

Defining Ethos in Global Values Education

Islam in the Age of Global Challenges: Alternative Perspectives of the Gülen Movement
Gülen Conference, Washington, D.C.
November 14-15, 2008

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Abstract

As an investment, education awards a great benefit to the social economy of any country as an efficient and concise human effort focused on productive outcomes. Can commitment to developing thinking skills as well as social and ethical perceptions of behavior for youth offer an opportunity for global peace? The Gülen model represents a viable and agreeable international and cross cultural method for teaching these ethics and social skills as a means to manufacture this peace through values education. One cannot deny that within educational systems and societies there exists a lack of practical teaching and knowledge of universally acceptable social skills, values, and moral ethics. (Nelson 2005: 1)¹ Followers of the Gülen Movement realize that the future of Turkey lies within the education of its youth; therefore, high standards of expectation and accountability are sought for both students and teachers. (2005: 3-8)² In order to sustain and further the global goal of peace a need exists to emphasize ethical and social development and to endorse a supportive ideal that encourages positive human action toward the greater common good of civil society. (Dallmayr 2003: 421- 442)³

Introduction

This paper discusses education and the attainment of knowledge as an integral element for sustaining a global environment of right thinking, global ethics, and values. Three areas will be addressed using foundations found within the Fethullah Gülen Educational Movement in Turkey as one method for attaining this goal. Areas of discussion will include: 1) the Gülen model for teaching morals, ethics, and social values in educational and social environments, 2) the benefits derived from implementing the concept of global moral values, and 3) the anticipated possible and proven outcomes for student success. The Gülen Movement does offer a working and productive plan that establishes a means to improve social, educational, and religious global health in civil society by teaching moral and social values to youth. Children, when educated with global perspectives and a genuine human concern of an acceptable differentiation of right from wrong, build a genuine hope to affect a peaceful future. A commitment to establish standards of moral, ethical, and social values for children can relieve future discord and improve

¹ (2005) Nelson, Charles. Fetullah Gülen: A Vision of Transcendent Education. Accessed on 7/18/2008 from <http://en.fgulen.com> and on 8/04/2008 from <http://www.interfaithdialog.org> .

² Ibid, p. 3-8.

³ (2003) Dallmayr, Fred. Cosmopolitanism: Moral and Political. *Political Theory* 31, no.3, 421-442.

global attitudes, thus creating a commonality for establishing a forum to instill global values. This unity establishes a forum for wielding a strong foundation upon which societies can base their decision making for future generations. Ultimately, a focus on educating youth and society begets a beneficial social return and an opportunity for peace. (2005: 438) ⁴

Keywords: *morals, ethics, society, global standards, conflict, resolution, peace, education, youth, social economy, religion, dialog*

Defining Unity According to Need

The idea of a global ethical and moral standard is not a genuinely new concept. The earliest known meetings for dialog began in Nicaea with discussions to clarify Christian theology, and then much later in 1893, the U.S. first held an inter-religious ecumenism in Chicago with the debut of the “Parliament of World Religions”. (Dallmayr 2003: 423) ⁵ An assembly of delegates reconvened in Chicago in 1993 to draft a “Declaration toward a Global Ethics” (2003: 423) ⁶ as a supplement to provide a moral perspective for the (1948) “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. (2003: 423) ⁷ Further development of these ideas as they pertain to the sharing of human responsibility for right thinking and action was determined by the German Theologian, Hans Küng, in his composition, *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic* (1991). ⁸ This work is also recognized by Leonard Swidler who chartered a global ethic standard titled, “Global Dialog and Global Ethic” (1998). ⁹ His theory emphasizes the benefits of dialog as a precursor for global values to become an attainable reality. Dialog is a major component of Gülen’s communicative transcendence that provides opportunity for self evaluation and spiritual awareness. Hans Küng comments

⁴ (2003) Dallmayr, Fred., 423.

⁵ Ibid, p. 423.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ (1991) Küng, Hans. *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*. As included in (Dallmayr 2003: 423).

⁹ (1998) Swidler, Leonard. Global Dialogue and Global Ethic accessed on 8/04/2008 from the Global Dialog Institute website http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/swdag_an.htm.

that the movement of society today is toward a “new” era of realization that focuses on awareness within the *global* perspective of a truly *global* society who is in honest need of a *global* ethos.

The “new”, Küng professes, is an era of transcendence and realization reflecting an ever changing global society and what proves to differentiate the ideal of what is and is not acceptable. Even where social and moral values exist, variations still occur regarding what values are and what the education must entail. These variances can create conflict within right thinking,¹⁰ societies, and global cultures.(Butts 1988:174) ¹¹ Specific differences are webbed within social and cultural diversities, but a global ethic and values commitment is still foreseeable.(1988: 176) ¹² The hope is not ill founded, nor is it solely evident. The processes of globalization make it inherent to acknowledge the need and desire for communion with other people as well as experience a higher spiritual existence.

Whatever is deemed right or wrong is not solely influenced by a single force, religious, cultural, environmental, or political, but is additionally affected by human experience. Cultures are influenced by observation of grave and dire deeds rendered in social human history such as the Holocaust or the genocide in Rwanda and through the positive gains for human rights as experienced in Poland and in Argentina. (1988: 188) ¹³ The ills of the contemporary world affect a fundamental crisis within the global sectors of economy, ecology, and politics to create impoverished hungry people that face social, racial, and ethnic conflicts. Hans Küng further addresses this saying,

¹⁰ The concept of right thinking is a cognitive, analytical ability to determine moral perspective between right and wrong.

¹¹(1988) Butts, Freeman R. The Moral Imperative for American Schools...Inflame the Civic Temper.... *American Journal of Education* 96, no. 2, 162-194.

¹² Ibid., p. 176.

¹³ Ibid. p, 188.

¹⁴ (2003) Dallmayr, 424.

