

Devotional Education and its Process Based on the Islamic Teachings of Holy Qur'an and Traditions

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ABSTRACT— This paper is a conceptual study of religious education, as well as an analysis of the method of Islamic teaching based on the Holy Qur'an and the Traditions. We will be employing a theoretical method that is limited only by the availability of scholarly sources from existing libraries of which we have access. Our findings suggest that the concept of 'education' in the Qur'an is rooted in both the lexical meaning of 'bountifulness' and 'abundance', as well as recognizing that God is the Lord of the worlds and choosing to follow His commandments. Furthermore, 'worship' is understood as a devotional act whose purpose is nearness to God. The term 'devotion' can also be understood as 'humility'. Therefore, in summary, teaching devotion is a dimension of religious education that introduces the trainee to devotional practices and duties, and firmly motivates them to abide by those duties. Also, teaching devotion has stages that include creating a spiritual climate, observation and emulation, teaching and practice, commitment and accountability, increasing understanding of and strengthening attraction toward God, and culminating in normalizing spiritual values.

KEY WORDS: *education, worship, thrall/ldom, Islam, Qur'an, Exemplum/traditions, devotional education*

Introduction

And worship your Lord until the certainty is reached (Al Hajar: 99)

Based on the verses and traditions, the philosophy of human existence is to achieve the prosperity and nearness of God. Therefore, Islam has comprehensive programs in the form of religious education. Among these programs, is the "worship"? Worship is one of the basic and real needs of life that is deeply rooted in the depths of life and human nature and Islam has planned it as a comprehensive educational program to foster and perfect the human spirit. One of the most important aspects of religious education is the devotional education. This kind of education that involves the raising of spiritual dimension and establishing a relationship with God is very much emphasized by religious leaders. The discussion of devotional education is one of the most important issues in scientific and educational circles of the religious society that has attracted the attention of many religious centered parents and committed learners to it. On the other hand, devotional education is the complementary and sequence of ideological education and ideological education has no value without it, because the prerequisite of cognition of a religion is hidden in practicing its teachings. This article seeks to briefly answer this main question, by citing Quranic verses and traditions of infallible Imams in view of the concepts of education and act of devotion/worship in Islam that what is the concept of devotional education in Islam and which phases and steps it has?

1- What is the concept of education in Islam?

a- Lexical meaning of education: the word education is from the root of Rabvah and chapter of Tafeil. In this root the meaning of excess and abundance has been extracted and in its different derivatives this meaning can be recovered in some way. For instance in this holy verse a hill is called Rabvah because it has protruded in relation with ground or earth surface. (The believers 50): We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign and housed them in an elevated territory with housing ability and flowing water. (Bagheri, 2007)

b- Education concept in holy Qur'an: In the Qur'an, the concept of education (from the root Rabava) has not been considered so much. In the occasions this word is used in connection with man/human being it had the meaning of nurture and body raising, as we see in this holy verse: and say oh God have mercy on my parents who educated me in childhood. Therefore, the discussion of Islam does not fit in the concept of education in designing and practicing of Islam. Since the use of this concept in the Qur'an means growing and nurturing of body. (Bagheri, 2007)

2- What is the concept of worship/devotion in Islam?

a- Lexical meaning: The terms of worship in the opinion of many philologists means the "humility". (Tabari, 1412 AH, 3/ 1-Also Tabarsi in 2003 61/1- -Also Al-Qurtubi, 1450 AH, 1/225)

Or the worship means the "extreme humility". (Tabari, 1412 BC 3/1, third in 1382 –Tarasy in 2003 Bc, 61/1 –Esfahani 2002, the word "abd"; Ibn Manzoor, 1389 AH, 3/272)

b- Concept of worship: But the concept of "worship" in its common and frequent uses it somewhat in dispute and there are a number of opinions in this regard: 1- the true meaning, i.e. the humility or the extreme humility. This meaning is acceptable to the majority of philologists. (Almoqry 1987, 2/142, Alshartouny 1403 AH, 2/736; Alsekandari, 2002, 287)

As mentioned earlier, most of the dictionaries/lexicons and many of the interpretation books have confirmed the same meaning.

2-Obedience and Servitude: As mentioned earlier, most of the dictionaries/lexicons and many of the interpretation books have confirmed the same meaning. (Almoqry 1987, 2/142, Alshartouny 1403 AH, 2/736; Alsekandari, 2002, 287)

3- Multiple meanings in proportion with occasions, such as humility, obedience and ... (Tabatabaei, E., 2003, under the verse of ...)

