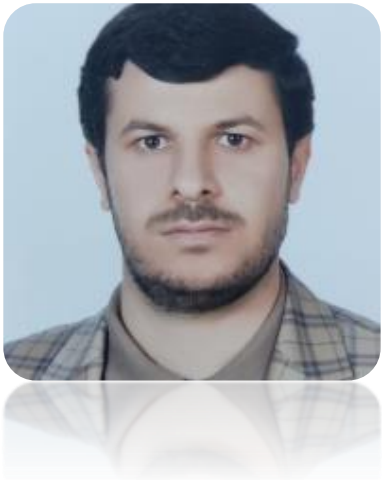


A review on Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani’s Approach towards Islamic Social Sciences; Emphasizing aspects related to Islamic management



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Abstract:

One of the most important motives for understanding the viewpoint of the so called “stylist scientists” in every scientific field is the fact that they have had the utmost influence on the trend of researches of that field, and determining the framework for the next researchers in that scientific field. It seems that Ayatollah Muhammad Reza Mahdavi Kani was one the most effective pioneers in Islamic social sciences after the Islamic revolution. Through establishing the Imam Sadiq University, he meant to educate knowledgeable, elevated researchers in this field. So this is out of the question that understanding his view to the Islamic social sciences will be very useful for the researchers. This paper is the result of a

research conducted to understand and explain his point of view to Islamic social sciences, emphasizing Islamic management. The references used in this research are as follows: all of his written literature- including his books and articles, and the text of his lectures- and available recordings of his lectures. The findings of this research could be categorized in two parts; the first part includes explanations for the necessity to attend to Islamic social sciences- the why question- and explanation of the essence of Islamic science, and the framework of Islamic social science researcher- the how question. The second part explains the concept of Islamic management from the viewpoint of Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani, and recounts the basic requirements to make Islamic management and organization come true.

Keywords: Devine knowledge, Islamic social science, Islamic management, Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani

1 Introduction

One kind of researches in every field of human knowledge are the ones done to understand and explain the outstanding scientists in those fields. Conducting such researches in inchoate fields of knowledge is way more important, because regularly the first scientists and researchers in every field are the most important ones to explain the necessity for research in that field. Besides these people affect the next research trends to a great extent and in fact they form a framework for the researchers in the future. Islamic social science is not an exception. So, regarding the novelty of this field, studying the views of its pundits affects the explanations of the essence, the importance, and the qualities of research in Islamic social science.

Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani was an outstanding Mujtahid (clergy man practicing Islamic jurisprudence) political activist and champion during the Pahlavi's reign. He also played part in Islamic republic system in crucial positions after the Islamic revolution. Though studying

his activities show that establishing Imam Sadiq University with the purpose of integration of common social science and Islamic knowledge, and resigning all other positions in 1361, was a turning point in his scientific and political life. Such conduct in that important period of Islamic republic's life shows the importance of Islamic social science in his view. In addition, he was one of a few pundits of Islamic social sciences that did not limit himself to research and theorisation alone, and started to educate researchers for this cause to a great extent, which is impossible without having a strong basis of the essence and requirements to achieve Islamic social sciences.

Like the majority of the scientist and pundits who have not explained or declared their own opinions and its distinction from other similar ideas, Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani has not written a book about the fundamentals of Islamic social sciences based on his own ideas. So, the authority to explain his views of this crucial matter lies upon students and researchers who have been educated in his school of thought and are familiar with his views towards Islamic social sciences and especially Islamic management.

So, this paper is exploratory research conducted with the purpose of explaining Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani's view of Islamic social science, particularly the Islamic management in the aforesaid framework- the importance, the essence, and the qualities. For this cause all of his written materials and recorded lectures were studied and noted, the data were collected, revised, categorized, and finally systematically analyzed. Be noted that in this paper, the best effort was taken to use the exact sentences and phrases of Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani, but in some cases that this was not possible, the author was committed to take in the content of his speech.