... the ethical demand, the unconditioned nature of the ought, cannot be grounded by human beings who are conditioned in many ways, but only by that which is unconditional: by an Absolute which can provide an over-arching meaning which embraces and permeates individual human nature and indeed the whole of human society. That can only be ultimate, supreme reality...that primal ground, primal support, primal goal of human beings and the world that we call God, Küng (1991).(Dallmayr 2003: 424) ¹⁴

This research will focus on the existing educational system of Fethullah Gülen and his efforts for revitalization of moral and social values within a Turkish privatized system of education. In comparison, American systems of education have also experienced an intermittent resurgence of the teaching of moral and ethical values within private and public education and civil society. Children and youth are not the only focus of a social values program. It is beneficial for all members in all levels in society. The educational movement of Fethullah Gülen offers an example of a working, socially global and inclusive plan for implementing social and moral values within education. His concept uses existing and effective Islamic core elements, such as truth, integrity, transcendent awareness, love and pleasing God/Allah; however, the focus here is not religion, but on what constitutes education within a moral and ethical context. Details of previous efforts constructed and developed in the U.S. were drawn from theories by scholars, thinkers, and educational philosophers. Gülen uses many of the same ideas and theories supporting these concepts. Most theories emphasize the existence of a basic and intrinsic cross cultural human ethics that is especially important within the religions of Abraham and the East. Through comparison a universal interconnection can be found. (Rindfleish 2007: 65) ¹⁵ Theories and methods of support also exist in environmental, political, and economic arenas but do not always include religious elements. The primary aim of values

¹⁴ (2003) Dallmayr, 424.

¹⁵ (2007) Rindfleish, Jennifer. The Death of Ego In East – Meets – West Spirituality: Diverse Views from Prominent Authors. *Zygon* 42, no. 1, 65 – 76.

education is to develop a student's way of thinking about morality and social convention without direct religious instruction. (Nucci 1982: 107) ¹⁶

Realization that the need of a global ethic exists is reinforced with the introduction of dialog and discussion. This is a focus of the Gülen Movement, and in accordance, the newly instituted Blair Foundation ¹⁷ promotes current research and teachings to support dialog and discussion. This is a common axis for Gülen and Blair endeavors. The Blair foundation recognizes that moral and ethical standards, as well as basic elements for dialog and discussion, are important initiatives for foundations involved in global humanitarian causes. Nonprofit organizations and social movements consider that meeting humanitarian needs is urgent and is a benefit toward the greater good. Common foci of the greater good and the global ethic must function openly, willingly, and simultaneously. Hans Küng defines this better by saying:

If ethics is to function for the wellbeing of all, it must be indivisible. The undivided world increasingly needs an undivided ethic, Küng (1991).
(Dallmayr 2003: 424) ¹⁸

Tony Blair announced his appeal for Karen Armstrong to compose a "Charter of Compassion", a shared agreement among leaders regarding a standardization of global moral and ethical perspectives among religions. This initiative says that

The different religions formulate their ethical precepts by way of their beliefs in transcendence. Although the doctrine and beliefs associated with the different religious doctrines vary regarding transcendence, the ethical precepts are still very similar. The problem, however, is not that there are no common elements of ethical precepts among religions, but

¹⁶ (1982) Nucci, Larry P. Conceptual development in the Moral and Conventional Domains: Implications for Values Education. *Review of Educational Research* 52, no.1, Spring 1982, 107.

¹⁷ www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org Links to foundation agenda, goals, aspirations and current projects.

¹⁸ (2003) Dallmayr, 424.

that people do not follow the ethical precepts of their own religions and ideologies. (Mitra 1997: 3-4) ¹⁹

These efforts in addition to dialog will contribute to a moral grounding and facilitate discussion that may well entail political, social, economic and environmental agendas and move them toward a mindset of universal cooperation for humanitarian and special social projects. In this aspect, the education focuses on adults and leaders with political and congregational followings. (Goldstein 2008: 1) ²⁰ Standardization of ethics on a global scale must enlist cooperation and support from all levels of society. Knowledge and learning are valuable and when applied as needed, the learning, education, and knowledge can transpire but only if action is taken. Programs and curriculum need to be evaluated, assimilated, and applied so that the moral and social values benefit civil society. Value, therefore,

...lies in its “enabling coexistence” within a rapidly changing society. Society changes so rapidly that keeping abreast of not only technology, economic, and political changes are difficult, but social and global societal issues and diversity often reflect a facet of growing concern in this realm of change. Human awareness of cultural, humanitarian and other social concerns reflect the moral and ethical side of this learning curve. Often balance is not kept in check. This balance rests within the vision of a total and wholesome educational plan whereby not only academics become an asserted effort, but concern of moral and ethical behavior and decision-making are added to it. The balance initiates effectiveness when application reaches into the depths of the whole being. (Jarvis 2000: 349) ²¹

Ultimately, if the human core can be transformed by cultural environment, humanitarian ideologies, and education then the creation of a basic acceptable moral conformity within global society is feasible. In this relation religion is not a major factor despite its inability to dissect itself from culture, but moral and

¹⁹ (1997) Mitra Kana. The Drafting of a Global Ethic: A Hindu Perspective accessed on 8/04/2008 from the Global Dialogue Institute website http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/Antho/kana_an/htm, 3-4.

²⁰ (2008) Goldstein, Laurie. Blair’s New Charity Aims to Counter Extremism, Conflicts. Accessed on 5/31/2008 from <http://www.chron.com>.

