An Investigation to Majlessi Anthropological Theories about Principles of Education

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Abstract
The goal for this study is to extract some principles of education from the Moslem scholar Mohammad Bagher Majlessi's anthropological views. After reviewing available resources and with a descriptive-analytical method, some educational principles were extracted: joint of ethical education with spirituality, considering the individual differences of students and their capacities and abilities, observation of moderation and staying away from extremism, participation of students during the learning process, taking advantage of the will power, creating the appropriate conditions, pay attention to changeability of personal characteristics and traits.
Keywords: The great scholar Mohammad Bagher Majlessi, Islamic ethical training, principles of education

1.   Introduction

Undoubtedly, human is the most interesting and the most controversial subject for the great researchers of social sciences from various religions, philosophies, ethics, moralities, psychology and sociology. In all anthropological and humanistic sciences, the study of human nature and its characteristics is the foundation. Therefore, anthropology is the common line among all realms of social studies (Razmjoo, 1989: P. 15). Human and anthropology have always been one of the subjects for various religions, philosophies and educational schools. They have made discussions about the story of creation, his descending, and dimensions of his existence, his spiritual and physical abilities, his mental power and his differences with other creatures.

The subject of human creation and his station has also been of special importance in Islam. There are several verses in holy Koran about the high station of human among other creatures and much has been said about his abilities and unique qualities. In Islam, human is like the main source of all truth and wisdom that has ever been manifested. This being, which has also been referred as "perfect human", "God's successor" and "the total mirror", is the origin and the truth of all prophets and humans who have been or will be the manifestation of some truth. Muslim thinkers, from philosophers to others, have attended the subject of human and his prosperity and perfection extensively. They have established multiple theories for answering the questions regarding the human and his ethical training. They have taken advantage of both religious teachings and the great philosophers' notions (Arafi and colleagues; 1998, Vol. 1, P.2). One of these Muslim thinkers, who has laid a great emphasis on the subject of human and anthropology, is the great scholar Majlessi.

Consequently, the basis for this research is the principles of ethical teaching and training taken from Majlessi's anthropological views. For discovering the principles of education, it is common to use the three sources of human, society, and philosophers' or scientists' views (Taghi Pour Zahir; 1997, P. 114). We have selected the views expressed by Mr. Majlessi on the subject of anthropology. The subject of education is aimed at human, and the educational methods are rooted in the cultural/historical backgrounds and they try to define their desired humans for their societies. On the other hand, at the present time, the need for reviewing the works of great thinkers for redefining the original model of Islamic/Iranian human model is greatly felt. Various educational systems try to define human in accordance with their own cultural/historical background and social texture. Then, they try to propose the best method of education and training on this basis. Research and study in Majlessi's views, as one of the main Iranian/Islamic culture representatives, can be of high importance.

Subsequently, the need for setting some rules and laws in human conducts and using them as a reference for interpreting behaviors is so obvious that often does not require any further explanation. In the field of education and ethical training, by principle we mean the philosophical concept that is equivalent with the meaning of the origin and source (Hooshyar; 1956, Vol. 1, P. 3) that is based on the recognition of the relationships among the structural components of any educational system. A principle has some normal nature and consists of some obligations; therefore, it is different from the foundation, which is the source of the division of the principle and has some complete descriptive nature and looks upon the beings (Bagheri; 1991, P. 68 & Shariatmadari; 1988, P.

11). They are as some common man principles that can be considered as some general guidelines and they can be used as action guideline in educational measures.

In other words, the principles of education in any philosophical school of thoughts prescribes some "musts" and "must not's" for educational purposes that can be used as a framework for educational works. Here we can explicitly declare that without a correct understanding of the principles, we cannot be successful in education; because some educational sciences researchers believe that education is a science based on the principles (Rafiei; 2002, P.1 & Hooshyar; 1956, Vol. 1, P.133). These principles can be extracted from the education system (Hooshyar; 1956, Vol. 1, P. 47); therefore, we can conclude that the principles are discoverable and not to be laid out (Hooshyar; 1956, P. 45 & Shokoohi; 2002, P. 136). By nature, these principles are the first step in taking any educational action and are the most important roles required in any educational system (Shokoohi; 2002, P. 142). It is in putting it in the education process framework and the key role for the principle that creates a rational connection among the elements of the educational system, such as: goals, academic curriculum, content, methods and the relation between the teacher and the student.

As a short introduction to the high position of this Muslim scientist we must say that Mohammad Bagher Majlessi was born during the last days of 1037 H.G or the beginning days of 1038 H.G. (around 1616 A.D.) at Mohammad Taghi Majlessi's home, known as "the first Majlessi" (Ghanbari; 2000, P. 5). Because Molla Maghsood used the name "Majlessi" as his poetry alias, his family name was also turned into Majlessi (Sefat Gol; 2002, P. 284). Also, since Mohammad Taghi lived in a place called "Majless" near the city of Isfahan, this family were nicknamed as Majlessi (Ghoreishi Karin; 2007, P. 50). He was raised in a home of sciences and knowledge and under the training of a knowledgeable father with breadth (Al-kaharat; 2007, P. 81). He showed great interest in learning the sciences from very early on (Jafarian; 2007, P. 359).