2 Why Islamic social science is important

Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani has some words in this regard that sheds light on the origin of his views about the necessity of research in Islamic social sciences. He says in this regard:

After the creation of the revolution council, we gradually understood that we are two groups of people who don't understand each other; some were the alumni of universities abroad and some other were the alumni of hoze-ye-elmieh (an Islamic institution for educating clergy men). Of course, both groups were revolution supporters and meant to serve it. We felt that for saving the revolution we cannot dissolve neither the university nor the hoze. Our revolution was Islamic, meaning that people revolted to follow Islamic objectives; but to achieve those objectives we needed planning and content explanation. In that time the purpose of the revolution was very comprehensive. We believed that Islam had economy, politics, worship, morality, and planning; but we merely had some generalities of these ideas in our minds and they were not yet practiced; because we didn't have a [Islamic] government before to try to explain these, we did not even feel we needed to. So, for execution of Islam, we needed to know what Islam had brought to us about these issues. We needed to explain Islam in some way to be satisfactory. So, the principles and the path to the purpose was general and we did not have intellects to explain the purpose and execute it.

Besides, he believed that after the Islamic state is settled, the continuation of this path will be dependent upon having theories extracted from Islamic teachings. He refers to an anecdote of Amir-al-Mo'menin:

When Amir-al-Mo'menin says raise your children for the future, it is obvious that the future meant here is not what the followers of other schools of thought demonstrate for us.

So besides he did reject everything that is called exigencies, he believed that cultural invasion has two levels; first the surface which consists of behaviours and actions that could corrupt the society's morality, second is the philosophical layer and must be noted that it is more important than the first layer; as thought is the foundation of action, if the mind of the society gets hurt, the behaviour of the society will corrupt too. So, he strongly believed that in the philosophical layer we must either become laic and leave everything [religious values] behind in the name of laicism or liberty or choose to be religious and regard the religious principles as much as it is possible and manifest it in social relations.

3 The essence of Islamic social sciences

Before we investigate the essence of Islamic social science from Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani's stand point, we must explain the relation between religion and science from his perspective; then follow the concepts of divine knowledge and Islamic knowledge in his statements to accurately demonstrate the concept of Islamic social science from his perspective.

The relation between science and religion

We can investigate this relation from two aspects; theoretically and practically. We understand that Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani has left us with statements for both these aspects.

Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani believes that even though the religious knowledge and science are in different spheres, and its arguments and predicates are different than the religion's, science and religion have deep relations in both theoretical and practical aspects.

In theory every science is somehow affected by an especial worldview which could be either divine or materialist. It undoubtedly affects the perspectives, philosophies, motives, and scientific inferences. As a result, we can say that religious beliefs have an undeniable effect on scientific research. On the other hand, most of the sciences inform man kind of mysteries of creation, theologies, order, and discipline in the universe. This awareness is

effective in achieving theosophy and stabilising the faith in the faithful, by that we claim that science also has strong effect on religious beliefs, so religion and science are theoretically interactive.

In practice, religion affects science in two ways; First, applying the results of scientific research in the sense that it is a voluntary act, is not be outside the scope of religious rules or, more precisely, the field of jurisprudence. Second, if we take one step back, having divine orientation in learning science- considering it may not revolutionize the science- will definitely affect the science's different aspects to a great extent. This is what lead us to the concept of divine knowledge in Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani's thought.

Divine Knowledge

From Islam's perspective, learning every useful science is indispensable. Though some natural sciences are mentioned in the holy Quran and Sunnah, it was never meant to teach us how to cure or operate on patients. But it is Muslims' duty to learn them. This does not mean that we cannot speak of divine knowledge or Islamic knowledge. Considering Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani's statements, we can conclude that he believes that all of the science (i.e. natural and social sciences) could be divine; furthermore, he believed that social sciences could be Islamic too.

In his view, the divine being of a science depends on the kind of view and intent of scientist and researcher in gaining that knowledge. that is, if science is intended to serve the community, Muslims, Islam, the slaves of God, to remove loads that are on the shoulders of the people and the Islamic state, as well as to be educated and held by Muslims in the world, that science will be divine and should be noted that in such a situation though the content of science will not change but education, orientations, methods, applications, and reflections will certainly change.