²¹ (2000) Jarvis, Peter. Globalisation, the Learning Society and Comparative Education. *Comparative Education* 36, no. 3, 349.

ethical convictions can be addressed without indoctrination by religion. Gülen does this effectively. The interesting aspect about the Gülen schools is that they do not teach religion, although faith is a motive for their creation. They emphasize the teaching of ethics, which offer the union between religious, ethnic, and political orientations. (Agai 2003: 48) ²² The objective is to devise a means and a method to cross cultural distinctions and elevate social awareness. A higher humanitarian focus where unity, community and ummah, ²³ become the foreseeable result and produce a structured system to sustain educational standards of universal moral attitudes is a goal. (Dallmayr 2005: 438) ²⁴ The need for a global ethic and moral values system asserts a basis for support of American civic educational initiatives as well as Gülen's educational model. An internal examination of human character beyond religious, political, or other constraints plays an important role in determining the cultural environment needed to sustain an educated, successful, and healthy social economy. The social economy constitutes efficient and highest best use of civil society toward a specific outcome. This concentration maximizes social values and creates a valid system for establishing a global ethos.

A Turkish Muslim Response

An examination of the content of values education reveals areas that Fethullah Gülen believes need to change. His methods and standards are promoted within private educational facilities supported by members of civil society. There are some very basic differences between the private and public education systems; the greatest difference being the implicit and transcendent method to attain a moral and social values education for students aligned with successful academic outcomes. His program determines to make an effect upon the whole student by encapsulating the “whole: child – physically, spiritually, and

²² (2003) Agai, Bekim. The Gülen Movement's Islamic Ethic of Education.: in M. Hakan Yavuz & John L. Esposito (eds.) *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement*. Syracuse, Syracuse university Press, 48.

²³ “Ummah” – worldwide religious and social Muslim community.

²⁴ (2005) Dallmayr, 438.

mentally – to bring about the greatest overall student success. (Nelson 2005: 4-7) ²⁵ Little emphasis is placed directly upon religion but emphasis is firmly placed upon providing a positive learning environment, good moral teaching models, and the ability to infer values. The end goal is to build social and moral character. A transcendent method is instituted within the Gülen model of education and is made effective when students learn to surpass barriers derived from cultural, religious, and environmental sources. The transcendence invites an elevation of spiritual awareness through which students cultivate their inner being. This inner being responds to spirituality not necessarily to religiosity. It reflects a spiritual awareness enabling a transformative soulful awakening. With practice and example, this becomes an easy transition, especially for students who have been in the program from the beginning of their formative years through graduation and on to university studies. Teachers exemplify their behavior by modeling good and positive character traits that foster student success. Education can, therefore, create social capital, a valuable commodity made up of members from civil society who build a positive, productive, and healthy relational environment. (Agai 2003: 49) ²⁶

Fethullah Gülen is a modern man, a philosopher, a Sufi, a Muslim, and a Turk. He is who he is and he holds to his beliefs whether or not his thoughts are held by the Turkish majority. He is not directed by political agenda, and he firmly supports the betterment of Turkey and the improvement of education for youth. His schools have roots in many countries especially in those where there is a Turkish connection. His goal remains simple regardless of what opponents may contend. (Gündem and Şafak 2008) ²⁷ By considering human beings as complete and whole inclusive of their spiritual dimension, and in

²⁵ (2005) Nelson, Charles. Fethullah Gülen: A Vision of Transcendent Education. Accessed on 7/18/2008 from <http://en.fgulen.com/content/view/2133/31/>, 4-7.

²⁶ (2003) Agai, Bekim. The Gülen Movement's Islamic Ethic of Education. In: M. Hakan Yavuz & John Esposito (eds.) *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 49.

²⁷ (2008) Gündem, Mehmet and Yeni Şafak. Is Fethullah Gülen a Political Figure? Press Review in *Today's Zaman* from 5/24/2008.

consideration of the existence of their spiritual needs and mortality, a unifying common element can be found to exist. It is important to note that

Human life is not limited to this mortal life and ... all people have a great craving for eternity, [and as such] democracy could reach the peak of perfection and bring even more happiness to humanity. Islamic principles of equality, tolerance, and justice can help it to do just this. (Carroll 2007: 19) ²⁸

Contributing to the ethos of civil society with these types of core beliefs in human capacity can award a global truth that is yet to be realized. Ethos, in short, is defined by as

the largely *unconscious* set of cultural habits, rules of behavior and expectations that inform, define and constitute our lives – including the various dimensions of emotional, intellectual and physical interrelationships that shape our daily activities....and as we move into an epoch of global consciousness, as a global society emerges, humankind must also cultivate a global perspective. Local, regional, and national concerns will remain, but our personal and collective *ethos* will have to include a global ethos. (Halloran and Bale 1997: 2) ²⁹

Formulating a global ethos that is universally acceptable and reflects the diverse understanding and ultimate meaning of life, and how to live it accordingly is the challenge that is faced in drafting a standardized global moral and social values plan. (Mitra 1997:1) ³⁰ There is a great need to retain diversity within this global perspective in order to formulate a successful ethos. Gülen, as an advocate of dialog, knows the need of retaining diversity. An integral part of Islam, and a duty of Muslims, is to address the need to make the world a more inclusive, peaceful, and safe place. According to Gülen's core Islamic beliefs, a developed international community of faith can, through dialog and understanding, develop a truly

²⁸ (2007) Carroll, Jill. *Dialog and Civilization: Gülen's Islamic Ideals and Humanistic Discourse*. Somerset, NJ: The Light, Inc., 19.

²⁹ (1997) Holloran, Harry R., Jr. and Lawrence S. Bale. Toward A Viable Global Ethos. *Global Dialogue Institute* accessed 8/04/08 from http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/Antho/lsb_an.htm, 2.

