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### THE METHODOLOGY OF ISLAMIC HUMAN SCIENCES With an Emphasis on Ayatullah Misbah's Doctrine pp: 5-19

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#### Abstract

Ayatullah Mesbah takes "the human sciences" to denote "a set of sciences dealing with understanding the human being, and describing, explaining, and interpreting individual and social phenomena (as human incidents), and directing human actions and reactions." For a discipline to be "Islamic", he requires it to meet such conditions as: complying with the foundational principles of Islamic thought, including ontological, theological, epistemological, methodological, axiological, and teleological principles. On the basis of the above-mentioned definitions, it is apparent that the subject matters of the human sciences are human actions and reactions, and their objectives are: description, explanation, interpretation, and direction. Taking into consideration the variety of the subject matters of these

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sciences, and the diversity of their goals, it is fully logical to anticipate a considerable multiplicity in their methods as well. In this paper, I will base my discussion on the objectives of the human sciences, and following a methodology of logical analysis, I will reflect on the logical requirements of the subjects and concepts employed in these sciences, to study their methodological implications, based upon Ayatullah Mesbah's doctrine.

**Keywords:** Ayatullah Mesbah, Methodology, Islamic Human Sciences, Rational Methodology, Experimental Methodology, Narration of Divine Revelation, Intuitive Methodology.

### Introduction

The methodology of sciences, including that of the human sciences, refers to general investigations about the proper method for research in a set of sciences by taking into consideration, their subject matters and their logical and epistemological requirements. The object of study in this branch of knowledge, i.e. methodology, which is classified amongst the second-order disciplines, is the "research method" in different sciences. From the advent of the human sciences, their research method has always been a matter of debate and quarrel among specialists. Empiricism, positivism, historicism, interpretationism, refutationism, and critical rationalism are only some of the most important approaches in this field. The issue of the methodology of the human sciences is so consequential that most of the problems discussed under the rubric of the philosophy of the social or human sciences, are related to these issues.

The problematic of the methodology of the human sciences from an Islamic perspective has become a major concern for Muslim thinkers, since the time they took the burden of producing Islamic human sciences. Although some of them advocate experimental method for the human sciences along with other sciences (باقري, ۱۳۸۲), some others restrict their methodologies to *Ijtihad*, i.e. eliciting answers from the Noble Qur'an and narrations from the Infallibles (مجيد اسمعيلي و عبد الحميد واسطى, 1394). Still some scholars suggest multiple methods due to the multiplicity of the subject matters of such sciences (آملی جوادى, 1378), while others recommend a combination of philosophical-*Ijtihadi* method because of the different objectives these sciences pursue. (خسرو پناه, 1390)

Ayatullah Mesbah, as a contemporary expert in Islamic thought, on the one hand, has extensively written on Islamic and comparative philosophy and epistemology, and on the other, has a long background in research in the domain of the human sciences from an Islamic point of view. His Ideas on the issue on hand can be found in different parts of his writings. Especially one can find a more systematic and elaborate treatment of this topic in his

*Philosophy of Islamic Education* (Mesbah Yazdi, 2011) and *Foundations of Islamic Human Sciences from the Viewpoint of Ayatullah Mesbah Yazdi* (A Group of Writers, 2019). What is missing; however, is applying his fundamental theories to various subjects and objectives of the human sciences, and we hope that this work may be able to take a humble step toward filling this gap, especially in the area of methodology.

All methods proposed for the human sciences by various schools and scholars have their roots in their theoreticians' theories of knowledge and their understandings of the subject matter and the objectives of these sciences. Human sciences are differently defined according to their subject matters, their methodologies, or their goals. Ayatullah Mesbah prefers a definition that covers modern human sciences and indicates their subjects and objectives as well. He takes "the human sciences" to denote "a set of sciences dealing with understanding the human being, and describing, explaining, and interpreting individual and social phenomena (as human incidents), and directing human actions and reactions." (A Group of Writers 1397 A.H., p. 23). This definition encompasses such disciplines as anthropology, psychology, sociology, history, economics, ethics, law, political sciences, management, and education.

