

**Review Article**

## **COMPARISON OF ISLAMIC AND MODERN LIFESTYLES WITH AN EMPHASIS ON FAMILY**

**\*Mojtaba Salmabadi<sup>1</sup>, Hossein Salimi Bajestani<sup>2</sup>, Abolfazl Bahari<sup>3</sup>, Hossein Eghbalinasab<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> M.A student, Family Counseling, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor at Counseling Department of Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>3</sup> MA student in pre-school education, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

<sup>4</sup> M.A student, Family Counseling, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran

*\*Author for Correspondence*

### **ABSTRACT**

The concept of lifestyle has many definitions as the approaches taken towards it. Lifestyle is a set of attitudes, patterns, values, practices, tastes, and means of life taken in collective action, often by number of people who share them, and become the symbolic identity of individuals and social groups in a society. Today, lifestyle is an effective factor in all aspects of life. The subject as it is known today, has in the mid-19th century entered the literature of sociology, social psychology and then the field of cultural studies; this is because each society needs to take advantage of the multiple patterns of behavior and action at various levels of formation and social development. Lifestyle has been the subject of special attention for a few years in Iran. However, due to the Islamic nature of Iranian society, there would be a special emphasis on Islamic lifestyle. Accordingly, it is necessary for effective cultural institutions such as family, school, and the media, to give attention to Islamic teachings and take the patterns presented in Islamic doctrines to shape a kind of lifestyle appropriate to the particular cultural and social indicators of Iranian society. Therefore, this paper which is merely a descriptive-analytical review article uses documents, websites, and available e-journals to make a comparison between Islamic and modern lifestyles with an emphasis on family.

**Keywords:** *Lifestyle, Islamic Lifestyle, Modern Lifestyle, Family*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Discussing an Islamic lifestyle in the fields of personal and social life is of highly importance for societies. Shaping elements of social identity are beliefs (ideology), values, and lifestyle (a system of individual preferences). The true identity of a society in appearance is represented by lifestyle chosen by its people. A society will enjoy the results of its ideology only when its people take a lifestyle consistent with its religious beliefs and values.

Unfortunately, Iranian society has today failed to build a significant relationship between the fundamental beliefs and values of Islam on the one hand, and on the other in various spheres of social life. Today due to lack of correct understanding of Islam, the lifestyle taken in Islamic countries is a mixture of Islamic customs and Western lifestyle. Failing to provide an Islamic lifestyle for Islamic countries can bring about dire consequences that would be irreparable, because people in Muslim countries are not only gradually losing their Islamic beliefs but are beginning to question the effectiveness of those beliefs. Sometimes they go as far as to deny and ridicule religious commandments and revelations of God, calling them old-fashioned and out-of-date.

Preservation of an Islamic lifestyle is one of the most important factors in maintaining cultural and religious values in Muslim countries. The history shows that offending and attacking the Islamic lifestyle is one of colonial practices employed by colonizers in Muslim societies to gain cultural, economic and political dominance over those societies. Changing lifestyle is usually a creepy, soft and subtle

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movement. Before changing lifestyles, attitudes and views towards social and cultural issues is changed. A change in ideology and behaviors can cause distortions.

The most important composing matters in lifestyle are life and income, economic activities, family-oriented culture, family and marriage, clothing and appearance, following local customs, respect for others, planning and construction practices, recreation and leisure, shops and houses decoration, buildings and structures and the type most-used goods. The most important part of lifestyle is the attitudes, feelings, behaviors, beliefs and personal values. Since Iranian religious and value system relies on Islam, there is a need to conduct personal and social life to be an expression of the Islamic principles. Islamic doctrines and teachings, ordinances concerning the practice and conduct of Muslims' lives is a complete set of rules essential to obey.

### **THE NECESSITY**

Now the question is why in the sensitive conditions of our country, in which many economic, cultural, social and effective international factors are at work, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei has raised particular accurate questions: Why lying is prevalent in our society? Why corrupted social relationships family disputes are so prevalent? Why there is so many divorce cases? Why there are many unrestrained sexual relationships? Why is so much corruption in the country? Etc. obviously his motivation for raising the issues is concerned anti-social not compatible with Islamic vision and values. And the result would be to the detriment of society. This is why Iranian supreme leader has raised up all who are somehow able to remedy these deficiencies, shortcomings and weaknesses to work their sense of duty and try harder in order to reduce these problems.

