

The young in Quran and Narratives

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ABSTRACT: Days of youth is the symbol of vitality and spiritual development, and are considered as the effective basis of man's goals for the one's future. The young are subject to the most inflammatory individual, social, and ethical harms.

Accordingly, failing to train and guide the young generation causes loss and deprivation for governments. In today's world that we see that human values are gradually weakened and in turn, social harms are intensified, it is necessary to take quick and serious actions to guide and support young. The author tries to provide the proper context for communication with youth by taking a look at youth physical and spiritual characteristics in the mirror of Quran and Narratives. In this study we attempt to investigate "youth physical characteristics" in the first chapter, and "youth spiritual and moral characteristics" with subsections titled as "lack of experience and knowledge, lenity and extreme imitation, multiple goals, neglect and ignorance" in Quran and Narratives. The end of this paper is to find the proper solution to these problems and apply them in action by becoming familiar with patterns of behavior in Islam.

Keywords: Quran and Narratives, Young, Islam, Man.

INTRODUCTION

A. The young physical characteristics

Although human body is always changing, this change is of great importance in the course of youth. In this period, as a result of releasing puberty hormones, some changes occur in person's body and the process of one's growth rate fastens. Physically, height growth rate increases, reproductive organs are completed and internal glands, especially the pituitary, thyroid, gonads and adrenal glands start to release hormones. This process and activity of certain glands at this stage leads to the rapid growth of muscles and bones and internal organs. Increasing height, spindle-shaped stature, increasing weight especially in girls, changes in voice and formation of secondary characters in both sexes are the major symptoms of this stage and generally speaking they lose their fitness which as a result of that they are surprised and it leads to the emergence of anxiety and some disorders in their behavior. (khodayary Fard, 2008)

One of the reasons for the emergence of changes in their behavior is the increase in releasing endocrine hormones which cause deep changes in body's organism and disrupt the relative balance of the young. (Soleymani Far, 2006). In this stage, the young is physically in a critical condition and has special characteristics which can also be influential on his mood and behavior, and that's because the process of physical and sexual growth happens simultaneously with intellectual maturity and the young feels some needs which are either innate needs or secondary needs. So, when they are not met, it would adversely affect them. Those factors which are the barriers of these needs and risk the young physical and spiritual health can be classified into two categories:

First: personal factors (inherent barriers): these factors include physical diseases, maiming, lack of recognizing talents, lack of personal facilities, and lack of an exact idea about life.

Second: environmental factors (barriers): those factors which hinder satisfying the young needs include undesirable behavior of the family (improper training), disturbed environment of the family, ignorance, poverty, disturbed environment of school and lack of adequate opportunities for free activities and inappropriate social

context and situation. (Akbar, 2006). Physical growth, as mentioned before, happens along with and at same time with social and psychological development, meaning that man is transferred from indoor into outdoor, from the mother's womb into mother's arms, and from the mother's arms into the family environment, and from there to school which is a larger society comparing to the family.

Man departs from school to a bigger society and from there to future and struggle to build a better world and from future to infinite space, life after death.

Man should investigate his needs and wants precisely in order to experience wider horizons and enter each new stage. In addition to identifying the physical features, recognizing spiritual characteristics which pave the way for the correct guidance and establishing a religious and educational environment.

B- Mental and moral characteristics of young

Special features of youth which have a close connection with physical and mental characteristics of the young, in addition to precipitancy in performing different activities, inexperience, and hasty decision making, with the passage of time and through the hardship of life, will bring maturity and experience. Then there would be justice, breaking the tradition, uncompromising, renewal, diversity, criticism and dynamism. The young accept the right without hesitation and support it with courage and fearlessness. When the right is revealed, they attempt to death to eradicate the wrong and when a pure, perfect, and holy model is found, they would not hesitate to aid and assist (Loghmani, 2002).

Examples of these spiritual characteristics of the young which indicate these facts include:

B-1. Lack of experience and knowledge

Considering the fact that the young are at the beginning of life, they have little amount of knowledge and experience in all fields, and this will cause their emotional imbalances and instability and most of the times they are not capable of controlling themselves when they get angry. Soon they are saddened, especially when they think no one is listening to them. That's why some times they do unpleasant actions. Then they regret what they have done and blame themselves. The young sensitivity and excitements due to irritability which are permanent components of this period are often as a result of changes and transformations of internal glands and the amount of releasing hormones, all together with the type of training in the past change the condition of their emotional life (Khodayary, 2008).

Imam Ali (pbuh¹) says, in this case: «جهل الشباب معذور و علمه محقور» "The young Ignorance is acceptable and their knowledge is not of great value" (Al Amedy Al Tamimy, 2005).