He emphasizes that the proper method for studying an object is not arbitrary or conventional, but rather, it has a close tie to the nature of the object of study and to the concepts employed as subject and predicate in the propositions of such a discipline. In case the subject matter were a multi-dimensional one, it would require various methods for inquiry into all its aspects. Furthermore, the objective of a discipline can expand or restrict the subject matter, or confine research to some of its features. These modifications that goals make to the subject matter of a science can dictate a method (or methods) for its studies. Hence, one has to study the proper method(s) for the human sciences from the Ayatullah Mesbah's perspective, by taking the subject matter and the objectives of these sciences as depicted in his definition.

The human sciences include a wide range of sciences, the common point of which is their relation to human affairs and phenomena. This commonality notwithstanding, these disciplines cover a wide variety of subjects and problems. Their objectives also cannot be reduced to a single goal. On the basis of the above-mentioned definition for the human sciences, it is apparent that the subject matters of the human sciences are the human being, his actions and reactions, and their objectives are: description, explanation, interpretation, and direction. Taking into consideration the variety of the subject matters of these sciences, and the diversity of their goals, it is fully logical to anticipate a considerable multiplicity in their methods as well.

In this paper, I will base my discussion on the objectives of the human sciences, and by reflecting on the logical requirements of the subjects and concepts employed in these sciences, will study their methodological implications, based on Ayatullah Mesbah's doctrines.

As a preliminary step, I should mention that empiricism (and positivism too) which restricts the valid method for acquiring knowledge about any reality to sense perception and experience, has faced a wide range of contradictions and critiques. In its proper place in epistemology and the theory of knowledge, it has been explained that we need other methods along with, and even prior to experience so that one is able to understand different facts of the world (M.T. Mesbah 2017, Lesson 16). By proving this issue in the theory of knowledge, the narrow framework of sense perception is broken, and the realm of valid methods for gaining knowledge is broadened.

Intellect as a valid source of knowledge for universal ideas, and rational method<sup>1</sup> as the most valid method for unveiling reality provide a reliable base for all sciences. Intellectual understandings are related to the two realms of conception and judgment (*tasawur & tasdiq*). In the realm of concepts, intellect is used toward definition, because intellect is the sole source for creating universal concepts and intelligibles in order to make understandable some realities, sometimes even without the help of sense and imagination. The function of intellect in the domain of judgment becomes clear in the explanation and direction phases of the human sciences. That is because universal judgment (affirmative or negative) is possible only through intellect, whether by solely relying on intellectual premises or by getting help from other sources of knowledge as well. (Shīrāzi 1981, vol. 3, p. 419; Shīrāzi 1363 A.H., p. 300; Shīrāzi 1371 A.H., p. 312; Suhrawardi 1375 A.H., vol. 4, p. 143; Mesbah Yazdi 1383 A.H., vol. 1, p. 211-231).

### 1. Description

Since a scientist normally deals with universal concepts in his/her enterprise, one has to distinguish between various types of universal concepts used in the human sciences and their methodological implications for understanding and judging about them. So first, I will try to classify in a general mode, concepts related to the subjects of the human sciences (i.e. human actions and reactions) on the basis of epistemological principles, in order to arrive at proper methods for describing them. Not all universal concepts signifying human actions and reactions are of the same type, and each group of them has its own characteristics. Therefore, one has to investigate about them separately, and discover their proper methodologies accordingly.

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes the term "philosophical method" is used to denote the same meaning.