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **1-1: Operational definition of variables**

**A – Lifestyle:** lifestyle includes terms and definitions of various and sometimes contradictory views. Different languages use the term in different forms. In English, the two forms of «Style of life» and «Lifestyle» is used (Shekari, 2010). Lexical meaning of the word "life" is clear, but there are different meanings in different dictionaries for word "style" including: type, method, way (Moeen, 2006). Luggage style, shaping or designing in a way to comply with recognized standards, is deemed to be an appropriate and graceful manner, especially in social speech, presentation, especially in music or one of fine arts and also a particular way of interpreting a text or speech (Aryanpour, 2010).

We faced with numerous definitions of "lifestyle", including communication systems, living systems, methods of recreation and leisure, buying and consumption patterns, according to the fashion, visual effects dignity, dignity, products of technology used, how the cultural industries, the focus of interest in cultural matters such as religion, family, country, art, sports, etc. (Mahdavi Kani, 2008). A list of behaviors, types setting them, how to allocate time, emphasis and coefficients are variables that are involved in the formation lifestyle. For example, rich and aristocratic lifestyle, military lifestyle and farming lifestyle, American, Chinese, Iranian, Hezbollah and religious lifestyles are different in terms of these variables (Andy Bennett, 2007).

**B - Modernity:** Modernity in Persian language is equivalent of "seeking modern ideas", and is defined as "new and modern methods of life". In brief, modernity refers to asset of descriptions and characteristics of the modern civilization formed in the past few centuries in Europe and North America (Ahmadi, 2004).

**C - Family:** Islam defines family as a group of individuals with civil, legal and moral personalities whose basic core is the legitimate marriage of a man and woman. Marriage is based on a relationship of parity between man and woman which establishes new rights and duties for both parties. Familial and kinship ties is created by marriage; causing legal, moral and emotional relationships (Taghavi, 1997).

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### **1-2: Theoretical foundations of Islamic lifestyle**

World Health Organization defines lifestyle as a certain and definable behavior pattern produced through an interaction between personal features, environmental and social interactions, social relationships and economic opportunities (Kerr, 2000). Alfred Adler (1954) first introduced the term 'lifestyle'. Adler's thinks life's origins are: health, appearance, family socioeconomic status, parenting attitudes, family system and gender role (Kaviani, 2009). Kaviani (2009) was first to examine Islamic lifestyle, as the subject of a PhD dissertation. Primary source of Islamic lifestyle is Quran (Majlesi, 1404 AH).

Behaviors Interaction and attitudes in daily life, indicates one's lifestyle which draws a relatively flat route for living. To find the best type of lifestyle, it is essential that all components of the cognitive model of human behavior be consider in their best forms. On the other hand they should refuse to disagree with incontrovertible scientific findings. They keep both the world and the hereafter together and not lose sight of any of human material and spiritual dimensions. It can be argued that Islamic lifestyle is such. The depth of lifestyle, beliefs, emotions and attitudes are not be measured; But individual behavior is gauged by Islamic lifestyle. Lifestyle from ideologies is just paying attention to the behavior and thinking and not intentions. But Islamic lifestyle cannot be indifferent to the intentions, while the emphasis is on behavior, it cares about most minimal emotion and cognition (Kaviani, 2009).

To have an optimal lifestyle two different orientations are required: 1 - Acceptable dos and don'ts of life. 2 - Methods of implementation and accomplishment of these objectives. The first orientation is predominantly moral, the second is based on a practical orientation of values, and these two issues has been predicted in Islamic lifestyle. Islamic lifestyle is composed of ten indicators composed of ten indicators which lack of one makes Islamic lifestyle incomplete. Each of these indicators can be identified by their borders (Shariati, 2013; Kajbaf, Sajjadian, Kaviani & Anvari, 2011; Kaviani, 2009).