³⁰ (1997) Mitra, Kana. The Drafting of a Global Ethic: A Hindu Perspective. *Global dialogue Institute* accessed 8/04/08 from http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/Antho/kana_an.htm, 1.

useful global society and yield effective results. (Ahmed 2007: *Forward*)³¹ Moral action helps renew right civil action and positive civicism³² which creates principles of good citizenship and develops a better civilization. Gülen also believes that the real goal of nations is to renew the civilization of individuals and society through moral action. (Ahmed 2007: *Forward*)³³ Moral action can help renew civil thought and can create a positive social economy. An opportunity then exists to redefine self identity through inner spiritual awareness. This awareness is a valuable facet of social interaction within the parameters of dialog and offers a means to transcend differences. This transcendence traverses barriers that have resulted from lack of ability for self expression due to constraints from religious, judicial, or political views within a given environment. A power such as this is most enabling. The ability to overcome difference is to succumb to peace by emphasizing a co existence within a global network that is bound by respect for wisdom, reverence, and humankind.³⁴

Ann Munley, president of Pennsylvania's Marywood University, referred to the Turkish schools across the world as "islands of peace".³⁵ She further declares,

Our world at present needs such peace islands where people can live in peace and solidarity more than ever, said Munley during a conference titled "Contributions of the Gülen Community to Muslim Dynamism and Education" held at her university. (Bulut 2008: 1)³⁶

³¹ (2007) Ahmed, Akbar. Foreward from *A Dialogue of Civilizations: Gülen's Islamic Ideals and Humanistic Discourse*. Jill Carroll, Somerset, NJ: The Light, Inc.

³² (1988) Freeman R. Butts, *The Moral Imperative from American School*, 167. Civicism is a way of referring to the principles, sentiments, and virtues of good citizenship in a democratic republic.

³³ (2007) Ahmed, from Foreward in *Dialogue and Civilizations*, Jill Carroll.

³⁴ This is an introspective perception of the spirituality that can be forged when the fissure between eastern and western theologies merge.

³⁵. (2008) Bulut, Kadir.

Pennsylvania. Accessed 8/4/2008

http://islam.sincx.com/index2.php?option=com_content&id=1345&pop=1&pag..., 1.

³⁶ Ibid.

As expressed by Mr. Gülen, the initiation of social and moral education evidences an attempt to find a means to direct moral need in youth, adults, and community. (Nelson 2005: 4-7)³⁷ In essence, this approach can alter perceptions toward a favorable disposition of global values. In the U.S., the process often derives multiple titles and aims. In a global society, this is also often the case. The American initiatives often resemble values education, sex education, character education, peer mediation programs, and civics, but in reality, a systematic need remains. Questions that evolve from values education programs require careful evaluation and a specific anticipated outcome. Answers are not always simple, but commitment and determination can attain successful results.

Concepts of values education involve teaching students to be able to recognize right social action and cognitive thinking including the ability to comprehend, internalize, assimilate, and evaluate information in social environments. The value³⁸ represented in values education is best understood as reasoning used to distinguish a common ethic within the routines of daily life. Greater analysis used to distinguish value often has a moral connection related to weighing outcomes to determine right or wrong action. This process is a timely internal development that instills individual ethos and values awareness. The achievement can be hindered if influence from external environmental forces is contrary to expected outcome.

One core component of Gülen's model in education is based on his belief in a morality centered within Islam. His perception assesses social and moral interaction within modern cultural contexts to determine proper action. His approach used in the private schools embodies an acceptable social, civic, academic, community, and family values methodology. Gülen has determined to teach students to understand and establish "intent of action" and "derive purpose" in order to determine the difference in right

³⁷ (2005) Ibid, 4-7.

³⁸ (1977) Webster's Collegiate, 1292. "Value"- something (as a principle or quality) intrinsically valuable or desirable [relational evaluation within dichotomy].

and wrong action through Divine Revelation and finding the middle way. (Gülen 2005b: 61) ³⁹ Students discern intent within social contexts to fully understand action and consequence in order to provide the greatest benefit for the overall greater good for community. The success, therefore, is derived from utilizing universal perspectives to establish a global ethos and social values that condone beneficial humanitarian results. (Prencipe and Helwig 2002: 842-856) ⁴⁰

The greater good is formed within diverse populations and in keeping with the true design of diversity, the national and individual cultural norms should be considered. Understanding global civil societies and their respective diversity helps identify a moral template found within social economies. One concept that uses this template to found a global ethic and social order is faith. Whether faith is in God or in something else; it is the element of faith from which we derive existing innate good from humankind. It is important to preserve the individualism of youth while enlivening spiritual awareness in the process of youth education. Aligning methodology within a global perspective can ensure that individualism and diversity remain to be important elements of global social values. Principe and Helwig declare that public efforts should not overbear individualism.

Moral reasoning should also include consideration of the role of aspects relating primarily to the self, including the values, deeds, and goals viewed as central to the self's definition and to human flourishing (Prencipe and Helwig 2002: 842) ⁴¹. Moral identity and responsibility play an important role in helping to bridge the gap between moral cognition and action... Both the diversity and scope of these values and the important ways in which they may differ in [an]

³⁹ (2005b) Gülen, Fethulah. *Questions and Answers About Islam, Vol. 2*. Somerset, NJ: The Light, Inc., 61.

⁴⁰ (2002) Prencipe, Angela and Charles C. Helwig. The Development of Reasoning About the teaching of Values in School and Family Contexts. *Child Development* 73, no. 3, 842- 856..

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 842.

individuals' social and moral thinking lead to better understanding of how morality is developed in individuals. (2002: 843) ⁴²

Their study (2002) finds that direct teaching of religion or morality is not the most widely acceptable option for teaching ethics and social values. Although research recognizes the value of such an initiative and action, they do not determine that direct instruction is the best option in public school settings. In the United States reasoning about values education often reflects attempts to integrate and to differentiate between moral ethics and moral character and makes distinctions between such traits as racial equality and honesty. The moral connection is made broad and reasoning and analytical thinking can remain less fully developed.