According to the well-known classification in the Islamic logic and epistemology, factual concepts (which are called “intelligibles”) are divided into three categories: a) essential concepts (or primary intelligibles), b) philosophical concepts (or philosophical secondary intelligibles), and c) logical concepts (or logical secondary intelligibles), each of which has its unique characteristics and requirements. (Jurjāni 1370 A.H., p. 97; Jabr et al. 1996, p. 933; Mesbah Yazdi 1383 A.H., vol. 1, pp. 189-200; Fana’i Eshkevari 1375 A.H., pp. 169-246).

### 1.1. Describing Internal Actions and Reactions

One is aware of one’s own internal actions, such as conceptualization and judgment, and one’s inner reactions, through knowledge by presence (*‘ilm hudhuri*). For this reason, one’s understanding of such realities is immune from falsity. But such knowledge is a personal encounter with reality, and it is not a subject of study by scientific disciplines. Sciences deal with concepts and statements, while knowledge by presence is void of concept by itself. The mental reflection of such understandings in the form of general concepts provides the human sciences with objects of study, so that one is able to define, explain or interpret them.

Some concepts like the free will, pain, and joy directly signify such inner actions and interior reactions. They act as mirrors to reproduce those subjective states and feelings in the human mind without any analysis or addition. This is why they are considered as “essential concepts” or “primary intelligibles”. To understand such concepts, and to comprehend or evaluate propositions employed to describe them, becomes possible only through rational pondering upon what is found through knowledge by presence, and empirical methods are of no use in this regard.

There are some other notions, such as development and backwardness, felicity and misery, or welfare and distress, which are comprehensible only when an action (or reaction for that matter) is compared with some other things. For instance, the concept of development can be abstracted by comparing it to a state of non-development. This type of concept is relational, that is, the same level of material or scientific progress that is called “development” in certain conditions, may be understood as retardation when it is weighed against more important objectives like spiritual and ethical improvement. The same is true about the concept of wellbeing and happiness which do not simply signify one’s enjoyment, but one’s joy is called happiness only when one’s current state of affairs is compared with his/her ideals and goals in life, and one recognizes that he/she is in the right direction toward those ideals. In epistemology, this type of concepts is called: “philosophical secondary intelligible” or “philosophical concept”. (Mesbah Yazdi, 1383 A.H., vol. 1, pp. 177-78)

Such concepts are prone to strength and weakness. To use philosophers' terminology, these concepts are of gradational levels. Person "A" at the time  $t_1$  may be happier than the same person at the time  $t_2$ ; and person A may be less happy than person B. Also, contradictory concepts of this kind can be used for the same person or society from two different points of view. For example, society A is developed in comparison to society B, and at the same time it is retarded when compared to society C. For the sake of studying and investigating about such concepts, one may need to seek help from the senses and experiment, but we need to employ rational method as well, to understand and describe this set of concepts, because one needs to operate mental comparisons and descriptions, before one is able to abstract and comprehend them.

### **1.2. Describing Social Institutions**

Some philosophers of the human sciences introduce social institutions as part of the subject matters of the human sciences (Selznick, 1996), despite the fact that social institutions are the products of human actions and reactions. Social institutions are defined in different ways. We can identify them as "rather stable models of comprehension, evaluation, and action in a society for satisfying people's necessities, in a manner that secures structural cohesion, social order, and solidarity, and the objective of social life is met in the highest possible level." Ayatullah Mesbah considers social institutions as products of human actions and reactions and not as independent objects per se (Mesbah Yazdi 1391 A.H., pp. 344-349). In any case, almost all concepts employed in this definition are abstract notions of the type of the philosophical concepts. Even "action" which is the most sensible concept, is included in the definition, thanks to the meaning ascribed to them. To describe social institutions requires a comprehensive knowledge of the visions, goals, values, and procedures in a given society. Therefore, the methodology for describing social institutions will be a combination of rational and interpretive methods. If empirical method had any role in this regard, it would be at the level of preparing the preliminary steps.