Islamic lifestyle indicators are as follows: 1. Social indicator: refers to the duties of an individual in relation to others, beyond his nuclear family; 2. Worship indicator: life duties referring to the relationship between an individual and Allah; 3. Beliefs indicator: refers to internalized concepts not directly life behavioral tasks, but are present in underlying emotional and cognitive layers; 4) Morality indicator: implies behaviors characteristics intrinsic to a person not a formal legal duty, but the individual has the trait and perform the behavior; 5. Financial indicator: refers to the behavior of a person that directly or indirectly considers the economic and material life; 6. Family indicator: refers to the behavior and communication of these terms as a part of a family; 7. Health indicator: refers to all the issues that play a role in the physical and mental health; 8. Thinking and science indicator: refers to an individual's cognitive space, including the individual's present cognition, and trying to increase his knowledge; 9. Defensive-Security indicator: refers to the duties of an individual or community related to the security of individuals and society; 10. Time indicator: refers to the individual's tasks related to the efficient use of time (Kaviani, 2011).

### **1-3: Theoretical foundations of modern lifestyle**

Human originality or humanism is the cornerstone of Western thinking. Humanism is an overall impression of a man who embodies the meaning and origin of goodness and lightening in the world. Human being has free will, everything should kneel before his will, and all actions and behaviors should be good for him. The basic results of this idea are:

Reliance on Human as the first and final measurement authority of facts and issues, as opposed to the faith that believes in being bound by revelation and the scriptures. Also the belief in the possibility of seeking almost limitless perfection and progress. With this view, social life phenomena is nothing but the result of human action, need and desire. So we can change them by our mode of operation and needs; for instance we can create other social institutions with various functions instead of family. By this idea, human life and society and all its history is standing on its own or foundations. The roots of this idea can be traced back to the ideas of the Enlightenment: belief in endless progress, and ultimately, the endless human capacity and creativity. So Western ideology knows human as a foundation in itself. This

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civilization gives originality to the time; and is future-based. The rise of science, technology, engineering and development concepts and originality of time and negation by stillness and stability is interpreted in the context of this ideology. The basic principle of human world is change and transformation, Change and time have originality.

In contrast, in Eastern ideology, man is always addressed to God or gods and their will. From this perspective, human life phenomena are natural and inherent, so Oriental man being-oriented. Man has always seen himself associated with eternity and the roots of being. Based on religious and mystical insights, the universe is constant, absolute and eternal. Universe is original, and what man observes as transient events in time and space are only virtual, unstable and non-genuine. In Eastern thought, people always go back and follow the previous patterns, and when faced with major problems of existence and being answered his questions by referring to the origin (Ashouri, 2005).

### **1-4: Comparison of Islamic and modern lifestyles**

#### **1 - Divinism vs. Humanism:**

Divinism is the most fundamental principles of Islamic lifestyle that is the opposite of humanism in modern lifestyle. With no familiarity with the philosophical thought of a nation, we cannot know properly our relationship with that culture. Cultural invasion and conquest finds its appropriate context when humans feel sufficient with the trappings of other civilizations and judge them by their cover, and refuse to contemplate their intellectual and philosophical foundations of thought. In other words, the overcoming of superficial projections of other civilizations has engaged human heart with the visual layer of civilizations. The main point lies here; Western civilization success and West-oriented ideas and attitudes are a result of neglect to inner levels of Western culture. Western civilization fears those civilizations that question and challenge ideological and philosophical foundations of Western culture. That is why Western civilization does not let others take the opportunity to exchange ideas and emerge with many of deceits to confront and defeat them.

Divinism in Islam: In Islamic ideology, God is the axis and creator of all phenomena. In other words, the Islamic ideology is based primarily on a God-centeredness idea. The centrality of God is considered in every matter, including the question of man's creation and the creation of all existence, his infinite knowledge of everything and everyone, and Human responsibility before God, which are all a general image of image of God-centered worldview of the Quran. No verse of Quran misses repeated emphasis on the manifestations of God's unconditional omnipresence. God is presented by Quran as the center of everything. Qur'an expresses this centrality in variant forms and by Divine traits.

Human-centeredness or humanism: Humanism is the most important foundation of Western or modern lifestyle, human-centeredness or humanism is a school which knows human as the axis of creation and denies the originality of God, religion or any other non-Human issues. The term is generally used to mean any system of philosophical, political, economic, social or moral thinking with the human being at its core. This school represents human as the only reality of creation instead of God, Thus in contrast with God-centeredness. In its extreme form, it denies any metaphysical thought such as divine revelation. Assuming human the only owner and ruler of the universe, it has invented a new idol and promotes its worship. Humanism is in fact human-worship, and not meant to serve or respect humanity, which is meant and emphasized by Islam and other monotheistic religions. Humanism is a term which refers to any attitude or philosophy which recognizes a special dignity for human, and puts human at the center of its ideology and gives authenticity to the growth and prosperity of human beings (Ghanbari, 2004).