Susceptibility from deviant groups indicates this characteristic, since if they had enough, complete, and deep knowledge about life, they wouldn't be influenced by any group and their inductions.

B-2. Lenity

Comparing to adults, the young have more lenity, as it was mentioned in the story of "prophet Yusuf (pbuh) and forgiving brothers"

«يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَ هُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ» "God will forgive you, God is the most merciful" (Yusuf (12) / 92). But Prophet Jacob (pbuh) told his children:

«قَالَ سَوْفَ أَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكُمْ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ» "I will ask forgiveness for you in the future" (Yusuf (12) /98). In interpreting this verse, Imam Sadig (pbuh) says: "Young hearts are softer than the old heart" (Majlesy:173). This results in more susceptibility for young people because this human nature that instinctively and naturally learn what they see and hear, have greater ability and capability in youth period. Since the young heart and mind is not concerned with diverse individual and social issues, they have great potential to learn. Even the young heart lenity prepares the grounds for accepting the truth.

Imam Ali (pbuh) wrote in his testament to his young son Imam Hssan (pbuh): "surlly the young heart is such as a vacant land which is open to any seed which is plant in it" (Dashty, 2008).

And Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says:

«أوصيكم بالشبان خيرا فانهم ارقّ افنده ان بعثني بشيرا و نذيرا فحالفني الشبان و خالفني الشيوخ» "I declare that the young should be well behaved since they have a softer and more virtuous heart. God has appointed me a prophet to promise people the divine mercy and to scare them from God's punishment. The young accepted my word and pledged with me but the elders refused to accept my invitation" (Qomi, Bita: 176).

¹ Peace be upon him

As a result of having a pure and intimate heart, the young are fascinated about superior ethical attributes and excellent traits of human and build their personality on the basis of good deeds, honesty, and kindness. This great gift of God should be institutionalized with proper training and precise program.

According to the Prophet (pbuh), we come to the conclusion that the young have a bright heart, informed and intact conscience and are not infected to the darkness of heart, barbarity and obedience of the desires of ego as much as adults are. In this statement the Prophet has introduced lenity and brightness of heart as the young guidance factors. Therefore, those who put step in the path of growth and development and don't deviate from the path of nature and continually adorn themselves with higher attributes of human, are more probable to keep themselves from deviation and slip in adulthood. Those who are accustomed to evil moral and inhuman traits are not capable of easily adorning themselves to moral virtues and good qualities because the human heart would be inflexible as a result of getting addicted to bad habits (Gol Mohammady, 2007).

B-3. Susceptibility and extreme emulation

Emulation in itself is not condemned to blame the young for it, but what is the problem is to emulate those models who are considered inappropriate and can't provide human perfection and success and another point is that the young choose a person that is considered successful according to the young idea, and his work and way is worthy of imitation and they try to coordinate with chosen model. Meanwhile, by encountering other people, the young may choose another model to imitate, and keep on continually changing decision to follow different ideas and people. In this process, every day they have to change mind and their activities, and start a new profession, behavior and path. According to Imam Ali (pbuh): "It's the full irrationality that they follow any voice and with a gust of wind they move" (Dashty, 2008).

B-4. Dispersion of thoughts and multiplicity of goals

If this characteristic is not controlled, it can lower the success rate of the young in achieving goals. The young should be trained to prioritize their goals to keep them safe from dispersion of thought and distribution of imagination. One of the factors for the young underdevelopment and lack of success is whim_ meaning not to have stability in doing a job or having an idea for a long period of time; which with identifying and recognition about precious and competent figures will prevent the loss of their life capital. It doesn't take long that devastating scatterings and hopeless confusions turn to idealism and purposefulness. It will fill body and soul with spiritual joy and happiness (Loghmani, 2007).

Psychologists believe that: people should adjust their mental image in reading Qur'an in order to eliminate their mind from dispersion and supply cleanliness of their body and soul and cleanse their mind and their body together in order to let the guidance of God form in their lives and hearts (/ghobary Bonab, 2010).

B-5. Neglect and ignorance

Youth is a golden and precious opportunity which if it is appreciated, it can be used as a fertilized ground to plant the seed of successfulness and happiness in it and in case of neglect and lack of attention to this precious point, the young can waste and ruin their life, with loosing this period.

The days of youth, greatly influences all stages of life and its good or bad results will accompany them, up to the end of their life. The basic foundations of prosperity and happiness or misery and unhappiness of every human being is formed at youth. Imam Ali (pbuh) reproaches those who are unaware of their capital and says:

"They didn't provide an investment, when they were healthy and they didn't take a lesson at the early opportunities of life, and they lost for free their brightest days of life. Can anyone who was indulgence when they were young, expect anything except failure and humiliation" (Nahj o Al Balaghah Feiz o Al Salam: 80). The precious opportunity of youth is at the same time productive and short. It doesn't take a long time that one realizes the sweet and passionate days of youth pass by and its blazing flames gradually go off.