## **2. Interpretation**

Physical acts, coined in the human sciences as "behavior", are not considered the subject matter of these sciences. Instead, their designations (their so-called "meanings") are studied in the human sciences. The description of this set of behaviors is also a function of describing their meanings, which is called "interpretation", and is considered as an independent goal for the human sciences. (Little, 1991, pp. 68-87) I will deal with this goal under the rubric of Interpretation.

### **2.1. Interpretation of Meaningful Behavior**

Meaningful behavior (action) is a behavior which, compared to its objective, is the source for abstracting a certain title such as “encouragement”. In the same manner that a word signifies its meaning, a meaningful behavior also signifies its goal. An essential difference between the two is that the relation between a word and its meaning is purely conventional and a function of social agreement, while the meanings of actions may have a variety of sources, depending on the situation. Sometimes they follow the agent’s decision, as in the case that one smiles in order to affirm and encourage someone’s behavior. In other occasions, they result from a social agreement, even if the agent has not meant that goal, as in the case of someone who steps in an unfamiliar culture, whose gestures are interpreted according to the host culture. In a third occasion, the meaning comes out of a Divine design in carving a natural relationship between an act and its goal, as frowning that naturally signifies discontent.

What these instances have in common, are the elements of awareness and choice. Even in cases that the relation between an action and its meaning were natural, it would only signify such a meaning if the action is done purposefully; that is, out of cognizance and choice. Otherwise, it indicates no meaning and goes out of the subject matter of the human sciences. But wherein the meaning is the result of a social contract and convention, it also indicates the influence of these constituents on the part of the authorities who have fulfilled such a convention with a specific purpose and goal in mind.

A close examination of the process for producing and discovering the meaning of actions makes it clear that one has to find out the source of the abstraction of that “meaning” and “title”. Empirical methodology will not work here. Rather, if the meaning of an action depends on the agent’s intention, the proper method to penetrate into his/her mental aim would be an interpretational (hermeneutical) method. Actions, whose meanings are functions of social agreements, must be analyzed through historical as well as hermeneutical methods in order to grasp their cultural and traditional backgrounds in a given society. And in cases where the meaning has a natural relation to an action, such a relation should be discovered through field studies and cross-cultural inquiries as well as experimental observation.

### **2.2. Interpretation of Linguistic Symbols**

Employing language is one of the most common and most available tools for sharing one’s internal actions, reactions, and the meaning of actions studied in the human sciences. Words symbolize their meanings based on sheer linguistic conventions. Such conventions vary from one society to another,

and even in the same society may change dramatically throughout the history. For this reason, the meanings of words not only lack stability and absoluteness, but also fail to meet universality. One only can determine that a specific word has (or had) such a meaning in a given society in a specific time. Words enjoy various technical meanings in different branches of knowledge and arts as well as their literal meanings, which necessitate acquaintance with their specialized glossaries. Discovering the bond between words and their meanings is out of the reach of rational as well as experimental methods. The unique method here is to employ hermeneutical methodology. In the hermeneutical method, in order to find out about the intention of the speaker (or writer for that matter), one should learn linguistic conventions of the society in which these words and phrases are used, and decode the words and sentences according to the grammar and rules of discourse governing the host culture. For technical terms, however, the extrapolation of meaning depends on familiarity with the conventions agreed upon by the society of experts in that field.

### **3. Explanation**

In the philosophy of the human sciences, explanation, as opposed to understanding and interpretation, means discovering and explaining causes and effects of human phenomena. (Little, 1991, pp. 6-8) The notions of cause and effect are philosophical terms and the principle of causality is a philosophical proposition. They are understood only through intellectual contemplations, and in many cases include comparing the type of the existence of two (or more) entities. (Mesbah Yazdi 1383, vol. 2, pp. 16-18) Of course, this is shared by both the human and the natural sciences. This fact shows that causal explanation is impossible, even in the natural sciences, without the help of rational method (Mesbah Yazdi 1383, vol. 1, pp. 109-111), and naïve empiricism has no fate other than conformity with David Hume in neglecting causal relation and reducing it to association (Hume 1965, p. 130).

