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## Research Article

# STUDYING THE INFLUENCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT AS AN EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF QURAN AND NARRATIVES

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### ABSTRACT

Moral education plays a pivotal role in the health of human spirit as well as the felicity of society and people. Among issues related to moral education, educational practices are considered as the most important parts of moral education, so a teacher's chance of success depends mainly upon what methods they apply to educate students. Accordingly, the most difficult step in the moral education is to determine the best method and to apply it correctly. Among various moral education practices, encouragement is of the most important. Therefore, as the positive encouragement manages and guides educational activities it has a considerable role in the education.

Indeed, it should be noted that, the issue of engorgement is a source of contention. As a result, some believe that it needs to be applied for students in all situations, but others do not agree. There is also another view through which an educator has to use encouraging methods according to student's specific situations.

Accordingly, the present research aims to study the encouraging practices on the viewpoint of Quran and Imam Reza's teachings. Hence, after discussing about generalities various kinds of practical and verbal encouragement as well as specific situation of the educator to perform them are analyzed. Showing affection, admiring and blessing are among verbal encouraging methods, while giving rewards is a kind of practical one.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human naturally likes encouragement and hates reproach. People feel happy when others encourage them because of doing something well and probably they try to keep repeat it over and over. However, they get depressed if someone reproaches them or even when they don't receive an appropriate feedback. So it is not possible to repeat it again. (See also, Karimi, 2006; 110-112).

Islam has paid a special attention to the issue. Religious leaders ordered their followers not to be inattention to what people do well and try to encourage them. When people are encouraged not only feel happy and repeat it again but also encouragement would be a motive for others insomuch that increased collaboration and sympathy may be seen in the society.

However, when someone commits a crime, on the one hand people must reproach them about their fault, but on the other hand beneficent need to encourage them to feel regret. (Mostafavi, 1986, 308; see also, Mojavezi, unmatched, 50).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many books about educational issues especially moral education. But, the author could not find any independent work about encouraging methods and the present research was prepared as the first study on encouraging practices. It should be noted that, the following is a list of some books and articles which consider the given issue briefly:

1. Bagheri, Khosro (1998). Principles and bases of moral education, Tehran, Islamic Development Organization.
2. Parsa, Mohammad, (2008). The modern psychological context, 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, Tehran, Be'sat.
3. Haji Babaeian Amiri, Mohsen (2009). Methods of practical moral education in Islam, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Tehran, Soroush.
4. Dolat, Mohammad Ali (2011), bases of anthropology and teleology of education in Quran and narratives, Chapavol, Tehran, Pars Ketab.
5. Rimond, Milton Berger (2009). Methods of changing behavior, translated by Ali Fathi Ashtiani & Hadi Azimi Ashtiani, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, Tehran, SAMT.

6. Seif, Ali Akbar (2011) the modern educational psychology, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, Tehran, Douran.
7. Hemmat Banari, Ali (2003).Bibliography of moral education, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Qom, institution of education.
8. Heligard, Ernest (1988). Learning theories, translated by Mohammad Naqi Barahoni, Tehran, center of university press.

Familiarity with moral education methods and their practical usage in different fields of moral education is considered as a prerequisite for an educational code with a moral approach in the society. So, when it is studied with respect to the view of Quran and Imam Reza's teaching, its importance will increase twofold.

### **Semantics**

#### **Encouragement in words**

The literal meaning of encouragement is to motive, to inspire, to hearten and such like (Dehkhoda (1998), vol5, 63-67). It technically means to apply educational alternatives which are used to stabilize and empower a behavior as well as to emphasize on its repetition (Davoudi, 2010); 165). Stabilization and empowerment are considered as the most important parts of encouragement. It means that, if the given behavior is not respected by the educator, the behavior may not stabilize. So, psychologists have coded many principles for the issue (see also, Seif, 168-177). Since, compassionate of God takes precedence over his exasperation, among totally 2797 divine names and epithets in Quran, 737 of them especially refer to holy love, affection and encouragement and only 42 items are about godly anger. Moreover, among verses related to reward and torment in heaven and hell, 367 and 434 items are on promise of heaven or hell for beneficent or wicked, respectively. It implies that God pays a special attention to encourage righteous<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Education in words**

The term "education" has several meanings in Persian like teaching someone about etiquettes and morality, teaching and fostering children till their maturity. To express the given meaning the term "education" is used in English. The Latin derivation of the word is "dux" and "ducis" meaning leader and director. While, compound words "educere" and "educare"

mean to extract or draw, to foster (human and animal), to form and to learn. However, the term "education" was not available in the academy until 1835, but the word was used in a writing called "mirror of history" by Jando Winbeh in 1989. Moreover, the word was used in a witting called "Etiquettes of lord's education" by attendants of kings' children in Middle Ages (see also, Dehkhoda, 1998, vol 4, 5776; Miyalareh, 1996; Shokouhi, 1999, 21).