There is need for greater distinction between types of values and the social context of values education. (2002: 853) ⁴³

By examining values in search of a foundation for a global standard, an awareness of global need is revealed and the importance for commitment to community is also made apparent. People can be trained to think about others, to commit to peace, to honor respect, and to be lawful. This is not a foreign concept, but mastery may be difficult. The mastery involves a transformation process that perfects individual intuitiveness by building spiritual awareness. Instilling good character and modeling ethics in the classroom is one way to indirectly implement socially acceptable values and moral ethics for future generations. (Nelson 2005: 8) ⁴⁴ It is not unacceptable to have ethically moral and socially astute teachers in the classroom modeling good behavior, good judgment, and directing positive outcomes for students. This is an important part of the Gülen model for educators. The teachers are educators of academics and

⁴² Ibid., p. 843.

⁴³ Ibid, p. 853.

⁴⁴ (2005) Nelson, 8.

models of an ideal. The “ideal” produces what Gülen refers to as a “Golden Generation” (Nelson 2005: 8) ⁴⁵ who goes on to create a new revitalized society in the midst of a diverse global environment. The ideal encompasses an assimilation of the internalized valuable tenets of an ethics system that can be passed to others by modeling it within the community.

Developing Transcendence and Educating Awareness

A focus on spiritual awareness develops a transcendent process incorporated through higher level thinking skills. It is a process recognized by Fethullah Gülen as instrumental for educating the “whole” child in order to prepare them to function optimally in a diverse and global civil society. Philosophers recognize an archetypal ⁴⁶ human ideal that distinguishes human development and achievement within a social and spiritual values system. Humanism is defined as

the goal to which all endeavor aspires, either for itself alone, or for what it provides with regard to an ultimate, transcendent reality such as God. (Carroll 2007: 29) ⁴⁷

To acquire a transcendent perspective, elements of awareness that are visionary and ideal are developed. Awareness transforms the spiritual prospect into a visionary idealism or transcendental mode.

This transcendental mode is defined by Kantian theory as:

1: a philosophy that emphasizes the a priori conditions of knowledge and experience or the unknowable character of ultimate reality or that emphasizes the transcendent as the fundamental reality; 2: a philosophy that asserts the primacy of the spiritual and transcendental over the

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶ (1977) Webster’s Collegiate, 59. “Archetypal”- an inherited idea or mode of thought in the psychology of C.G. Jung that is derived from the experience of the race and is present in the unconsciousness of the individual.

⁴⁷ (2007) Carroll, Jill. *Dialog and Civilization: Gülen’s Islamic Ideals and Humanistic Discourse*. Somerset, NJ: The Light, Inc., 29.

material and empirical; 3: the quality or state of being transcendental; esp.: visionary idealism...(1977: 1239-40) ⁴⁸

Transcendence becomes the reach and effort to perfect inner being and elevate it to a higher level of conscious awareness. This spiritual experience recognizes the existence of faith in others, in self, and in social environment. Without awareness there is no inner perfection and there is a loss of spiritual cognizance and viable faith. The ethos of something far greater than the tangible, immediate environment is not realized. The most remarkable unifying element that humankind possesses is faith. Faith that transcends is the thread by which the fabric of humanity is woven. It is the interrelating factor of a global cultural existence that reduces diversity to simply the dye in the print of the woven fabric. If faith can be simplified and defined as a transcendent spiritual connect, then why is it a difficult concept to conceive? In education teaching students how to think about their lives and the repercussions of their actions is crucial to the developmental process that leads to mature socially acceptable reasoning. Critical thinking abilities are highest on Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive development. The greater ability a student has to analyze and assimilate information for use, the better decision making capacity they will have. This vision can apply for schools and also for families, communities, and media. All major components of society must partake and align with efforts for educating youth. It is noted that

Highly educated people play an important role in society today and in that of future generations. It is imperative that the type of education be appropriate to sustain a universal mission dealing with complex issues within a diverse society and heeding focused foresight and forethought derived from sufficient contemplation between elements of cause and effect. (Carroll 2007:74) ⁴⁹

⁴⁸ (1977) Webster's Collegiate, 1239-1240.

⁴⁹ (2007) Carroll, 74.

Reasoning is crucial to ensure that graduates have the ability to function and behave productively within global social systems. A need exists to enlist individual reasoning in order to continue to sustain the hope of peaceful existence. Learning that is enhanced by transcendence brings individual inner awareness and spiritual realization to heightened perceptions. It enables elevated thinking and produces a patience that relies on faith.

The individual's moral perceptions are determined by factors inherent to social relationship, as opposed to a particular form of social or cultural structures. Raising the level of the cognitive thinking and reasoning process to attain highest taxonomy incorporates, according to Kohlberg & Ruriel (1971), values education rather than focusing on specific values, centers on efforts to move the student from lower levels of moral reasoning in which convention and morality are presumed to be undifferentiated to higher levels in which convention and morality (justice) displaces convention as the basis for value judgments. In this system, then, morality and convention are distinguished, but in such a fashion that convention is viewed as a subclass of morality. (Nucci: 1982: 95)⁵⁰

Faith, the integral element of transcendence, is revealed in Hebrews as ...”the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”(11:1) Throughout Biblical history we find examples of the patriarchs practicing their faith. They rely upon it for direction and stamina; and their faith, not their life on earth, becomes their greatest quest. Their spiritual desire surpasses all things earthly. They contend that the greater their faith, the greater will be their resurrection. Mankind cannot elude the fact that faith, regardless of “in what” or “in whom”, is a powerful tool to reckon the greatest struggles life may offer. It possesses the power to interconnect generations, world religions, and cultures. Can this faith that is so powerful be funneled toward a greater common good where faith, regardless to what degree, can be used to unify global societies and promote global morality and peace?

⁵⁰ (1982) Nucci, Larry P. Conceptual Development in the Moral and Conventional Domains: Implications for Values Education. *Review of Educational Research* 52, no. 1, 95.