#### **3.1. Explaining Actions and Reactions**

One of the most important objectives of the sciences is to discover the causes and effects of their respective phenomena. Since empirical sciences fall short of discovering complete (sufficient) causes, they content themselves with finding preparatory or incomplete (partial) causes for the phenomena under study (Mesbah Yazdi 1363, vol. 24, p. 43). Successive changes of theories and the cohabitation of divergent theories in these sciences are the outcomes of this very fact. So one should not expect these sciences to explain a philosophically necessary relation between what is claimed to be a cause and its effects, because such a relation only exists between a complete cause and its effect. Of course, knowing incomplete and preparatory causes are important in their own turn, since lack of such

causes indicate the lack of their effects; as discovering an incomplete cause is very helpful when it is a complement to the complete cause.

A discussion on what cause human actions and reactions, and what are their outcomes and effects, shape a great amount of the endeavors of the scientists in the field of the human sciences. As far as the methodology of these sciences is concerned, the method for discovering the causal relation between human actions (and reactions) and their effective factors depends on the nature of the two parties in such relations.

If both of the cause and effect were instances of inner actions or subjective reactions and emotions, the proper method for recognizing each of them, as well as their causal relation, is restricted to knowledge by presence, and none of the experimental or rational methodologies are applicable in this regard. For instance, feeling insufficiency (as an emotion) can cause depression (as another emotion); sincerity and not having any expectation (as an inner action) in helping a friend can strengthen the affection between the two (a reaction). Finding out about the connection between these two variables is possible only through knowledge by presence. It should be noted that personally discovering such a relation between two subjective feelings is a necessary condition for explanation, not a sufficient one, because explanation, as I mentioned before, technically means discovering a causal relation which enjoys a sort of universality and necessity. So one needs to rationally contemplate about what is found through knowledge by presence, in order to discover the essential relation between them.

Now, if one side of the causal relation were understandable through other methods, those methods should be employed as well for the explanation to occur. For example, some other factors may play a role in causing depression as an inner reaction. It may occur as a result of some physiological elements such as the decrease in the density of Serotonin in the cerebrospinal liquid, or it may be caused by a physical behavior such as committing a sin or distancing oneself from spirituality, or it may be produced under the influence of some natural environmental factor such as deficiency in sunlight in the winter, or it may be a consequence of some social events such as inattention by others. To find out and explain the causal relation between depression and such preparatory causes, we need to employ one of the historical, interpretive, empirical, or pseudo-empirical methods.

Till now, I discussed cases in which at least one side of the relation was an inner action or emotion. Now the question pertains to the proper methodology for explaining external actions.

### **3.2. Explaining Meaningful Behavior**

Physical acts only become objects of investigation in the human sciences for their meanings and titles. Hence their explanations are linked to the

interpretation of their meanings which are functions of their goals. The intended goal could be an end which is anticipated by the agent, invented by some social conventions, or devised in the nature of an action by God's design.

In the philosophy of the human sciences, the goal that is intended by an action is called its "reason" (Aune, 1977, pp. 74-75). According to this idiom, "reason" is a special technical term, opposite to "cause" which is taken to mean any kind of cause independent of its agent (Weber, 1968, p. 11) & (Winch, 1994, p. 45). However, by analyzing the reason for performing an action, one can realize that it is the same as "*causa intentionalis*" in philosophy, and is a component of the complete cause for an intentional act to be done. Therefore, the first step for a causal explanation of an action is to interpret it on the basis of the agent's intention. But the explanation of an action is not the same as its interpretation. The aim of explanation is to discover its causal relation in a way that could be generalized. So explanation is accomplished only when one can establish its universality through a rational inductive method. Of course, it may be necessary to employ intuitive or experimental methodologies for providing the premises.