The term "al-Tarbiyat" in Arabic is a derivation of Tafeil infinitive. Studying the term in dictionaries represents that its origin is "Rabab" and "Rabou". Some believe that the main meaning of term "Rabab" is to conduct something to perfection as well as to remove deficiencies via discharging and displacement. The process may probably towards something nature and its consequences or beliefs and knowledge, about morality and measures or common sciences, or about animals and plants or human. Accordingly, major meaning, high position and its perfection depend upon circumstances. Hence, the given literal meaning in dictionaries is often interpreted into correction, rewarding as well as completion and such like. However, some meaning like ownership, companionship, lordship, directorship, increased growth, meeting requirements, nutrition and such like all are considered as prerequisites of major meaning which is expressed according to the issue and its specific circumstances. Another derivation of the term "al-Tarbiyat" is may be "Rabou". It is often used in meanings like growth, abundance, predominance and excellence. It could be said that, with respect to application and meaning of the term "Rabou" is often implies on physical foster (Mostafavi, 1992, vol 4, 19; see also, Sadri, 2005, 765; see also, Tabarsi, 1998, vol 2, 781). Intellectuals apply various meanings for the term "education". Studying given definitions represents that, each of them reveal their own educational Schools. In the process of education an instructor helps students to create and foster a gradual physical or mental change which is accomplished by another human so as to develop their capacities or to correct their features (see also, Shariat Madari 1970;75; Houshiar 1988; 13; A'rafi 2002, 366; Motahari, unmatched; 14).

#### **Method in words**

The literal meaning of method is style, practice, principle and custom (Dehkhoda, 1998, vol 8;1237). The meaning of method in educational sciences is predicated to three conceptions as follow: 1- set of practices conducting people to discover and solve problems, 2. Set of applied principles to study realities and 3. Set of means and tactics conducting an individual to move from indeterminate to determinate (Farmahini Farahani, 2011, 327). But in the present research, moral education practices are a set of measures, tactics and methods derived from Quran verses so as to realize purposes of moral education goals.

#### **Verbal encouragement**

Encouragement has many different forms which verbal encouragement is ordinary and common. Verbal appreciation, showing affection, applause and devotion are among encouraging form for stabilizing and empowering positive behavior. The following is a summary of three encouraging methods:

<sup>1</sup>. it should be noted that, encouragement has its own principles as follow:

- Encouragement will lead to empower the positive behavior if its reason is specified before.
- Personal differences, weaknesses and strengths, need to be respected.
- Encouragement should be in harmony with action, so slightest encouragement does not lead to decrease its effect and great one does not arouse unrealistic expectations.
- Encouragement must be different from offering bribe.
- Encouraging people publicly is more effectual than in private, because they feel happy and confidence in the public.
- The influence of encouragement will decrease when there is a long delay between doing a positive action and receiving encouragement.
- Encouragement needs to be internalizing insomuch that people believe that they deserve it. It is not true if they feel it is a bogus manner only for a temporary delight or there would be unreal purposes.
- Excess encouragement will lead to the feeling of self-importance.
- Encouragement needs a specific criterion, as irregular encouragement is problematic.
- Gradual developments also need to be encouraged because it leads to empower the good behavior and it may guaranty the accuracy of behavior.
- Encouragement is not considered as a goal but it is a mean to develop.
- Encouragement must to be driving. The insufficient encouragement, qualitative or quantitative- have not desired circumstances.
- Encouragement should be comparative but not to cheapen person (Haji Babaecian Amiri, 2009; 286-287).

### **Showing affection**

Emotional attention and expressing affection creates confidence for the students and it will persuade them to achieve educational purposes. Showing affection is fulfilled through practical and verbal forms which each of them has its own requirements. According to Imam Reza, there are different favorite groups with God and a specific form of encouragement is used for each of them<sup>2</sup>.

In the words of Imam Reza, anyone who tries to supply lawful (halal) food for their family is better than those who fight for God (Majlesi, 1983, vol 19: 37).

Here, not only Imam points to the importance of effort to supply family expenditures, but he also encourages them insomuch that they are preferred to those who fight for God. In another anecdote, Imam Reza introduces good tempered people as the most favorite people with God (Hamiri Qomi, 1992; 120).

Meeting demands of people is another educational and moral teaching of Imam Reza, and it will lead to decrease affliction in Doomsday (Koleini, 1966), vol 2; 197).

