EDUCATIONAL GOALS (in Quran)

Khosrow Bagheri
Translated by Farhad Aryaee

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Abstract: *Some of the words of the Quran are used in a way that refers to our goal, that is, indicating the situations in relation to humans that they have to realize. The review of these words specify that their fields do not match in terms of width and narrowness.*

Key words: *educational goals, the essence of truth, Imam Sajjad (a.s.), Sahifa Sajjadiyeh.*

The most important words that show the final situations or goals are as follows (there are other words that we avoid from pointing because they returned to one of these words.) growth (Baqareh:186), purity (Ma'ideh:6), clean life (Hayat Tayyibeh; Nahl:97), guidance (Fath:20), worship (Zariyat:56), piety(Baqareh:187), adjacency (Qurb; Kahf:24), satisfaction (Rezvan;Hadid:27), Establish justice (Hadid:25), redemption ('Araf:69), thinking and contemplation (Baqareh:242), independence and esteem of Islamic society (Ma'ideh:54), cooperation (Ma'ideh:2), refinement and purification (Tazkiyeh and Tahdhib; Muminun:4) and correctness, and strength and cleanup (Muddathir:4).

As the verses quoted in the footnote show, these words refer to the goals so clauses like" Maybe you will become pious" and "Because people uphold the justice" are used in these verses. It is also clear that these words are not at the same level and each one has its own meaning.

Therefore, it can be said that there are two types of relationships between these words and goals that these words express:

Latitudinal and longitudinal relationships.

Goals that have latitudinal relationships to each other can be placed in a row. In other words, these goals are independent from each other. These are the categories of goals reflecting on different characteristics of human. And just as these characteristics are independent from each other, so are their related goals. The purpose of "being independent from each other" is that it is possible to specify different human characteristics in such a way that they are different from each other. For example, the social characteristic and the intellectual characteristic of human can be separated from each other and these

two can be placed in a row as two separate parts. (Undoubtedly, different human characteristics are not completely independent from each other, but there is clearly a two-way relationship between them.)

Now if we want to point out among the mentioned goals, an example of goals that are related to each other as latitudinal, we can pay attention to cooperation and thinking. The first is a goal that refer to social affairs and the second is a goal that refers to intellectual affairs. But goals that are related to each other as longitudinal cannot be considered independently of each other and cannot be placed in a row or rather, when a goal is placed along other goals, it is always associated with all of them. For example, the goal of "nearness" has a long relationship with the two goals of cooperation and thinking and therefore these two goals cannot be assumed to be independent from "nearners". of course, its shadow always will be placed on that two goals:

This relationship shows that two goals of "cooperation" and "thinking" should be taken into consideration in order to achive nearness. So it can be said that nearness is "Ultimate or final goal" and those two goals are "intermediary or medial goals”.

Based on this, we will have two categories of goals:

Goals that are placed in longitudination (and on top) of other goals "ultimate goals" and goals that are placed in latitudinal of each other “Intermediate goals”.

Now, we will categorize the goals that we listed earlier based on this criterion. Among these goals, the following are placed in a one row and have a transverse relationship, because each of them looks at a specific charactristic of human's characteristics.

Therefore, these cases show intermediate (intermediary) goals:

Health, strength, cleanup (physical affairs), thinking and rationality (intellectual affairs), purge and refinement (ethical affairs), justice (economic affairs), cooperation (social affairs), independence and esteem of the Islamic community (political affairs).

The following items are considered ultimate goals because they do not have a specific status, but cover all human affairs: Guidance and growth, purity and cleanlinessly life, piety, nearness and satisfaction and worshipping. Now, we will observe briefly these ultimate goals and finally consider the relationship between them.

Ultimate goals

Guidance (Divine guidance) and Growth (right conduct).

Guidance refers to the direction and meaning of creation and therfore no creation can be without guidance (Taha:50). In relation to humans, guidance is done in two stages. In the first stage, guidance means appearance (or manifestation) the way. In this type of guidance, path of identified guidance (way) and byway (al-balad:10) are identified. and difference between piety (fear of God) and impiety is provided. So this guidance will include the guidance of the messengers and genesis guidance because appearance (showing the way) is done in both.