An example may help illuminate the issue. Imagine a businessman who has speculated some commodities. In order to find out about his/her aim and motivation (the meaning of his action), different methods such as introspection, interview, questionnaire, or even psychoanalysis can be used. If the result of the surveys showed that his/her goal was acquiring more material interest, then his/her action is interpreted. Furthermore, if field research showed that other businessmen of the given society have the same motivation for stockpiling goods in the same situations, then such an interpretation is generalizable to the people of that society. But still it is not a universal law, applicable to all people and all societies, in all times; so it is not explained yet. Now, if intercultural studies were carried out, and analytic statistics showed that the same relation was approved under similar conditions amongst significant and statistically meaningful percentage of businessmen around the world, then the ground is ready for employing deductive method for arriving at a universal judgment. It is only at this stage that one can claim to have "explained" the meaningful behavior of "speculation". Of course, one has to take into consideration the fact that the universality of laws in the human sciences, like laws in the natural sciences, are relative, and indicate a relation that exists in most of the cases, not a necessary and obligatory relation. In other words, "universality" in these sciences has a special meaning different from its meaning in logic.

### 3.3. Explaining the Effects of Meaningful Behavior

Actions (meaningful behaviors), according to various labels that attach to them, leave intentional and unintentional effects, on the agent him/herself or other people; effects that may be psychological or social, physical or mental, active or passive, immediate or mediated, pleasant or unpleasant. Explaining such consequences as the effects of meaningful behavior form part of the issues deliberated on in the human sciences. As it is the case with discovering the cause of an action, discovering the effects of an action also requires employing non-experimental methods, because it involves an understanding of the meaning of action, recognizing the causal relation, and establishing a universal and necessary connection between cause and effect, all of which need non-empirical methods. Again, empirical method can be of use in identifying their instances and particular relations.

### 3.4. Explaining Physical Effects of Emotions

Human internal states leave their stamps on different systems of the body, including hormonal changes, neural stimulations, and muscular movements. There may be some causal relations between the effects themselves as well, so that one of them leads to another. What makes such issues to be included in the domain of the human sciences is their causal relation to human internal states. Some human sciences like psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis are interested in studying this type of connections. I draw your attention to an example:

“Anger”, as an emotional state, causes hypothalamus to send an electro-chemical alarm to hypophysis in the brain, and this gland releases a hormone which stimulates the cortex of adrenal glands. As adrenal glands are activated, they discharge cortisol into blood which sends signals to other glands in the body. In response, spleen releases extra red globules into the blood stream, and extra oxygen and food are made available to the cells; blood’s possibility for clotting is increased, liver releases vitamins and sugary elements, heart beats faster, breathing rate changes, blood pours from skin and entrails to muscles and brain, hands and feet become colder, and the whole organism becomes ready for aggression or escape. (Yadav et al. 2017, pp. 3-5)

It is impossible to discover a causal relation between subjective emotions, their physiological effects, and the resulting behavior only through empirical methods. Although the correlation between different levels of physical and physiological effects can be understood with the help of experiments, one’s emotions are perceptible merely through knowledge by presence, and others’ internal reactions can only be understood through their own reports which require employing narrative and interpretive methods. After all, as far as we deal with specific cases, we are not doing

science. To introduce a causal relation between different phenomena and to judge about its universality depend on making use of rational arguments. Of course, the relation between different levels of physical and physiological effects can be discovered through experiment, but it also needs some sort of rational method, as mentioned above.

### **3.5. Explaining Behavioral Signs of Emotions**

Causal relation between such behaviors as smiling and some human internal states such as happiness makes these behaviors to be considered as external expressions and objectifications of psychic affections. In other words, they signify subjective feelings. Their relations to their respective feelings are not functions of some sort of convention, but instances of causal relation. Everyone finds this connection through knowledge by presence, and for judging about others one depends on their own reports. But the discovery of a universal relation between smile and happiness (for example), and a universal judgment about it is in need of using inductive method, to enable us to determine about dubious cases and anticipate future instances. As one can see, empirical method has very little to do in this procedure, and its role is restricted to indirectly providing some preparations.

