English translation

*And you were the most beautiful when you appeared to us ********** On the day you came forth to the courtyard of the palace, like a pure white pearl ********* Nurtured in the depths of the sea's basin.*

In summary, the linguistic concept of *tarbiya* encompasses growth, upbringing, and correction. These meanings complement one another, forming a comprehensive understanding of education as a process of fostering development, nurturing character, and guiding moral and intellectual refinement.

3.2. The Terminological Definition of Education[27]

The definition of *tarbiya* (education) in terminology varies according to the philosophical foundations adopted by human societies in training their generations, instilling their values and beliefs, and shaping their understanding of the educational process, its methods, and its tools.

Some Western scholars have defined education as follows:

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[26] al-Muqahwī, Mawza Zayd ʿAbd Allāh. "Mafhūm al-Tarbiyya al-Islāmiyya" ["The Concept of Islamic Education"]. *Majallat al-Dirāsāt al-ʿArabiyya* [*Journal of Arab Studies*], Minya University-Kuwait, n.d., 528.

[27] Ibid., 529.

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- **Plato:** Education aims to provide the body and soul with all possible beauty and perfection.

- **Aristotle:** Education is the preparation of the mind to acquire knowledge, just as the earth is prepared for plants and crops.

- **Herbert Spencer:** Education involves preparing human beings to live a complete life.

- **John Dewey:** Education is life itself, not merely preparation for life.

Among Muslim scholars:

- **Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna):** Education is ʿāda (habit), meaning the repeated practice of an action.

- **Ibn Khaldūn:** Education is a process of social upbringing that accustoms the individual to the customs and values prevailing in society while imparting existing knowledge and information.

Contemporary educators also differ in defining education:

- Education is a deliberate or spontaneous process shaped by a society's culture to nurture new generations, equipping them with awareness of their roles and responsibilities.

- It is the set of experiences through which a learner develops intellectual, innate, perceptual, emotional, social, and motor capacities, acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to face life and adapt to it.

- Education is a process of socialisation and acculturation, enabling full participation in society. Under specific conditions, political systems, governing structures, and firmly held beliefs, education becomes a means of shaping and refining individuals.

In general, education is a comprehensive process that addresses all dimensions of human existence: psychological, intellectual, emotional, personal, behavioural, cognitive, and social. It shapes an individual's way of thinking, approach to life, and interactions with others, occurring in the home, the school, and every environment. Education embodies individual, social, and ideal concepts, reflecting the full development of the human being.

3.3. Education in the Individual Sense[28]

Education, in its individual sense, is the preparation of a person for future life. It equips the individual to face the natural world, uncovers a child's innate abilities and talents, and works to nurture, develop, and strengthen them.

This stage, known as childhood, cannot flourish without a supportive environment and sound, guided education beginning within the family under the care of parents who pass on their cultural and educational heritage. Here, the child receives their earliest upbringing. Parents, mothers and fathers alike, as well as teachers, bear responsibility for educating children, shaping their character, and preparing them for life.

Psychologists have focused on child development, its stages, contributing factors, and age-specific characteristics, as well as individual differences. They have also demonstrated that children have essential needs that must be fulfilled to ensure healthy growth:

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[28] al-Muqahwī, Mawza Zayd ʿAbd Allāh. "Mafhūm al-Tarbiyya al-Islāmiyya" ["The Concept of Islamic Education"], 530.

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➢ Cognitive and intellectual development needs

➢ Physical and motor development needs

➢ Social and moral development needs

➢ Emotional and psychological development needs

4. The Relationship between Religion and Education from Kant's Perspective

Kant saw humanity's most significant task as learning how to occupy its place in creation with dignity and to understand what it truly means to be human. In the preface to his *Lectures on Pedagogy*, he writes that a human being can become truly human only through education; education forms a person, and its ultimate goal is the cultivation of character, developing a being who acts freely and preserves their own moral integrity.

Kant adds that divine providence has willed that humanity must bring forth goodness from within itself. Providence says to humankind: *Strive in the world; I have endowed you with all the capacities for goodness, and it is your duty to cultivate them. Your happiness or misery depends upon yourself.* Thus, divine providence has not bestowed goodness or evil upon humanity but rather the capacity for goodness and its development.