In this regard, he emphasized that the mystery of the divine knowledge is the divine direction in their acquisition and application. in this case, every science, whether it is

medicine or jurisprudence, is divine. It is clear that in such a sense of divine knowledge, in an Islamic society, all sciences should be divine.

Islamic Social Science

Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani believes that Islam influences social sciences in the two ways, and thereby explains the concept of Islamic Social Sciences. He believes that social sciences are influenced by philosophical foundations. On the other hand, while accepting Allamah Tabatabaei's view of the presence of subjectiveness in social sciences, he has clarified the effects of Islam on social sciences. Both of them are explained in short;

Social sciences are rooted in philosophy and researcher's philosophical view is absolutely effective in the cognition process. So, the philosophical foundations must be considered, and our worldview and etymological basis in these sciences must rely on divine worldview. Put differently, our purpose must be achieving a scientific-cognitive system which is based on religious and Islamic teachings. So, beware that if we ignore the relation between social sciences and religion and divine worldview, we can never reach an Islamic society.

On the other hand, most of the social sciences are intersubjective, and they are based on an especial worldview, though most of the universities in the world today do not think this way. As a result, social sciences differ from school to school, region to region, and nation to nation. Social sciences are not true worldwide as the natural sciences are (this concept is very similar to the constructivist paradigm). Based on Allamah Tabatabaei's view, man's knowledge and perception could be divided into two branches; real perceptions and intersubjective perceptions. Somethings are concrete and science wants to explore them in the outside world and understand their rules. So, this kind of science is working on concrete objects. But sometimes the science is setting rules more than exploring. For example, the law is one of them. Even sciences as economics, management, politics, and communication sciences that are treated in universities as empirical ones, are different than real perceptions. Of course, these sciences are connected experimental in practice, but as the

essence of these sciences is dependent on humans' will, they are not absolute sciences. This is why we can see differences in these sciences as they are treated in different schools and isms in different manners. For instance, the communist and socialist economics is different than the capitalist economics; each of them have adapted their lives to their principles. It is the same with management and law. These are sciences that are strongly dependent on human's will. They cannot exist without human kind just like the physics does.

4 How to generate Islamic Social Sciences

Looking at what remains from Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani's statements, we could see that he addressed how to generate Islamic social sciences both theoretically and practically. We are going to explain both in short;

The outline for generation of Islamic social sciences

Today's sciences are a result of experiment; so, we cannot and must not ignore them. But we must pay attention to the values of every scientific branch and try to use them as means to help humans' prosperity. It does not mean when we say we are Muslims and want to have Islamic social sciences, that we reject every effort that human kind has ever put in science and we want to start over. This argument that because the west has created the common science it is un-Islamic and must be put aside, is not valid. Though humans' experience might contain some errors, it is not something that anyone can ignore. To draw conclusion, what is important is that this experience is valuable; meanwhile it has some errors that makes us as Muslims not to be able to take the west's experience for granted and do not investigate it.

So, the researcher who is going to study the society's issues from an Islamic perspective and suggest Islamic-Scientific solutions for them, first needs to understand the problem carefully, and then present it to Islamic values system and the science to which the problem is related, to finally make a true (not mechanical) connection between Islamic values system

and science for making suggestions that match both criteria and are acceptable for the society. It must be mentioned that in this explanation, the “Islamic values system” means understanding both “values” and “their priorities”. In other words, when referring to Islamic knowledge and values, we must look for exploring values and contrary values in Islam, and understanding the interrelation of these values; to know if one value has a priority over the other one. So, the duty of Islamic social sciences scholar is to face the problem, understand Islam’s view towards (utilising jurisprudence, the fundamentals of jurisprudence, morals, the holy Quran’s interpretation, etc.), meanwhile learn the sciences’ suggestions for solving that problem; then try to accumulate this knowledge and in fact realise religious principles in a manner that suits the epoch.

It must be noted that religion has direct, precise and detailed dicta about some social issues, but some other issues are not directly addressed. Islamic social sciences’ scholar’s duty is clearer when facing the first category of issues. But about the second group of issues, the process is rather complicated. Under such circumstances the scholar must refer to the Islamic values system and suggest Scientific-Islamic solutions.