## **4. Directing**

### **4.1. Directing Human Actions**

Directing human behavior is the objective of the normative human sciences, which entails value-judgment, evaluation, and instruction. To do that, one has to firstly comprehend the valuable goal of human life, and then weigh the relation of various actions against the appreciated objective. Only based on such foundations one can evaluate actions, so that any voluntary action that fits in the path to the goal of life is considered as “good” and those opposite to that direction is labeled as “bad”. Following these steps, human scientists, policy makers, and social planners should try to direct human actions in different fields of individual and social arena towards that valuable end. (مصباح یزدی، ۱۳۸۱، ص. ۵۸-۶۴)

To understand the final goal of human life is a crucial and immense job, which against the backdrop of some naïve thinkers who consider it as a matter of taste or inheritance, is attainable through deep thinking, rational arguments, and Divine revelatory guidance. Some general relations of human intentional activities to that end can be discovered by intellect. Experimentation also can help in finding executive and administrative techniques. However, as discussed in the Islamic theology, in many issues related to values and instructions, there is no way out unless one takes refuge in Divine revelation through what is communicated to us by narrations from the infallibles. (A Group of Writers 1397 A.H, pp. 218-220) For instance, human intellect recognizes in a general way that “justice” is

good, and “injustice” is bad. Human experience is able to introduce some of the techniques and tactics to observe justice and combat oppression. But human being, after millions of years of habitation on earth, has come to no consensus about the criteria and instances of justice in society. The only authentic source for determining specific instances of justice in many social issues is to ask human Creator and Lord. The problem of evaluation shows itself in the issues related to practical ethics more than any other place, because it is the junction of opposite values and deciding about the preference of one over the others needs a vast variety of data and precise scrutiny, sometimes out of the reach of human capability.

#### **4.2. Establishing and Directing Social Institutions**

As mentioned before, social institutions lack any independent and objective entity. They are conventional notions, signifying an ideal life-style and the preferred ways for satisfying individual and social needs in the context of a given society. Determining about what objectives should be set for social life, and distinguishing the best way for attaining those ends depend on a series of beliefs and values. More specifically speaking, foundational doctrines pertaining to epistemological, ontological, and anthropological issues deeply influence one’s understanding of the goal of life in general and the goal of social life in particular. Divergence of different schools of thought on these basic ideas has led various societies to dramatically differ on how to shape social institutions (Mesbah Yazdi 1391, pp. 344-349). The same discrepancy exists in distinguishing human needs and the proper means to satisfy them. Differences on these issues have culminated in their discord about both the form and the content of social institutions according to the belief systems and the value systems of the dominant schools in respective societies.

Since social institutions are ingrained with value judgments and directions, one has to make use of the guidance provided by reason and revelation in order to solve problems of this branch of the human sciences. Therefore, appropriate methods for this part include rational methodology for understanding general directions and principles, and the interpretation of the Qur’an and the authentic tradition for grasping facts, values, and instructions of the Divine revelation.

#### **5. Concluding Remarks**

On the basis of Ayatullah Mesbah’s elaboration on epistemological, ontological, anthropological, religiological, and axiological foundations, the human sciences require a variety of methods in order to attain their multi-faceted objectives, including the description, explanation, and interpretation of human phenomena, as well as value-judgment, direction, and the correction of individual and social behaviors. None of the rational,

historical, hermeneutical, empirical, and intuitive methods is able to explore all the issues and solve all the problems discussed in these sciences. Classifying the subjects and objectives of the human sciences, I tried to give a general perspective of the domain of each method based on Ayatullah Mesbah's fundamental theories. This is the collective road map for doing research in the human sciences, which should be taken into consideration in the detailed research programs in each and every branch of the human sciences.

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