**2 - Reason vs. Faith:** Another foundation of modern life closely related to humanism is the centeredness of reason versus faith. In modern lifestyle reason is placed at the center rather than religion. But religious lifestyle places reason along with religious quotes of wisdom, and not against religion. In religious lifestyle ruling orders of life both comes from as a healthy mind and revelations of God as the source of infinite benefits immune from any error or mistake and based on objective and scientific arguments.

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**Wisdom from Islamic point of view:** Wisdom has a special status in religious knowledge. Despite the modern approach which has cut the relationship between the origin and the end of natural sciences, Islamic approach tries to connect the two sources of wisdom and revelation in a harmony with each other and present it as an innocent messenger known by scientists in any scientific fields (Javadi Amoli, 2007). Wisdom in Islam is rather ontological than epistemological, therefore from Islamic perspective divine wisdom is the highest in the of order of wisdoms which in the light of divine illumination is directly imparted to human beings by the Holy Spirit who uses revelation to convey the Word of God to man. From this perspective, spirituality cannot be outside the circle of reason. The result is that at high levels of thinking and philosophy, spirituality and sanctity not only survives, but the material and worldly affairs, can guide Muslims in trade and training. (Nasr, 2002).

**Rationalism:** Among the factors influencing modern lifestyle is rationalism which is focusing on mind putting it in all facets of life first. "Rationalism" is one of the foundations of secularism meaning the power of human reason to understand all issues. The final judgment of in human life is by wisdom independent of revelation and teachings of religious knowledge. Before the Renaissance and in other religions wisdom has a special status and is of a central position, and such wisdom is known as the esoteric messenger known along with the wisdom relying on religious revelation. Allah's repeated emphasis on thought and reasoning represents a pivotal role of intellect and wisdom in Islam. But what makes Renaissance rationalism be apart from other rationalisms is the independence of its reason from revelation. Human notion that he no longer needs to rely on a power beyond the mere exercise of his reason and thought gives a boost to Renaissance attitudes. This extremism is a result of improper operation of the church that ignored this element and its position in the system of human life. In fact, in the Renaissance the "reason" is the opposite of "religion". The word "rationalism" is taken from the Latin root "ratio: meaning rationalism, reasonability, originality, intelligence, originality of thought and intellectual (Nourbakhsh Golpaygani, 2001).

**3 - Hereafter against secularism:** One of foundations of modern lifestyle which is different from Islamic lifestyle is the purpose of life. Religious and Islamic lifestyles are hereafter-oriented. Accordingly, the purpose of life is something beyond worldly life, and even worldly life and but a route to reach the heavenly life. In contrast, modern lifestyle is worldly and material and has a unique approach to the world in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures.

**Hereafter and purposeful creation in an Islamic Lifestyle:** Purposefulness of creation and believing in hereafter gives a specific direction to the lifestyle. It takes a meaningful approach to the creation of life and gives life a certain demand for right choices. Purposefulness of creation is mentioned in many verses of Quran suggesting that the creation of man and the world has a clear and defined purpose and that is excellence and perfection. Therefore lifestyle should be set in a way that may help us to achieve this goal. Quran considers the creation to serve man in the light of relationship with God to achieve perfection and eternal bliss (Javadi Amoli, 2007). In other words, the universe, human nature and universe calls him to find his direction to God. This call is in the form of prophecy, and will open journey opportunities for people seeking excellence.

**Secularism, Profit-seeking and confinement to the earthly pleasures of modern life:** From Western view of life, physical pleasure is the aim of life, which taking maximum pleasures of physical life. In accordance with the principles of freedom and humanism, modern humans satisfy their boundless and unbridled passions and carnal desires. Such is that today the West is in a crisis of spirituality and ethics. Now modern humans with regard to their modern freedom, has ratified the law of homosexuality in four countries, and the worse is that homosexuality is common among high-ranking politicians (Taeb, 2001). Hedonism holds that the pleasure of the subject of moral action is inherent; in other words happiness is having the most fun possible. The followers of this school of moral reasoning argue that human by nature escapes from suffering so pleasure-taking is end to human life. (Javadi Amoli, 2003).