In another type of guidance, it is not only "showing the way", but also "journeying" is expected. In this meaning, a guide is not someone who shows the ways, but someone who goes through the way and takes the guided one (bring to the desired goal). Guidance as an end goal (ultimate goal) is this type of

guidance. Because it is only in this guidance that human-creation and existence can be freed from destruction. (Therefore it guarantees the concept of prosperity (Naba':31) and it pays off (And in this sense, it includes the concepts of redemption and peace (Ma'ideh:16). Of course, reaching this final goal and achieving guidance in this sense depands on surrendering to the first guidance. If a person sees the path, takes a step towards it and sets out to seek the destination, the second guidance becomes apparent ('Ankabut:69).

Guidance as the ultimate goal is sometimes expressed in the Quran with the word "growth". "Growth" in culture of the Quran is not used in the sense of development or expansion, but it is used in concept of guidance(Kahf:17). Hence, the opposite of it is going stray or deviation. When we say guidance (in the aforementioned sense) is the ultimate goal, it inevitably means that a person should consider it in each of his/her affairs and walk towards it. Of course, God's help and leading the way to the destination is a Divine grace, but in any case, this grace is given to those who follow the path shown by God (the first guidance) in any aspect of their life and oblige themselves to its standards. Whenever human beings submit to divine's standards in physical, intellectual moral, social, economic and political affairs, it is necessary for God to help (to support) human and lead his/her to destination and this is how guidance is realized as ultimate goal.

Inward purification and excellent life

Purity and impurity are two existential attributes for objects. That are considered in terms of what causes human desire or disgust. The principle of the meaning about purity and impurity has been discussed for

all people's groups. Because man has needed possession of material things in order to achieve his vital goals, and in this matter, he has used objects that are attractive, sometimes something happens to objects that changes their attractive features. The main characteristics of these are three things: taste, smell and color. Whenever these three characteristics of an object change in a way that causes disgust, that object is out of the scope of human use and desire.

This meaning is mainly used in feelings and it has been the focus of all (ethic) groups. And in Islam, due to its many usages, it becomes facts of religious laws or legal matters and it refers to determinated items. The usage of the words purity and impurity in the Quran has gone beyond. The limits of perceptible things, and this perceptible meaning has been validated for reasonable matters. Therefore, in Islam, all the teachings (gnostic Knowledge), moral principles and legal injunctions, refer to the issue of purity and impurity. In Islam, the principle of monotheism has been introduced the greatest purity.

And if someone ascribes partner to God, he/she has lost her purity. Also, other teachings and moral issues and religious decrees (rulings) are considered purity. And to whatever extent there is an obligation towards them, more purity is achieved in a person.[1]

Purity in this broad sense that includes beliefs, morals and practices is an ultimate goal in Islamic education. This goal is also mentioned as excellent life (Hayat Tayyaba(Nahl:97)). An excellent life means a clean life and like purity, it includes all human's aspects. From physically cleanliness to intellectually-rationally, morally, socially, economically and politically purity, and this is the longitudinal (vertical) relationship

between ultimate and intermediate (Latitudinal) goals.

Piety (reverential fear of God)

The root of piety means protecting an object from what harms it, piety means that the soul is protected so that it does not commit sins and mistakes.[2]

The degrees of this protection are different: In the first degree, a person does not have the power to protect himself/herself when he/she sins (commits crime), So commits guilt (transgression), but after that he/she immediately recovers himself/herself, asks pardon of God and does not insist on his/her slips.(Ale-'Imran:135)

At a higher level, protection is more vigilant and the person overcomes it as soon as the temptation to error (A'raf:201) The piety of the previous order is revealed after the slip, but this piety comes when thinking about the slip. At higher level, the scope of protection is much broader than being limited to protecting after slipping or before slipping, rather, it is a protection to the extent of reviewing and correcting the achievments that a person has obtained by leaving behind the previous levels of piety.

Considering that piety has mentioned those ranks, it should be said that piety is more like a place of passage than a home. In other words, we are accompanied by piety throughout all the path of God and basically, we should follow this path by piety. Therefore, when we talk about piety as a final goal, we mean its highest level, otherwise the principle of piety does not have the color of an ultimate and an end.