"Youth is the highest age in which the highways of life are opened to the young. But this admirable and charming period, that a child impatiently waits for it and everyone wish it would be more long lasting, is very transient" (Falsafy, 2000).

The primary factors for missing this opportunity, is ignorance and unawareness and disregarding and neglecting the young. Yes, people dose not often take benefit of youth period as they should, due to the ignorance and lack of knowledge which are of rampant elements of this period and this golden age simply passes by and when man realizes what has happened to them, it's too late, it has gone! From this point we can realize the importance of providing proper guidance and education for young people. If the physical and spiritual power, extreme creativity, and happiness, and talents of the young are accompanied with intellectual development, and if in this age the young are "informed" before it's too late, so they can use this opportunity for spiritual development. Those who are

awake in youth and are aware of their own talents and are properly trained knows how much it worth; such a people, not only can spend the rest of their life to promote happiness and individual perfection but also can be a useful element of their society and perform outstanding services throughout their lives (Sadat, 1992: 280).

Lack of attention to the youth capital is the greatest loss. Since in the process of this neglect and ignorance, the young doesn't take advantage of this unique opportunity as much as they should, so the response of God to those who are captured in God's wrath and ask to come back to the life and use the opportunities to embark good deeds is:

«أَوْ لَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُمْ مَا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ» "Didn't I give you enough time and opportunity to wake up and learn?" (Fater (35) 37). Imam Sadiq (pbuh) declares about this verse: "this verse is to blame those ignorant young who have come to the age of eighteen and did not use the opportunity of their youth" (Bohrani, 1999).

But some people are so intelligent and smart it seems that they are born again and this is their second experience of life, and some other people are those who even if they are born many times, they don't get a lesson! I hope and ask God that you and my other children are from the first group" (Karani, 1990).

Prophet Ali (pbuh) says:

«شَيْئَانِ لَا يَعْرِفُ فَضْلَهُمَا إِلَّا مَنْ فَقَدَهُمَا الشَّبَابَ، وَالْعَافِيَةَ» "there are two things that their real value are not known except that people lose them, they are youth and health" (Mohammadi Rey Shahri, 1984). Yes the inexperienced young do not know the real value of youth and this ignorance is a destructive catastrophe that when it turns to awareness the opportunities are gone.

Youth is an opportunity that should be used best and it's a gift of God that should be kept by the use of cleverness and keenness since this opportunity is "worthy of abduction" and "about to go", and spoiling that will leave nothing except sorrow and regret for the later times. Therefore, the biggest method of living is to benefit the unique opportunities that befall us.

CONCLUSION

Considering the fact that youth is the best period of our lives and has some special characteristics including: attention to values, ideals, and the society in scientific community, social and educational and individual and social relationship, there is a high probability that in this period the young break traditions and extremely transform values and as a result, more extremely produce damage of any kind. Attention needs to be paid to training the teenagers and the young, and also to build up a friendly connection with them, proper behavior, respect and awe, love, to avoid discrimination, justice, strengthening the scientific basis, identifying and developing talents, development of religious emotions, attempt to learn social manners, kindness and dozens of other topics are fine, important and decisive points that parents and educators need to plan a harmonious and coordinated program and consider them in their relationship with their teenagers and young. They should attempt to make them operational and do not ignore any attempt to achieve this end (Khodayari Fard, 2009).

Although the young are not irreligious, in today's world with the expansion of media and communication, cultural invasion is replaced with soft war, the importance and sensitivity of religious education is characterize which is the most important part of human values.

Therefore it is necessary to identify problematic factors and the proper method to treat them; which it requires to know the dimensions of educational harms, knowledge about types of supervisions to prevent damage and also classification of issues related to educational issues, in order to provide solutions to deal with the issues. Among the important necessary issues that has an important role in educating teenagers and young people, and is always a concern for parents, teachers and custodians of cultural and social affairs is that, what teaching and training content, either directly or indirectly and formally (School and institutional) or informally (in the form of books, magazines, movies, and ...) should be provided for teenagers? (Haji Deh Abadi/ Hosseiny Zade, 2008).

Fortunately we Muslims have great models to follow them such as Prophets (pbuh) and Quran that beside its rich educational and Islamic content, have presented influential factors concerning religious education which to use these precious references it is necessary that people involved in young affairs, have an spiritual bond with these valuable resources besides an apparent association, to establish the true tradition of Saghaleyn² and avoid misleading and also guide the next generation.

² It's one of the most reliable Hadith expressed by Prophet Mohammad

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