It seems that answering two essential questions at the end of this discussion is necessary. First, does the possibility of making mistakes will result in disgrace for Islam? Second, can we make sure that the knowledge we obtain via this methodology is really Islamic? Put differently, can we make sure that the outcome of the researcher’s work who meant to integrate the “Islamic values system” and “common social science” is approved by the holy Quran and other religious resources? Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani’s answer to this question is negative. He believes that we do not claim that whatever we say and do is Islam, but we act based on our interpretation of Islam. So, when we talk about “Islamic management” we actually talk about our interpretation of Islam’s view towards management. He believes that if we do not pay attention to this fundamental point, some might use the theoretical errors and malfunctions in Islamic social sciences’ researchers’ activities to undermine the possibility of producing and utilizing Islamic social sciences.

The second question is “how can this blueprint come true?”. In other words, “how can we educate scholars who can establish this plan?”. Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani believed that this was the main educational method in the Islamic civilisation, and that establishing Islamic university is an effort for reviving this tradition; the very act that he himself has done establishing Imam Sadiq University. In the following we are going to explain this via his own statements in detail;

A precedent to the enforcement of this blueprint

The historical background of schools and religious seminaries in the Islamic community (especially in Iran) indicates that education in various fields of social sciences and experimental sciences was primarily focused on teaching religion, knowledge, Islamic beliefs, and ethics. Various perspectives and different studies of the history of Islamic civilisation and Iran agree on the point that the central focus of all teachings has been religious education. This means that all the scholars and intellectuals who were knowledgeable in various sciences and arts, or specialised in some experimental fields, had also studied religious sciences (such as interpretation of the Holy Quran, jurisprudence, principles of jurisprudence, philosophy, and theology). It is worth considering that the separation of "knowledge" and "religion" which occurred from the Safavid period onwards, has been the result of Westernisation and loss of self-esteem facing the West. Unfortunately, Muslims made a grave mistake which them to losing what they had. Today, the realisation of Islamic universities is dependent upon returning to traditional Islamic education, in a manner that education in various fields, especially social sciences and religious studies, is blended and integrated with each other.

Islamic University: Characteristics and Objectives

Islamic university can have two meanings: "a university that supports religion" and "a university that is supported by religion." Imam Khomeini considered both of these meanings. His intention for an Islamic university was not just for it to appear Islamic; for example, for women to wear hijab and for men to observe Islamic ethics. Besides, Imam

Khomeini's intention was not merely to have religious seminary lessons taught at universities or university courses taught at seminaries, or to blend religious and academic sciences together. Rather, the goal was to create a healthy environment in universities in terms of both knowledge and ethics, where the philosophy of sciences, perspectives, motivations, orientations, and education (especially in social sciences) would be based on religious orientation and righteousness. The principles of knowledge and teachings should be organised within the framework of divine worldview so that the university and seminary, while preserving their own identities, can move together in the direction of promoting Islam, independence of the country, and the public welfare through understanding, interaction, and exchange of views in the realm of theory, and cooperation and collaboration in the realm of practice. They should study various sciences in all scientific and academic fields to please God; they should align their way of life with the ordinances and laws of the Creator and strive not to deviate as much as possible from the main and innate path of creation, and employ the knowledge and wisdom that all prophets and scholars of the world have acquired for the prosperity and the well-being of human society. On this basis, the goals of Islamic universities (especially in the field of humanities and social sciences) can be categorised as follows from the perspective of Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani (may he rest in peace);

Establishing a scientific and knowledge-based system based on Islamic teachings and worldview

In humanities and social sciences, which have philosophical foundations, the theoretical basis must be considered; so that the epistemological and ontological foundations of these sciences be based on divine worldview. Therefore, the primary goal of an Islamic university is to achieve a scientific-cognitive system that is based on divine and Islamic teachings. An Islamic university is a university that is founded based on monotheistic worldview; on this basis, it engages in research, plans in the light of this perspective, accepts students, and selects knowledgeable professors; it does not shy away from the hustle and bustle of

Western-oriented individuals and critically evaluates and does not blindly accept what comes from the West in the name of science and experience.

Responsiveness to the daily needs of society based on Islamic principles and in a modern scientific framework.