The relationship between piety as an ultimate goal and intermediate goals is a longitudinal (vertical) relationship and must be

present in all human affairs. Humankind should find a path toward piety in each of human's affairs which with having it, can perform actions purely for the God's satisfaction and protects the human soul from influencing of other motives.

A pious person(fully devout) at this level is beyond the fact that his/her basic motives are stained by criticisms or praises by others, he/she has been granted immunity from these. Therefore, neither criticisms make him/her afraid nor praises make hem/her happy.

Regarding praises, it should be said that a pious person is not only not inclined to them, but also afraid of them, because he/she considers it a pest of piety (Third-order piety).

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) has expressed this feature in the pious people's sermon: "when one of them was purificated, he/she is afraid of what is called. This great capacity emerges in a person who has fulfilled the ultimate goal of piety.

Nearness (adjacency) and God's satisfaction

Nearness means closeness to God, and it is obvious that this close proximity is a kind of state (intuition, knowledge and spiritual vision) and not a place, but (or because) God is always close to man, even at the highest level of closeness. The secret of the problem is that the nature of man's closeness to and distance from God is related to his approach (attention) and turning away (lack of attention) from God.

In other words, man is in the Hands of God and in the real world, closeness always exists, but if a person understands this meaning, he/she will be close (or near) and if he does not understand, he/she will be far away. This distance and proximity arises in incoming

thought, not in reality and this is one of the obvious cases that can be said: o brother, you are all thinking. (Your whole existence should be only for thinking). The deeper and more stable a person's attention to God is, and the more a person has the feeling of being in the presence of God, the more closeness is created.

Therefore, prayers, which is the highest form of attention toward God and remembrance of God, creates the greatest nearness (reminding that God is greater than that can be described). And in the prayer itself, prostration provides the highest level of nearness because it displays the highest peak of humility.

The prophet says about this:

The nearest state a servant can have to God is when he/she is prostrating. (when the servant is prostrating, he/she is closer to God than ever). Therefore, it is recommended in the Quran to: “prostrate and ask for closeness.”

The truth of closeness is this attention, and the traits and characteristics that appear in a person after it are a branch of it and the result of it.

Searching for God's satisfaction is also connected to nearness, because the meaning of God's satisfaction is to pay attention toward God not God’s rewards. A sublime attention that aims at God's satisfaction, not Divine reward. So satisfaction is the most important part of nearness and its peak. Therefore, a small benefit from God's satisfaction is superior to many benefits from another (God's satisfaction is above everything)[3]. However, the nearness and its peak which is God's satisfaction, is one of the ultimate goals of education (training of the soul) and therfore it is necessary to cast its shadow on

each of the intermediate goals and each of human affairs.

Worship and servantship

The Quran states that the ultimate goal of human creation is worship. Human education should make it possible to reach this final goal. Therefore, worship is also the ultimate goal of education.

What is worship?

The appearance of worship refers to performance of some actions by the organs of the body (such as bowing, prostration, circumambulatin and etc.); but the truth of worship is that human puts himself/herself in the position of being owned and being educated in front of his Lord (master). So the truth of worship is servantship.

Worship (performing such physical acts) is a mysterious show so that its secret is servantship, and servantship means that man takes God as his nurturer, owner and manager, and also rejects anyone other than Him who claims to possess planning and managing for shaping humans. Servantship is associated with freedom (from other than God), even this other one can be the lust of our own ego or the lust of the people, there are two limits for worshiping, one is arrogance and the other is polytheism (Ghafer:60; Kahf:110). (the first is not gathered with worshiping, but the second is gathered with it) and everyone comes close to these two limits will get out of God's servantshipping. Therefore, in this sense, it can be said that the purpose of creation is servantship (God's bondage), not worship; And the goal of education (religious training of the soul) is to make a bondsman (God's slave) not a worshiper, because one can be a worshipper and not be a bondsman, as Satan worshiped for six thousand years, but was only worshiper, not a bondsman.

A bondsman is someone who considers only God as nurturer, and worship is the way that brings a person to this knowledge of God. If it does not do so, it cannot be considered as the ultimate goal of creation. For this reason, in the narration (traditions), they have interpreted "لِيَعبُدون" as "ليعرفون", that is, until people attain the knowledge of God's Lordship. If a person acquires knowledge and practical works related to it, he/she has obtained a special blessing (grace of God) from God, and God created man to obtain this mercy (Hud:118-119).