By not perceiving the exists in the world [and] or universe, the beauties, the miracles, the phenomena, the truths and living always unaware of these harmonious workings, inattentive and indifferent to everything, and not seek wisdom behind such things, a self awareness and inner world, spiritual enervation is never nurtured. Therefore that which God/Allah has granted to enable man to grow by revealing these signs bit by bit before him, man is taught nothing (Gülen 2005a: 35) ⁵¹...*and how many signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them!* (Yusuf 12:105)

Humankind possesses innate desire for faith or a reassurance of some element of hope.

Humankind also possesses an innate desire to be loved, accepted, and valued. This suggestion professes an existence of the core of inner goodness often found dormant. Confucian belief claims that basic human nature is inherently good. He does not necessarily believe that man is incapable of evil, but that human nature can be developed or taught to effect morally good behavior. To enliven the dormant spiritual goodness of humankind is to kindle faith. It may take time and devotion on the part of both student and teacher, but the benefit derived from this goodness is repeatedly returned in a display of transcendent moral goodness. (Carroll 2007: 45) ⁵² In social environments where belief and unbelief exist, personal faith must remain intact. This adherence to faith enables global societies to unify and establish moral guidelines.

Societies are also able to unite across cultural barriers through communication in dialog, discourse, and deliberation. Dialog, as it is currently known, enables us to benefit from interaction when none may have seemed possible. Interaction develops a kinship, a kindling of relationship with others. Communication is not always obvious. Whether or not people actually speak words to one another or not they are in fact still communicating. Verbal discourse is not the sole form of communication. Physical evidences of it are found in eye contact, a handshake, a nod, or a smile. To ignore nonverbal

⁵¹ (2005a) Gülen, Fethullah. *Questions and Answers About Islam, Vol. 2*. Somerset, NJ: The Light, Inc.

⁵² (2007) Carroll, 45.

communication shows an inability to synthesize a situation and is frequently interpreted as apathy.

Mankind can be nothing more than what it makes itself to be and if guided by right action and right intent, it becomes aware. This awareness is another way to help overcome the instant gratifications of a material world. (Carroll 2007: 81)⁵³ Mankind, therefore, enriches itself with the ability to overcome obstacles of immorality and the instantaneous temporal gratifications of a modern material world. The faith derived from the inner spiritual awareness of transcendence allows the believer to perceive consequences in order to live a righteously fulfilled life. Gülen further contends that the element of

Faith is a concept that gives us all the ability to strive to become worthy of the promise God has given us. (Gülen 2005a: xv)⁵⁴ Muslims, as God's faithful, are promised "Before this We wrote in the Psalms, after the Message (Given to Moses): "My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth." (Anbiya 21:105)

Righteousness and moral values are transcending concepts reaching beyond religious and cultural barriers to support a standard for global ethos. Gülen insists with his model for education that character and moral ethics can be taught simultaneously alongside academics provided that good character traits and ethics are inherent in the staff and modeled accordingly. Gülen's formula for modeling character and morality is subliminal. He reinforces transcendent methods that become inherent in personal teacher character. Educators are able to teach character values and moral ethics by setting an example for high expectation in each classroom. Consistency and uniformity for student and teacher performance are also reinforced. Children have time to develop the abilities for right and cognitive thinking processes needed to formulate healthy lifelong decision making processes. The academic instruction and analytical reasoning are presented in a cross curricular pedagogy that encourages student-teacher interaction and creates greater opportunity for successful student outcomes. This embodiment of the "whole teacher" involved in

⁵³ Ibid, p. 81.

⁵⁴ (2005a) Gülen, xv.

“whole transcendental education” draws attention to how important and essential it is to have the best possible representatives educating youth.

Education within this standard is a significant determining factor for change. Teachers are welcomed tools for constructing knowledge and their value is well appreciated. Schools retain the ability to screen applicants during the hiring process. The required commitment, as well as the number of hours a day spent in contact with students, emphasizes that these teachers be effective, exemplary models of social, moral, and ethical values. This modeling method of education proves to be an integral and vital promise for the future.⁵⁵

Gülen’s main concern is for the future, the future of youth and the future of Turkey. His ambition to elevate reformers who can, with the fortification of a working values system, move forward and pass beyond the physical and materialistic constraints of civil society and perceive its social needs. Students experience a self transformation when elevating their personal perception and the ability to reason beyond public social norms. (Agai 2003: 77)⁵⁶ A striking revelation that results from youth who are educated with social and moral values is that truly human people are formed. “A person is truly human who learns and teaches and inspires others.” (Agai 2003: 79)⁵⁷ It is imperative that learned people continually refresh their knowledge and their skills to provide an example for civil global society living in a constantly changing world. There will forever be a need for people who can adapt, adjust, and re-evaluate situations and circumstances.

⁵⁵ (2008) Personal teaching experience in U.S. public school systems is one resource from where I draw these conclusions. My research in Turkey (May 2008) allowed me to visit Gülen study and prep centers, classrooms, and Fatih University. It was an engaging experience and left me with a life changing perspective that also reinforced many of my own theories about education.

⁵⁶ (2003) Agai, Bekim. The Gülen Movement’s Islamic Ethic of Education.: in M. Hakan Yavuz & John Esposito (eds.) *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 77.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 79.

Learning involves social, public, and private sectors. There is reason to believe that teaching and learning new information requires new knowledge and skill of staying abreast of societal changes. (Jarvis 2000: 345)⁵⁸

The thought processes that form the transcendent awareness developed by youth affect the current era of global perceptions regarding the need and maintenance of a sustainable peace. There exists no guarantee, magic formula, permanent fix, or specific guide for finding the middle way where future generations of a diverse world can unite. Nothing can be taken for granted or implemented into perpetual existence as a once and for all answer to human moral need. Life is ever changing and since this is so, it is evident that in life, conditions also change. What is good today as the middle ground for social moral need may not remain as such, but may in fact become an extreme, either an excess or a deficiency, depending on what tomorrow may bring. (Kuru 2003: 130)⁵⁹ The future of a transcendent peace is found in the existence of faith and as many sufis, other religious thinkers, and philosophers before Gülen have declared, the inner change is the key to the spirituality that will bring truth and awareness.