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### **1-5: Modernity and family**

Family is a group of persons with kinship ties connected directly to each other in which the adult members are responsible for the custody of children (Giddens, 2007). In other words, family is a kinship group which holds the primary responsibility for the socialization of children, and meeting certain other basic needs. When close relatives, i.e. those other than spouses and their children, live in the same household or in close relation with each other and have a continuous, permanent relationship, then an extended family is formed. The form of family based on blood relations between many people including parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins is called inbred family. Nuclear family is consisted of a couple or a limited number of children that the husband is the task manager and the woman takes care of the children. This form of modern urban families and communities can be observed in most industrialized countries. One of the main characteristics of modern times is a wide variety of family forms and the expansion and dominance of the nuclear family households in the framework of evaluation.

Modernity with such indicators as human-centeredness, rationalism, belief in freedom, secularism, individualism and industrialization, and many other patterns has altered the traditional relationships. One of the most important changes is the change in patterns of family forms; Change in the pattern of the extended family and the nuclear family, and loosening of norms and values. Together with modernity, desire for independence and separation from family and parents, having a personal house, allocation of private space of each individual, importance of the privacy function, diversification of toilet ware and restrictions of familial relationships has become predominant. In pre-modern era local homes were a place of traditional values and religious epiphany and keeping up family. Home lost its meaning as a place for recreation and comfort, a place to meet and party at night and dialogue with the process of industrialization, urbanization and individualism. Modern architecture created a new model to fitness to the new functions. The first wave of modern architecture had several features: 1. smallness, 2. simplicity, 3. maximum use of space, 4. lack of signs and colors, 5. being based on spatial division of labor. This means that as nuclear family has become smaller and more limited and simpler than the extended family, modern houses has become smaller, simpler (Fazeli, 2006).

Using house as a tool in modern age is also seen in the family forms. Marriage tends to be less dramatic, divorce rates increase, single-parent families increase are all the problems of modernity. Giddens writes in this regard: family and household composition is not the only thing that has changed; there are equally important changes in people's demands and expectations of their relationships with others. Marriage is viewed as a job contract that "if the couples wish" they can terminate it (Giddens, 2007).

### **1-6: Family and Islam**

Among the variables that seem to be associated with life style is family function. Family function is to manage household tasks, including emotional needs, psychological, physiological (physical) of its members. A family is a family that is able to meet the emotional, psychological and physiological needs of its own members. Inefficient family is a family that is not able to meet the emotional, psychological and physiological of its members (Lashkari, 2004). Evans and Coop know lifestyle composed of physical, psychological, social, familial, economic, recreational, spiritual matters. Family health, family interactions, and the amount of family support and family roles are included in the general conception of life. The first and most important social institution is the family. Beliefs, values and ethical norms are institutionalized in the family. Way of life is taught in the family. A family in Islam is of great importance. Although the family is considered a very small population, but Islam as a larger community pays attention to human health. Family is the most important place where religious beliefs, moral values and social norms are transmitted from generation to generation. The next generation through family learn familiarity with the surrounding world, social relationships with others and learn how to socialize and the ways of life, morality and social mores. Thus, the biological model of the family is of great importance. Islam is the foundation of popular interest.

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1. **Family Nobility:** The first feature of a superior family in Islam is nobility and clean lineage. Good and worthy fathers and mothers who are not infected with any evil, as is mentioned in Imam Hussain's Ziyaratnameh: "I bear witness that you are born from a clean father and mother." Ignorance has not infected you, and not covered you by its unclean dress.

2. **Carnal features:** a superior family has some constituent elements, some of which include: religion, faith, science, spirituality, and virtue. Three. Behavioral characteristics: superior family lobes are the pillars of Islam in terms of behavioral characteristics, some of which include:

3. **3-1. Ideal Management:** A couple in a noble family because of knowledge, skills, and ethics are able to run the family in the best possible way. In such a family man are the competent manager and technician, energetic, decisive.

3-2. **The relationships in Islam:** best relationships are found in a noble family. Some of the behavioral characteristics of noble families are: mutual respect, good manners, respect for each other's rights, privacy and modesty and tolerance for each other.

3 3. **Lifestyle:** noble family life style is privileged. The couple coming from such a family should not spare any effort of working for the prosperity of the world, and all their life orientation is towards asceticism and simple life. Their way of life is poor with no withdrawal. There is also no sign of extravagance in their lives.