4- The practice that is with "the intention of pious act" and divine motivation. (Source is below)

It becomes clear by précising in the concept and applications of the term "worship" that although worship is also some kind of humility and humble, but each servitude is not worship. No doubt if someone is humble to a person it is not said as if he has worshipped him. Also, any "obedience" and surrender is not truly worship. That the worship of other than Allah in Islam is forbidden, but humility and obedience of other is permissible is proof to the fact that worship is not equal to these two terms. Therefore, the first and second sense is not approved. The third theory, which considers the worship as multi-conceptual, though it may be correct, but the main question is that which one is the first and the most common concept of worship? In other words, the true meaning of worship may be primary and secondary; in this case, the prevalent and first sense of it must be distinguished that is clearly understood without the symmetric of it. The fourth theory i.e. the act that is performed with the intention of divine closeness and orientation is accepted by most scholars of jurisprudence and principle as well as some others. (Boroujerdi, 1435 AH, 1/183; Kazemi Khorasani, 1994, 1/128; Fayyaz, 1419 AH, 2/184) This sense is at least literally the first and most common meaning of worship, and if it has other meanings such as humility, obedience, etc., secondary true meaning, or it is permissive that needs to have symmetry. Confirms this, that saying of Imam Sadiq (as) is about the reality of worship that said, having Good will [Intention of closeness to Allah] in obedience, as commanded by God. (Majlesi, 1404 AH, 67/208) Some have regarded the Persian equivalence of worship as "servitude" and "worship". (Safipuri, 2010, Volume 2 / 788- Moein, 1984, 2/2272)

c- Concept of worship: the word "servitude" is also (such as worship) in principle, means "humility" in the opinion of many philologists (Husseini, 1306 AH, 2/409 and 410) Some have known 'servitude' synonymous with "worship"; as every 'obedience' is not 'a servitude,' though servitude' without 'obedience' makes no sense. (Maalouf, 1994, the word "abd"; Hosseini Zubeidi, 1306 AH, 2/410) If servitude is assigned to God, someone can get the title of "Abdullah". It is seen in many traditions: the best names is that implies servitude, such as Abdullah and Abdur Rahman and ... (Kulayni, 1369 AD, 6/18) If servitude is assigned to someone other than God, he receives the title of 'slave of other than God'. We read in the 'interpretation of Beautiful names Asmaolhosna': On the night of the Ascension the Prophet was addressed: any bliss you like to have request from us now! The Prophet said: assign me for your servitude! At that moment the verse 1 of Asra descended to prophet (PBUH). That God is holy and pure who ascended and traversed his Servant Muhammad (PBUH) in the night from the Sacred Mosque to the Aqsa Mosque ... "(Sabzevari, 2012, 90)

Difference between Servitude and Worship

The difference between servitude and worship is that the worship is from the concept of "act" and action that is performed by man, but servitude is a characteristic that man be attributed to it. It is said for example: someone is attributed to the 'characteristic of servitude', but not said he/she has the 'attribute of worship' (But she is the subject.) (Mousavi Sabzevari, 1985, 1/111)

1-What is meaning of devotional education in Islam?

According to the literal meaning of these two words that mentioned, the "devotional education" means gradual and step by step creation of worship's spirit and submission as well as state of disgrace and humbleness against the lord of universe in human beings until they reach to the final limit and perfection of servitude position. Efforts should be made to increase the love and relationship with God in the offspring so that to have pleasure and joy by conducting worship and performing the devotional duties and reach the position where they prefer and prioritize the performing of religious duty and obligation of worship during all moments of life over all restive works. As the Prophet (PBUH) said: "best of people is who loves worship and embrace it, and loves it with all his/her heart, mixes with it by whole of his entity and prepare him for its good performance and he is not fear of his world is going hardly or sunny "(Kulayni, 1407 AH, vol. 2, p. 83) Davoodi considers the devotional education as: 'educating the acts of devotion to learners and making them committed to perform it'. (Davoodi, volume 2, religious education) The holy Quran on the parents' responsibility in devotional education of family members says: command your family to pray and be patient on its' conduction". (Taha, 132) also says: O you who have become the believers hold yourself and your family people from the fire whose fuel is people and stones. (Sanction, 6) In a hadith Imam Sadiq says: When this verse was revealed, people said: O Messenger of Allah, how do we keep ourselves and the people of world from inferno fire? He replied: Do good deeds, remind your family to do good things, disciple and educate them on obedience and worship to God. Then, Imam recited these verses: (Maryam: 54-55): also remember Ismail in this divine Book, that he was true to his promise, was a great prophet, and also commanded his family to prayer and alms and the Lord was satisfied from him. (Nouri 1408 AH, vol. 12, p. 201, chapter 8, V 5)

2-Which are the steps of religious education? During religious/devotional education, this should be tried to teach worship education especially prayers and fast based on the growth and mental development of learner. To accomplish this, at least six phases are conceivable.

a- Stage of spiritual ground and space making

This stage that is also called the childhood period or the 'first childhood' includes the period of four years of age (Shokuhi, 2006, p 113)This is the stage of basic familiarity with some of the acts and practices; to materialize this goal it is necessary to prepare spiritual atmosphere at home. In this regard, Imam Sadiq says: say Adhan in your houses to escape the devil from there and that is recommended because children become familiar with its recitation "(Kulayni, 1407 AH, vol. 3, p. 308)

b-Stage of observation and imitability: this period that includes the ages of roughly four to seven years is called the "second childhood" or "preschool" periods. (Shokuhi, 2006, p. 113)Late Ayatollah Falsafi believes that: " words and phrases may not understand the prayer, but the meaning of attention to God, whisper with God, help of God, prayer and pleading to God your child understands in his/her childhood" (Falsafi, 1387, vol. 2, p. 186)