The other main goal of an Islamic university is to identify the issues and needs of society in the fields of sociology, law, philosophy, education, politics, management, and other social sciences, and to provide solutions based on religious principles in a scientific and globally acceptable format. As humans advance in terms of technology and innovation, more questions arise for them. An Islamic university should be able to provide acceptable answers to the questions of today's society. However, it should be noted that, as previously mentioned, the focus is on the religious and scientific nature of these answers, not a montage of Islamic and Western theories.

Creating a common language between the seminaries and academia

The third goal of establishing an Islamic university is to avoid the one-dimensional education of students. Nowadays, seminary students and university students usually do not have a common language for communication. The purpose of an Islamic university is to educate students who can communicate and understand seminarians.

Educating self-made and capable students

The fourth goal of an Islamic university is to educate purposeful and self-made alumni. This education is both scientific and practical. The aim of such a university is to educate students who seek divine goals.

Imam Sadiq University, the practical initiative of Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani in realization of an Islamic university

According to the statements of Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, he felt that universities must be reformed, and of course, this task has could

not be accomplished in a short period of time; so, the discussion of establishing Imam Sadiq University, as an Islamic university, was raised during that period. The educational program at Imam Sadiq University is fundamentally based on offering courses in a combined and integrated manner from the very beginning. In fact, Imam Sadiq University is a combination of two elements, seminary and university, therefore, in addition to academic courses, this university also offers courses that can somewhat familiarize students with Islamic sources. Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani believed that there is a kind of interaction, fracture, and reaction between "religious teachings" and "today's scientific issues", creating the possibility of linking religious teachings with scientific issues (in their modern sense). Despite the simple expression above, this task is indeed quite challenging.

Due to this reason, Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani believed that unfortunately, what is primarily referred to as Islamic social sciences studies, due to the difficulty of conducting genuine studies, is a form of montage. This means that they find a few hadiths and then interpret them according to the words of a Western scholar. In this perspective, they first take inspiration from a Western scholar, then apply the Quranic verses and narrations of the infallible to it. They believed that many of these efforts are commendable and stated that we know many people in the world have worked hard and have gained knowledge that we need to acquire from them. However, Islamization the social sciences does not mean that we should present the words of Western scientists followed by a saying from the infallible Imams. Although all these steps are good, they are merely preliminaries to achieve the lofty goal of providing "scientific" and "Islamic principles-based " solutions.

5 Islamic Management

In the realm of Islamic management, we commence by exploring the views of Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani on the essence of management (whether it is a science or an art) and proceed to review topics such as the prerequisites of Islamic management and the conditions for achieving Islamic management from his perspective.

Management, Science or Art?

One of the fundamental questions in the field of management is whether "management is a science or an art." Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani suggests that "management" is not a "science" but rather an "art"; however, this does not mean that managing does not require any knowledge or lack the need for "experience"; just like most artistic fields that have their specific schools and are taught in universities. So, by "management is an art" we mean that being a good manager requires inherent talent as well. It's not the case that anyone who learns management can necessarily be a good manager. Although nobody becomes an artist simply by benefiting from artistic talent; rather, it also requires education and experience. In this way, "management" is an "art" that requires "science" and "experience".

Scientific Qualifications of an Islamic Manager

Then Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani elaborate on the concept of "science" required for a manager in an Islamic society among the three concepts of "art," "science," and "experience," dividing it into three categories: "the science of management" "specialized sciences related to the field under management" and "understanding the Islamic values system." Accordingly, for example, a university that aims to educate managers in the field of economics based on an integrated system, needs to provide education and courses in three areas: management, economics, and Islamic sciences; so that they have knowledge of management, have expertise in their specific field under management (economics), and have a good understanding of the Islamic values system (including general values and specific values of the economic sector).

Islamic Management; From Theory to Practice

Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani's statements' analysis suggests that he considered developing a theory of Islamic management to be a necessary condition for the realization of an Islamic organization, but it will not suffice. In the following we elaborate on two points regarding the practical realization of Islamic management

The humanistic requirements for establishing an Islamic organization

One of the differences between Islamic management and the common management is the necessity of employees' commitment to Islamic values and the establishment of an Islamic organization. Therefore, merely possessing theories in Islamic management is insufficient to establish an Islamic organization; rather, employees' belief in the values of these theories and their commitment and motivation to realize these values are vital for the establishment and realization of Islamic management and organization. Accordingly, the cultivation of self-disciplined individuals should be an integral part of the university's mission aimed at producing knowledge in Islamic management.