3-4. **Raising a moral generation:** Noble families children are an example of education raising a moral generation. Children in such a family are taught religious and moral education from an early age, and learn how to live morally. They take moral personality traits and step into the realm of human beings and effect great blessings (Bostan Najafi, et al. 2011).

### **DISSCUSION AND CONCLUSION**

The concept of lifestyle including, social, sociological, and anthropological concepts, has recently received much attention among social scientists. Life method or lifestyle represents trends, tendencies, behaviors, beliefs and values of an individual or a community, and a set of attitudes, habits, tastes, and moral standards, besides the economic level working together to make individual or group life method. In studying life style, relatively stable behaviors of individuals in confronting life difficulties need to be considered.

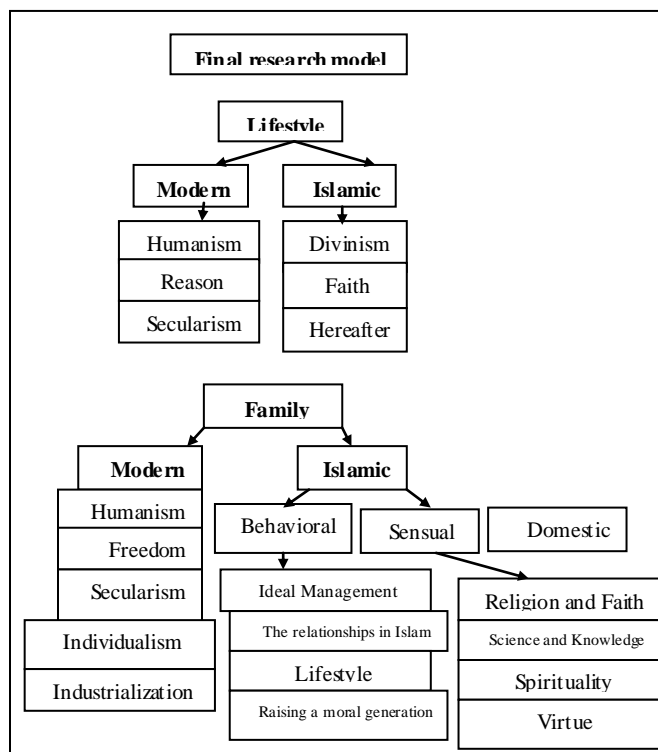
While Islamic lifestyle is rather based on the meaning and philosophy of life, than the meaning and philosophy of materialism and secular life, lifestyle in its modern concept, is devalued into the decorative arts, as well as garden designing, flower planting, decoration and home carpeting; and today the concept of lifestyle associates imitation of industrial achievements and the consumption styles presented by secular governments and conformity with certain personality types or specific cultural groups. From materialistic and secular perspective, music, television and commercials provide projections of potential lifestyles, this projections inspire following a particular lifestyle for people , making them provide any tool necessary to achieve it.

Philosophy of modern life is cultivating instrumental reason, attainment of worldly prosperity, while Islamic philosophy of life, based on the verses and hadiths implications, is liberation from the worldly veil and achieving spiritual life and rational identity. What in modern approach means to be life, from an Islamic perspective is related to death. Islamic lifestyle is the outcome and the product of Islamic values, beliefs and worldview. In Islamic worldview this world is a passing caravansary and human beings by doing good deeds and worshiping as a way to approach God, figure their own otherworldly bliss and perfection. In Islamic anthropology, man is composed of both body and soul; while being autonomous, he lives within the framework of principles and rules and sees the world as a farm for the hereafter. So his lifestyle is taken from Islamic texts.

It is evident that a full comparison between Islamic and modern lifestyles requires a comprehensive study of cognitive, emotional, and moral education of man and the analysis of principles, methods and subsets such as biological, physical, artistic, aesthetic, political, social, economic and occupational education.

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As a conclusion it can be said that, avoiding Islamic teachings besides showing weakness and submission to the Western cultural invasion can be considered as the most important factor in changing Islamic culture and therefore Islamic lifestyle. So, by awakening against and awareness of Western purposes and strategies, returning to the heart of religion, and theorizing in different fields using religious sources and texts, we can achieve our Islamic religious identity back against changing our religious identity and can help strengthening family system. The final comparative model of this research is as follows:



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