c- Training and practice stage: When the child becomes seven years old, slowly the training and practice of devotional acts begin in serious and formal manner. This stage that coincides with the arrival of children to school, is called "third childhood" that includes the phase of seven to twelve years of age. (Shokuhi, 2006, p. 113)As narrated by Imam Ali (PBUH) regarding the education of prayer that says: 'Whenever a child reach some level of intellectual development and can read some of the holy Quran, prayer must be educated to him.' (Tamimi Maghrebi, 1385 AH, vol. 1, p. 193)

d- Commitment and Accountability stage: After completing training and practice, to forcing children to prayer and fasting, or preventing any laxity and negligence and probably abandoning the practice the accountability and reprimand has been discussed in traditions. Including that Imam Reza (PBUH) said: ' Children are accountable of prayer in seven years of age.' (Hor Ameli, 1409 AH, V 21, p 460)

3- Stage of knowledge increase and strengthen the trend

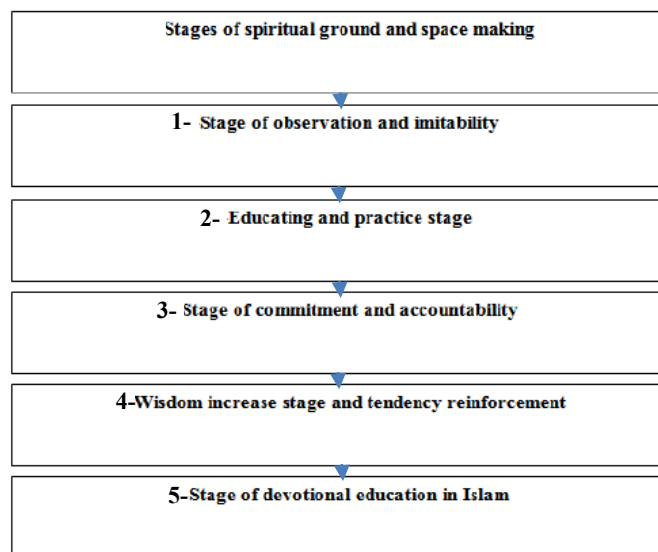
This stage is related to the onset of school year and the beginning of "adolescence" period that includes 12 to 16 years of age. Of course, this period starts one or two years earlier in girls compared to boys. (Shokuhi, 2006, p 178)In this stage, the cognitive and emotional dimensions of children should be enhanced in relation with spirituality and devotional duties, because in this age, the youth tries in the direction of understanding the religious habits and teachings. (Mehrmohammadi, 2006)

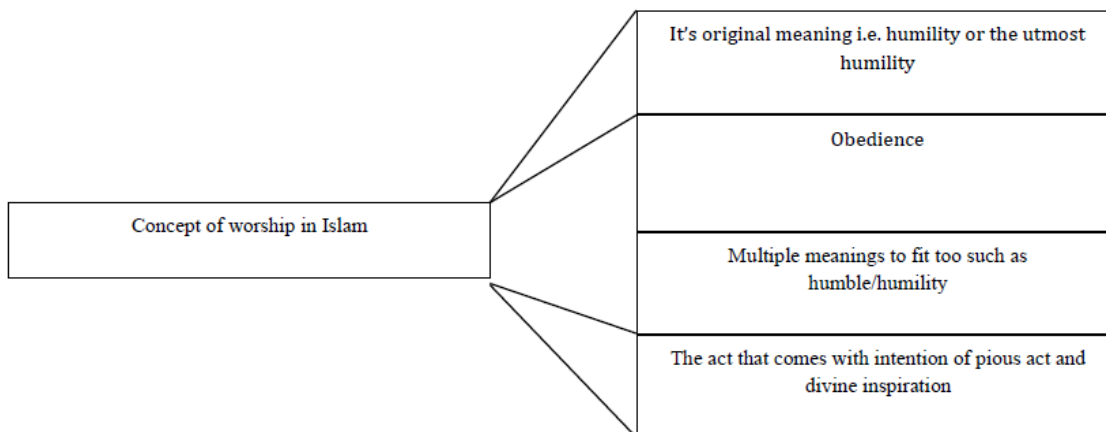
Institutionalization stage of spiritual values: is the last stage of devotional education that is related to youth, stage of strengthen the faith and beliefs and finally, to reach the stage of the heartedly love to God and divine assignments. This stage covers 17 to 20 years of age. (Shokuhi, 2006, p197)

Imam Sajjad (PBUH) in the "litany by lovers" says: oh lord the one who tasted the sweetness of your love not required other than you? Who became familiar with the proximity to you and turned his face from you? "(Majlesi, 1404 AH, V 91, p 148)

Conclusion

In general, devotional education is a dimension of religious education that makes the learner acquaintance with devotional acts and duties, and makes them duty-bound to perform them with strong motivation. Efforts should be made during devotional education that the worship education especially, the prayers and fasting education can be taken place based on psychological evolution and nurture stages of learner. At least six stages are conceived to materialize this job.





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