Idealism in the realm of theory; Patience and gradualism in the realm of practice

Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani believed that it is not possible for a group of Muslims with theories in Islamic management to implement all Islamic values in an organization at once. In the realm of theory, we consider the main purpose and goal, but we must understand that in the realm of practice and in the stage of implementation, sometimes achieving a small part of the goals and values is sufficient and worthy of appreciation. The most important reason for this is that management is a collective concept (not individual) and since humans are fallible and capable of error, it cannot be expected that all members of the organization act flawlessly and completely in line with Islamic values. Therefore, the art of Islamic management lies in increasing the level of realization of Islamic values in the organization.

Therefore, it should be noted that the purpose of developing and implementing Islamic management theories is for the organization to gradually move closer to its desired Islamic model, and one should not expect a radical transformation. Neglecting this important point may lead to the argument that if all Islamic values are not implemented in a particular organization, then that organization and its management are not committed to achieving Islamic management. We believe that the complete realization of Islamic values only takes place during the era of the Imam Mahdi's government. Based on this, believing in the

gradual implementation of Islamic values in society and organizations is essential for addressing the concept of Islamic management.

6 Drawing conclusions

In summary, it can be said that according to Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani's point of view, the necessity of engaging with Islamic Social Sciences stems from human's will. Where there is a presence of human will, thought, and choice, a form of cosmopolitanism undoubtedly emerges. Therefore, it is clear that Islamic social sciences, both in theory and practice, have a close and deep relationship with cosmopolitanism. Since Islamic worldview differs from capitalist, Marxist, and similar worldviews, Islamic social sciences inherently have distinctions from social sciences in other schools that need to be studied.

He perceives the secret of producing Islamic social sciences in the real integration (not mechanical assembly) of common social sciences and the Islamic values system. He argues that the flourishing of Islamic civilization in the second and third centuries of the Hijri era was due to this integration, and the separation of these two has been the most significant factor in its decline. Consequently, a researcher in Islamic social sciences, in addressing the issues of Muslim society (and perhaps human society), must strive to produce Islamic social sciences by respecting common science (as a valuable human experience) and establishing effective and genuine interaction between these sciences and the Islamic values system. Through this process, they aim to create Islamic humanities that are not only approved by Islam and are aligned with creation's goals but also acceptable to contemporary society.

Understanding the Islamic values system in this perspective requires recognizing each of the values of Islam and identifying their priorities over each other. It is noteworthy that with this definition of the Islamic values system, no researcher can claim to have fully understood it and can employ it in research and theoretical frameworks. Therefore, it is essential to be cautious that the theories classified as "Islamic Social Science" are actually the researcher's interpretation of Islam's perspective on the issue. Hence, the essence of

Islamic social sciences should not be questioned because of potential mistakes of researchers.

Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani believed that being a good manager primarily requires a certain level of art and inherent talent for management. However, the actualization of this talent requires education and gaining experience. The required knowledge for a capable Islamic manager can be divided into three categories: the science of management, specialized sciences related to the management's subject field, and understanding the Islamic values system.

He emphasized that merely producing and possessing theories of Islamic management is not sufficient for the realization of Islamic management and the establishment of an Islamic organization. What is essential is the motivation and determination of managers and employees for achieving such an organization. Therefore, alongside educating researchers and theorists in the field of Islamic management, nurturing capable and committed individuals to Islamic values must be a priority in the agenda of Islamic universities.

Ultimately, it should be noted that patience and gradual progress are essential for establishing an Islamic organization. It is evident that management and organization are collective matters, and it cannot be expected that fallible and free individuals work flawlessly. Therefore, even if the theories developed in the realm of Islamic management are flawless and complete (which is not a realistic expectation), since humans cannot work flawlessly, implementing the Islamic values system in practice requires significant patience and effort.