He further observes that within humanity, there are numerous latent seeds of virtue; our task is to cultivate these seeds in harmony with our natural capacities, to mature humanity beginning from these origins, and to work so that the human being may attain their destiny. Animals instinctively fulfil their destinies without knowledge; only human beings must actively strive to realise their purpose. This, however, is impossible unless a person possesses a clear conception of their ultimate destiny.[29]

Kant believed that education is an art that requires continual refinement through the efforts of successive generations. Each generation, having learned from its predecessors, becomes more capable of providing an education that develops all the natural capacities of humanity, ultimately guiding the entire human race toward its destiny.

He divides education into two main components: discipline (training) and enlightenment (instruction and moral formation).

4.1. Aims of Education According to Kant

- **Discipline (al-tahdhīb):** Cultivating self-control and curbing one's instincts to prepare a person for life in society.

- **Culture (al-taṯqīf):** Equipping individuals with intellectual, artistic, and practical knowledge that allows them to thrive.

- **Acquisition of prudence (ḥuṣūl al-fiṭna):** Developing wisdom and the capacity to act thoughtfully.

- **Moral Formation (takwīn al-akhlāq):** Building characters on the basis of moral law.

4.2. Types of Education According to Kant[30]

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[29] Badawī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. *Falsafat al-Dīn wa-l-Tarbiyya ʿinda Kant* [*The Philosophy of Religion and Education in Kant*]. 1st ed. Beirut, Lebanon: al-Muʾassasa al-ʿArabiyya li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Nashr, 1980, 121.
[30] Ibid., 123.

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1. **Physical Education**

2. a. *Education of the body:* Training the body to develop strength, health, and resilience.

3. b. *Intellectual education:* Cultivating cognitive abilities and mental discipline.

4. **Moral Education**

5. Moral education is, in Kant's view, the core element of human formation. He regarded humanity's ultimate goal as moral perfection. A person should perform good actions because they are good and fulfil their duties because they are duties. This imperative is absolute and not conditional upon circumstances or rewards.

   Moral education, therefore, must be founded on moral principles rather than mere discipline. Discipline prevents only faults, whereas moral education shapes a way of thinking. The goal is to accustom children to act according to moral laws, not out of external motives or fear of punishment. Discipline tends to become a habit that may fade over time, whereas an understanding of moral principles allows individuals to internalise and uphold justice.

   Since grasping these principles is not easy for children, parents and teachers play a crucial role in enlightening and guiding them toward moral reasoning, helping them cultivate morality from within.[31]

Kant affirms that religion is the moral law within us, insofar as it derives its authority over us from a legislature and sovereign; it is morality applied to the knowledge of God. If religion is not bound to morality, it becomes nothing more than a quest for blessings. Hymns, prayers, and attendance at church services should serve to inspire a person with renewed strength and courage to reform themselves; otherwise, they are only expressions of a heart imbued with a sense of duty. Such acts are not good deeds in themselves but merely preparations for good deeds. A person can be pleasing to the Supreme Being only by becoming a better human being.[32]

In Kant's view, religious practices and rituals do not themselves create morality; rather, their only proper function is to provide renewed energy for moral self-improvement. Vice is evil because it is evil in itself, not because God has forbidden it. A child feels within themselves a law, moral law, which must be strengthened, clarified, and affirmed in their soul. In Kant's eyes, a person is worthy of contempt when corrupt, and this contempt stems from within the moral consciousness of humanity itself, not merely because God has forbidden wrongdoing.

It is not necessary, Kant argues, for the legislator to be the creator of the law. A ruler, for example, may prohibit theft in their country, but this does not make them the creator of that prohibition. In this way, one learns that righteous conduct is the only path to being worthy of happiness, and this morality must appear as a natural law, not an arbitrary command. Thus, religion is inseparably embedded in the entirety of morality.[33]

Conclusion

A religion founded solely upon theology can never encompass true morality, for such a faith produces only fear on the one hand and, on the other hand, intentions and schemes driven by the expectation of reward, resulting merely in superstitious worship. Morality must therefore come first, followed by theology; this, according to Kant, is what constitutes religion. Moral instruction must precede religious instruction.

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[31] Badawī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. *Falsafat al-Dīn wa-l-Tarbiyya ʿinda Kant* [*The Philosophy of Religion and Education in Kant*], 144.
[32] Ibid., 145.
[33] Ibid., 145.

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In conclusion, the relationship between religion and education is one of harmony and complementarity: in the Islamic world, religion contains all the elements of both individual and social education, whereas in the Western world, both religion and education share the same aim: the establishment of universal human morality.

Acknowledgement

Conflict of Interest

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