Therefore, one of the ultimate goals of education is to making people God's bondsman. This goal has a longitudinal relationship with intermediate goals, it means that its shadow should be cast on each of the aforementioned goals. In other words, man should return from egoism (self-centeredness) to servantship (God's thralldom) in each of his affairs, and God has verified the servanthood (being a slave) of such a person who returns to God a lot:

نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۖ إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (Sad:44)

He/she is a good servant because helshe is very returning (to his/her Lord).

The effect of being a servant is revealed in each human affairs, in physical and instinctive affair, it prevents a person from following lusts (Nisa':27), in intellectual and rational matters, it leads human to consider knowledge as a divine gift (Baqareh:255), and causing fear of God (Fater:28). In moral and social matters, it removes the will of supremacy and conceit (Qisas:83). In economic matters, man is called to see God as the owner (Ale-'Imran:26), in political matters, is called to see God as the ruler (Yusuf:40).

The relationship of ultimate goals with each other

Taking a quick look at concepts that were of the ultimate type, we should pay attention to relationship and ratio between them. These words only indicate some numbers in the concepts, but in terms of real existence, there is no such frequency, and there is a unity between them.

If according to the clarification of verses that mention worship (and servantship) as cause of human creation, and we put servantship in the center of attention, then in this case, we can consider other concepts as matters of it. Therfore, it can be said that servantship is ultimate goal (final destination) of Islamic education and its purpose is to make a person God's servant. For this reason, the highest description used in the Quran for the Holy Prophet of Islam is servant.

The becoming servanted refer to a long and complex process in order to getting out of dominance of some factors that are threat to take humans over. Since man is a needy creature and is associated with physical, psychological and social needs, always in moments of extreme need, he is subject to being taken over by something or someone and this man turns the needs which are natural to his/her being, into abjection (which is the perverted form of that natural thing).

The practice of getting out of these possessions and the practice of removing these distracting forms is description of how to become a servant (God's servant). Becoming a servant does not mean leaving the bounds of needing (necessity), And basically such leaving is not possible for a human being. Being needy is human's essence and human has always been like this and will be like this. What the servant man tries to get rid of are illusions arising from

neediness, amidst the intensity of these illusions, he/she considers an inanimate object as his/her creation's source and refuge, or another needy person like himself/herself, support for living and life pattern.

By getting rid of these illusions, a human can find the true origin of his/her needs. Therefore, the servant does not get rid of his/her needs, but is saved from illusion and opens eyes and knows true Lord.

Servant and lord are correlative(close-knit) concepts and one of them cannot be considered without the other. The basic problem of human, as the whole nature of his/her existence depends on it, is Godhood (divinity).

In the conceptualization of education, we also came to the conclusion that the prophets had always made the explanation of theology (theism) the main part of their effort. Now regarding the goal of education, we have reached this point that servantship is the ultimate goal. So this final result is related to that original concept. And by being guided to servantship, a person answers basic question of his/her transcendental existence (Divinity) and follows the path which was shown by prophets.

By placing servantship in the center of the ultimate goals, other ultimate goals show some of its affairs and have only variation in application (diversity in states) with it. If we pay attention to servantship in terms of the effects it brings to a person's existence, we can call it a life of righteousness (excellent life) and piety. This irreproachable life (virtuous Life) is a way of living with its own special life effects, and piety refers to a kind of inner personality in which: states, feelings, thoughts and intentions are arranged under a special managing and controlling. Now, if we consider servantship in terms of reaching a person to destination, we can call it

guidance and growth. In this view, the important issue is whether human will be guided to his/her desired destination in the wilderness world and will human survive from it? In this aspect, servantship is the same guidance and growth. And finally, if we consider servantship from the aspect of reaching the goal and the beloved, we can call it nearness and satisfaction (Yasin:61). Therefore, God calls the one who seeks nearness and satisfaction as a bondsman and counts him/her as a purified worshippers (Fajr: the last verse).

Endnotes

[1] Al-Mizan, vol.2,p.210

[2] Mufradat Ragheb, Vaqi (وقی) entry

[3] رضوان من الله اکبر