According to Imam Reza, those who supply needs of a devout feel calm in Doomsday (Majlesi, 1982, vol 3; 510).

According to holy Quran various groups are in favorite with God. For example, people are always encouraged to be patient, as the steadfast are in favorite with God.

“And how many a prophet [fought and] with him fought many religious scholars. But they never lost assurance due to what afflicted them in the cause of Allah, nor did they weaken or submit. And Allah loves the steadfast (Al-Emran, verse 146)”.

The verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet in the Ohod battle to show the craven devout more affection. So, they were admired and encouraged due to Jihad for God as well as to defend God and the Prophet against enemies and having faith. Here, the term “how many” refers to affluence. However, the word “religious scholars” means those who sacrifice themselves for God. But some believe that, it means thousands. In the verse, there is an allocution mixed with expostulation and encouragement for the devout (see also, Hossein Shah Abdol Azimi, 1984, vol 2: 269).

By imitating religious scholars, they will get both this world and the next world divine reward. Their inappropriate deed and words in the Ohod battle were recited to serve as an example to the devout to get both this world and the next world divine reward like religious scholars.

It can be seen that, there is difference between the world and the next world divine reward in the verse. It means that, the first was interpreted to the world divine reward; however, the latter was rendered to the wellness of the next world divine

reward, so it points out that the next world divine reward is superior to the world divine reward (Tabatabaei, 1995, vol 4:41).

In the last part of the verse, the phrase “Allah loves the steadfast” refers to those who submitted in the Ohod battle, but those who refused to submit were in favorite of God (See also Gonabadi, 1995, vol 1: 306).

There were many prophets who fought with their followers against difficulties in the path of God and they refused to submit. The verse aims to inform Muslims about the history of prophets and their followers. Those who were educators of others, so tried to rebel against ignorance. Since, their past prophecy has ended and a perfect apostolate began, so it is your responsibility to commit and perform it, consequently, faith, patience and constancy is needed to fulfill your historical responsibility (Taleghani, 2010, vol 5: 368).

According to the verse, prophets were those who undergone any difficulty in the path of theist and Unitarianism, and had infinite patience to guide people, consequently they could develop a wide social evolution. As having patience is a prerequisite to guide people, the patient is in favorite of God.

The given method is probably of creativity compared to other educational views. Showing affection as an educational encouragement method could be introduced as the most efficient developing practice (developing and fostering moral virtues). Showing affection by good tempered people causes to increase efficiency of their emotional attention. So long as there is no link among faith, affection, deep love and emotional attention it will not be efficient. Affection with performance and motivation raise efficiency.

### **Admiring**

Admiring is considered as an important educational method for encouragement. Admiring is to encourage, to cheer and to praise. Patients and trustees has admired by Quran<sup>3</sup>. Being kind with servitors has been emphasized by Imam Reza. He used to eat in company with slaves during his crown-prince ship period.

“Imam Reza and I traveled together to Khorasan. One day Imam asked me to supply food for him. At the time of serving the meal, he invited slaves. I said, it is better not to company with them. Imam said, our God, mother and father is the same and what determines rewards is our behavior”, a Balkhi man said (Majlesi, 1982, vol 49; 101).

Those had such a good behavior were in favorite with Imam (see also, 1991, vol 2; 424; Ibn Babawayh, 1999, vol 2, 184; Ibn Shahr Ashoub, 2000, vol 4:361). The educational method is seen in abundance in Quran. For example, Prophet Mohammad as an instance of patience has been cheered for his unique kindness, patience and confidence by God: And indeed, you are of a great moral character (Ghulam, verse 4).

Behavior of Prophet Mohammad has been interpreted as follow: Patience, forgiveness and gracious, managing affairs, conscience and tolerance, withstanding hardships on the path to

- Some methods of Innocents to show affection are as follow: For example it can be seen in narratives that, if Imam Sajad saw a scholar, he encouraged him and said, bravo! You are following the will of Prophet Mohammad (bin Babawayh (Seikh Sadough, 1998, vol 2: 518).

- Imam Sajad realized the Prophet advice for scholars and called it “the Prophet order”. So he encouraged and admired scholars.

- The order of Imam Ali to Malek is that, “ Malek, try to praise them continually and count their difficulties , because by reminding their good deed, those who are inclined to do good deeds are stimulated and those who refuse will encourage. (Nahj al-balagh, letter 53).

4. And those who have believed and done righteous deeds - We will surely assign to them of Paradise [elevated] chambers beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Excellent is the reward of the [righteous] workers (Ankabout, 58-59).

inviting God, doing Jihad in the way of the Lord as well as giving up envy and greed.