Values education and transcendent thought can realize an improved social capital, an informed regard for humanity, and the development of a global ethos. Transcendent awareness and spiritual maturity offer benefits to all who recognize common truisms as evidence for a platform of global values forged by common human bond. Islam, an inspiring monotheistic religion, must be afforded opportunity to be recognized for its core values and not for random and deviant fundamentalism. As we know it, Islam is not only

a faith with a theology, philosophy, and mysticism, but also a culture and a social phenomenon of global character-with a history of more than fourteen hundred years. Islam signifies submission to the will of God, and

⁵⁸ (2000) Jarvis, 345.

⁵⁹ (2003) Kuru , Ahmet T. (2003) Fethullah Gülen's Search for a Middle Way Between Modernity and Muslim Tradition.: in M. Hakan Yavuz & John L. Esposito (eds.) *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, p. 52.

peace. Muhammad's original intent was to unite the monotheistic religions that had strayed from faith. His purpose was to unite believers in God on a platform that was common to all. Not unlike the search to devise a global standard of moral and social values. (Duran 1997: 1)⁶⁰

This profession is what Gülen works to achieve. This is his premier and foremost reason for adhering so soundly to his own Islamic core beliefs and to his further hope for humanity. His global ambition of peace is an ambition to unite humanity through faith. It is unity through faith, above the religious theologies, that tends to divide rather than unite, where educated people can regroup and realize together the mistakes that have transpired and where opportunities for global amendment exist. Taking advantage of the opportunity to enliven the awareness of civil society through values education and creation of a global ethos equates to an exceptional attempt to maintain and reaffirm what constitutes the definition of "greater good". This idealistic vision of the future is only accomplished through the inner commitment of the individual.

Individual free will and behavior determine the outcome of his or her life in this world and in the hereafter, a society's progress or decline is determined by the will, worldview, and lifestyle of its inhabitants. The Qur'an (13:11) says: "God will not change the state of a people unless they change themselves [with respect to their beliefs, world view, and lifestyle]." In other words, each society holds the reins of its fate in its own hands. 2001a, 135 (Kuru 2003: 129)⁶¹

Methods of transcendent education are a means by which this message can be transferred. Not directly transferred so to be coercive, but indirectly in the sense of focusing on analytical skills and social perspectives. Addressing opportunities for discussion within subjects such as literature, history, geography, civics and culture studies offer academic criteria where this can occur. The formula for success

⁶⁰ (1997) Duran, Khalid. "The Drafting of a Global Ethic: A Muslim Perspective". *Global Dialogue Institute* accessed on 8/04/08 from <http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/Antho/duran.htm>.

⁶¹ (2003) Kuru, 129.

begins with impressing importance of good choices, values, and right thinking. This is modeled in the Gülen classroom where the irrelevance of materialism is noted. Professional educators in each classroom create an environment allowing students to perceive teachers as non biased, non judgmental, and neutral by their modeling good behavior and non materialistic values.

By wearing white lab coats in the classroom the teachers are all recognized as equal among equals and are considered having the same values with no variance in moral identity. They are recognized as a pure embodiment of moral and ethical integrity. This immolation of truth represents the wise characteristics of Mohammad found in the Hadith. These characteristics also parallel the embodiment of similar eastern and western theological thought regarding spiritual essence. Wearing the lab coat takes away personal differences and distinctions that students may wish to mimic such as dressing habits, jewelry, or individual style of teachers. Students are then able to listen carefully to instruction and teacher responses. The teacher responses reinforce moral choices and behavior and teachers appear equally voiced, equally important, and equally neutral. The white lab coat that educators wear offers a sense of unity and does not appear to affect the learning environment negatively or cause derision.⁶² No judgments pass and educators and students remain open to entertain discussion.

Conclusion

For a public educator, many of the concepts of Gülen's education model may appear idealistic. The methods are not confrontational and are not forceful, yet his message for the future declares

Power's dominance is transitory; while truth's and justice's dominance is eternal. Even if these do not exist today, they will be victorious in the very near future. For this reason, sincere politicians should align themselves

⁶² This is summary of personal perspective regarding the importance of positive character that an educator must demonstrate in order to present a firm and acceptable model in values education to ensure positive student outcomes.

and their policies with truth and justice. People of such caliber will unite profound spirituality, diverse knowledge, sound thinking, a scientific temperament, and wise activism. Never content with what they know, they will continuously increase in knowledge: knowledge of self, of nature, and of God. (Carroll 2007: 56)⁶³

The schools are supported by members of civil society and in turn graduate students who can give back to the community. Their learned global perspectives are a bonus in their ability to move forward successfully to further their education and become responsible productive members of society. The building of a civil society composed of members who are resourceful and able to recognize humanitarian need reflects an innate ability to adhere to the norm of a global ethos. This perspective presents a positive approach that aligns civil thinking within a framework of acceptable moral and social global values. Being able to determine a process within educational systems that supports values education but is not coercive is often difficult, but not impossible. The Gülen model offers many positive elements to help provide a values system of education for public arenas. Success of the private schools is evident and is a feasible reason to consider modeling these positive aspects in public school environments.

Today, it is apparent that a desire for communication, dialog, and discussion often used in mediation, dispute resolution, inter faith dialog enables peaceful interaction. These abilities are useful in sustaining the type of peace that the Gülen model tries to perpetuate through its “Golden Generation”. The transcendent means of his efforts are unifying and global. They reach beyond barriers and constraints to elevate awareness and need for right thinking. Improvements in social thinking take time and are an investment that proves beneficial for humanity. The educational process of students and society is one that will require the commitment of the community.

⁶³ (2007) Carroll, 56.

Improving a community is possible only by elevating the young generations to the rank of humanity, not by obliterating the bad ones. (Unal and Williams 2000: 308) ⁶⁴

Training children in good citizenship revolving around morals, ethics, responsibility to community, intention, and weighing of foresight involving making choices will instill credible civicism and create a foundation of inherent ideals. Evidence of success is one tool to measure achievement, gain recognition, and spread respect for such programs. Education improves the health of community and the results speak for themselves. So far, the “Golden Generation” of Turkey proves to set an example as positive role models and evidence of successful outcomes for future generations. This generation is open to the installment of global social and moral values for all. Education is the general ground

Upon which rests any effort to actualize full or ideal humanity. Without education, the whole edifice of a system can fail. There is need for cultivation of human character that each member should seek. Education as the highest ideal and the cornerstone of fundamental structure is inherent in a society of order and of highest and best use. (Carroll 2007: 60) ⁶⁵

The discourse of Fethullah Gülen further expresses that many of the divisive issues present in the world today are also unique to history. Prior global conflict concerned within differences among civilizations; however, by the end of the twentieth century divisions became apparent among views and perspectives of the global future. The governing processes declared their support for the institution of a universal declaration to define human rights. Gülen’s model of education reinforces a common discourse which is based on common, spiritual, and universal Islamic core elements that have proven to be an effective global tool to use in a multicultural pluralistic society. (Voll 2003: 246-247) ⁶⁶

⁶⁴ (2000) Unal, Ali and Alphonse Williams, eds. *Advocate of Fethullah Gülen*. Fairfax, VA: The Fountain, 308.

⁶⁵ (2007) Carroll, 60.

⁶⁶ (2003) Voll, John O. Transcending Modernity.: in M. Hakan Yavuz & John L. Esposito, eds. *Turkish Islam and the Secular State: The Gülen Movement*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 246 – 247.

Voll further asserts that

As the impact of the educational activities of those influenced by him [Gülen] contend, his vision bridges modern and postmodern, global and local, and has a significant influence in the contemporary debates that shape the visions of the future of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. (Voll 2003: 247)⁶⁷

In summary the future generations of civil society and their community must be nurtured, educated, and maintained. They are the elliptical spark that can bring forth generations that reason on behalf of the “greater good of the community”. The community is composed of those who are forward and critical thinkers, and who can enliven the spark to send the message forth to benefit others.

Future Research

One future study is to examine the effectiveness of wearing the white lab coat, other neutralizing attire, or an educator uniform in public schools. The measurement of its effect as a tool to reinforce a non oppressive, moral and social conscious environment in the classroom would be studied. This investigation will reveal a simple change that could make a specific difference in attitudes, classroom and school environment or climate, and in the effectiveness for contributing to positive student outcomes. This study would also examine if a difference in student disciplinary issues result in any improved behavior. The use of student uniforms has been instituted by some American public schools systems, but not necessarily for teachers. Recently, schools have required staff and students to wear university T-Shirts as a standardized dress to promote higher educational objectives. Does wearing a semblance of conformity in a public classroom promote an environment that is conducive to social and moral consciousness and improved learning? Does the uniformity and continuity among educators make a difference in student attitude toward teachers and subjects? In addition, could a difference in mannerisms and techniques implemented

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 247.

by public school educators be conducive to a transformative environment for building successful relationships with teachers, other students, and community? Can teachers be taught to control their reactions? Can the implementation of mediation techniques for classroom management and administrative discipline prove to be useful in alleviating the tendency for some teachers to “react” instead of listening? How can these techniques work to improve management, environment, or school climate in a district? Perhaps training educators to be neutral in opinions or directives and to be neutral in presenting personal opinions could bring about this vital change in school climate in the classroom.

An effective model is represented within the Gülen education ideal and it can be applied to a public system of education to help build a globally conscious society willing to attain a *global* ethos for a *global* social values system. School systems offer the time and commitment needed to instill the important social and moral values necessary to perpetuate dialog and peace. The abilities children gain are significant for maintaining healthy social economies and for producing productive global citizens.

The short result of this research will find a change in social behaviors of educators and students. Teachers will find that in order to gain respect, they must first give it. This encapsulates immeasurable needs that can be met by implementing small changes in a system to affect individuals. The material within a study of this sort can be used to reevaluate the methods for teacher training and internships to bring about practical social change that can yield a tremendous positive educational impact on youth. Modeling “good” brings out good results in student behavior. The Gülen elements of character building offer no religious coercion and acknowledge valid benefits for adapting applications from his model into public institutions. This will strengthen not only the effectiveness of educators, but enable improved student outcomes. We understand, as Confucius declares *from The Analects...*

... that to love Humanity without loving learning: that's
the deception of foolishness. To love wisdom without loving learning:

that's the deception of subterfuge. To love veracity without loving learning: that's the deception of intolerance. To love courage without loving learning: that's the deception of confusion. And to love determination without loving learning: that's the deception of recklessness. (Carroll 2007: 61-62) ⁶⁸

In this world to choose not to *learn* is to choose to *live* void of the spirits of knowledge, reasoning, and awareness. As a community, seeking the greater good, it is tremendously important to continue to learn, change, and adapt. Just as the world and its people are diverse and ever changing, so too are the processes that must be instilled and recognized as needs within a global society. These needs must be met in order to continue the commitment for justice and human rights, and for the education necessary for maintaining peaceful society. In the spirit of Sufism, Melvana confirms that it takes only one – one action from one individual to ignite the energy to affect the rest... “If one candle in turn ignites another, then the power of the first is not lost. “ (Ağırbaşlı 2007: 53) ⁶⁹

⁶⁸ (2007) Carroll, 61-62.

⁶⁹ (2007) Ağırbaşlı, Ahmet. Selected Verses from the 800th Anniversary of Turkish Scholar and Sufi, Melvana: Konya. “Eğitim: Bir mum diğer bir mumu tutuşturmakla ışığından bir şey kaybetmez”, 53.

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