Although, Prophet was of all these idiosyncrasies, but his "great moral character" was not limited to them. In some interpretations his "great moral character" has also interpreted into Quran or Islamic customs which is an instance of abovementioned broad conception. However, it is an evident reason for his tact (Makarem Shirazi 2000, vol 24; 371-372).

It is clear from the context that those interpretations specifically point out to his social behavior, like his constancy in the path of justice, being patient with people annoyance (see also, Tabarsi, 1998: vol 4, 335) and sins of rabble, forgiving them and showing generosity, affability and such like (Tabatabaei, 1995, vol 19: 369).

In this verse, behavior of the Prophet was admired by God. As the main purpose is encourage people for having a divine behavior. Hence, he could stabilize and empower good behavior in people through his especial guidance and educational nature as well as his unique kindness and patience.

### **Benediction**

Benediction is an educational method of verbal encouragement which makes the student happy. Hence, they probably try to repeat good behavior over and over. Imam Reza encouraged Da'bal Khazaei after listening to his poems, then prayed and asked him to continue (Ibn Babawayh (Sheikh Sadough, 1999, vol 2, 142). Moreover, Imam prayed for those who tried to revive imam teachings. When the nature of those was asked, Imam said, they learn our teachings and help others to learn them (Sadough, 1998, vol 1; 180). Imam Reza encouraged all to revive commands of the Prophet Mohammad household. Benediction is a mean bringing peace and Prophet Mohammad was asked to invoke upon those paying alms by God.

Take, [O, Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing (Toubeh, 103).

The phrase "invoke [Allah's blessings] upon them" means to pray for them when receiving their alms or to utter such a Salutation. When Prophet had received their alms he had prayed them. Or the main purpose is to pray for them, because by purifying their property they deserved praised and benediction for life and hereafter. As we see in above verse, indeed, your benediction makes them happy. The term "Sakan" is indefinite and represents that it is a specific kind of calmness than what people know (Gonabadi, 1995, vol ; 275).

Some believe that, the term "sal" is derived from the word "Salat" and it means to pray. It is clear from the context that it means praying for their property and life. Insomuch that, Imam Reza had invoked upon those paying alms (Tabataei, 1995, vol 9; 377; Tabarsi, 1993, vol 5; 103; Makarem Shirazi 2000, vol 8; 118).

Praying not only makes them welfare and calm, but also they may rely upon God and the Islamic society (see also, Modarresi, 1995, vol 9; 377).

According to the verse, by thanking people for doing obligatory duties like paying alms they are mentally and virtually are encouraged; because encouragement alleviates the burden of

duties and makes people happy. Hence, people understand that when they lose something it is compensated virtually again (See also, Tabatabaei 1995, vol 9; 377).

### **Practical encouragement**

Practical encouragement is a kind of educational encouragement. Donating is one important instance of practical encouragement. It excites students to stabilize their good behavior. Encouraging Da'bal Khazaei by Imam Reza is one example of practical encouragement.

In words of Haroun ben Abdollah Mahbeli Marvi, when Ibrahim ben Abbas and Da'bal Khazaei met Imam Reza to covenant, Da'bal recited the following poem:

Here is green and rich as there are many verses here and it is the place of afflation so we are obliged to thank Prophet Son. Moreover, Ibrahim ben Abbas recited the following poem:

Anywhere Prophet Sons are live and govern; hardness is resolved and displaced with calm.

Then, they received twenty thousand drachmae struck with the name of Imam Reza. Da'bal went to Qom and sold its share to people. He sold each drachma to ten drachmae and made ten thousand drachmae. But Ibrahim kept and denoted them to some of his friends, relatives and household. When he died his drachmae were spent for buying his grave cloth.

Practical encouragement is seen in the life of Imams and intellectuals in abundance. Practical encouragement of Imams to those like Da'bal Khazaei, Sayyed Hamiri and Komeil ben Zeid Asadi implies on its importance. Imams tried to encourage people by donating and supporting specific poets. Moreover, emotional relations are obvious in poems, eulogiums as well as citations.

## **CONCLUSION**

The educational encouragement method is the most important practice by which the educator may empower and stabilize moral values. According to Quran and Imam Reza's teaching, the method is applicable in very specific situations. In the present research some public instances are mentioned. Religious-cultural efforts of household of Prophet Mohammad teach us several educational points as follow:

1. The necessity to Make effort so as to highlight religious and educational values,
2. precedence of cultural insurgence in the society,
3. Cultural contention is a prelude to political struggle and
4. Stabilizing and empowering courtship to household of Prophet Mohammad.

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