Majlessi, in addition to Molla Sadra, Sheikh Hor Ameli, received permission for narrating stories (from the prophet Mohammad and Imams) from molla Mohsen Feyz Kashani, Molla Saleh Mazandarani (died in 1728 AD.) and Molla Mohammad Taher Qomi (died in 1747 A.D.) (Ghanbari; 2000, P. 5). He was one of the most productive writers of the world (Nasr; 2005, P. 369 & Dekhart; 2007, P. 93). Almost all his works are for promoting and expanding Shiite Islam and some believe his works are more influential than the great scholar Helli (Noori Tabarsi; Translation Noori, 1995, P. 64). The great scholar Sayyed Bahr-ol Oloom describes him the outmost narrator, propagator of the Sharia (the Islamic laws), the divine scientist and the diver of the seas of brightness (Majlessi; 1987 AD, Vol. 1, P. 31). Further, he expresses his greatest wish to be to take the reward for one volume of Majlessi's Persian books in exchange for all his poems and works (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 105, P. 19). Mohammad Ibn Hossein Hor Ameli, known as Sheikh Hor Ameli, the author of "Vasaa-el ol Shiite" in quote about Majlessi writes: "He not only did spend his life on Haddith and Feqh subjects, but also all other sciences and applied his deep thoughts in every possible way for perfection" (Ghanbari; 2000, P. 5). The great scholar, Afandi, who was one of Majlessi's students writes: he has reached a level of totality in Feqh (Islamic laws), Osool (principles), Tafsir (Interpretation), Kalam (speech) compared with all the scientists that came before him (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 1, P. 29). As he served as the Sheikh-ul Islam of the Islamic country of Iran and worked in political and social issues, he also thought classes and authored books and left many works in Farsi and Arabic in various fields. In the book titled "Tarajem", he is known to be the author of 227 works, three of which are incomparable: Behar-ul Anvar (The seas of light), Malaz-ul Akhyar and Mer-aat-ul Oghool (mirror of thoughts) (Tehrani; 1987, Vol. 3, P. 16). At last, Majlessi died on a Sunday or Monday eve of 27th of Ramadan of 1700 AD., and buried him in front of his father, according to his will (Majlessi; Vol. 105, P. 108-109).

2. Research questions

The goal of this research is to find an answer for this basic question: what are the principles of Majlessi for ethical training and education considering his anthropological opinions? So that, by learning about his views in the field of education, we can provide educators a new method for teaching. We have, therefore, reviewed some of Majlessi's books and works and used analytical/descriptive method to do so.

3. Anthropology of the Great Scholar, Majlessi

Since a researcher's perspective on the human nature has substantial effect on his teaching and educational views, we briefly look at his anthropological views, first. Some of the characteristics expressed by Majlessi regarding the human nature are:

3.1. He has considered human as two parts: the soul and the body. He has admitted the duality and independence of these two from each other. He has denoted the origin and the identity of a human to his faculty of speech that some refer to it as "I" (id) (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 5, P. 221 and 245). He says: the faculty of speech in human is outside of his body and is also separate from his animal soul, but it is the same truth that is the center of his knowledge, understanding, and perfections and orders the body. It consists of some multiple powers and

dimensions. As a result, the faculty of speech is the most important faculty (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 61, P. 29). The body also includes beauty, because human eats with his hands and can speak, and has physical honor (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 60, P. 271).

3.2. Human has various dimensions, abilities and needs that must be cared for, and this cannot be achieved but by reaching a state of moderation to the point that no one of these powers do not interfere with any other ones. This is because, the more moderate man is in using his powers and away from the extremism the closer he can get to his God and be a real believer (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 68, P. 386-387 & Vol. 61, P. 291).

3.3. Human has Free Will by nature and instinctively and there is no escape from this; because all his behaviors and actions are based on two simple choice of doing or not doing it. But the difference among the humans is in their nature and creation; that is, some have more potential for being guided and some have less, and even the temptations by the devil are not mandatory, either (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 69, P. 213 & Vol. 4, P. 137).

3.4. Majlessi says: The inherent behavior of human is modifiable and a person who is stingy by nature, although giving and donating is very difficult at first, he can eventually invite the angel of charity and donation in himself. For this reason, everyone is responsible for acquiring virtues and can earn them by knowledge, thinking, efforts, and practice (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 70, P. 372).

3.5. He considers human as a social being and the reason for that is to achieve his own personal profit and interests, and that human cannot live in seclusion and without the cooperation of others to achieve his goals; therefore, human has no escape from social life (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 60, P. 175 & Vol. 61, P. 106 and 131).

3.6. Human is created in such way that has tendency towards his God and the relation with him is instinctive (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 68, P. 318). He identifies the divine temperament as universal and claims that all humans are in search of God by nature and you cannot find anyone who is not somehow familiar with God, even if he calls it something else or be against God and in denial of his existence (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 3, P. 276-277).

3.7. He says that human has a tendency towards the bad and evil by nature, because he wants to be free and accepts no obstacles in doing his human urges and fulfilling his sensual desires. If God leaves this system to itself and does not invite him to doing good and the righteous actions and does not send messengers to guide him, he will continue satisfying his human desires and goes towards corruption, degradation and injustice and killing. Therefore, even if the nature of man is not towards evil, the evil is prevalent over the good (majlessi; 1987, Vol. 11, P. 126).

4.   The Principles of Education from Mohammad Bagher Majlessi point of view

The educational system must be based on some particular principles, principles that can be the foundation for legislation in educational systems. Based on the anthropological views of Majlessi, we have extracted some of these principles here:

4. 1. Participation of students during the learning process:

one of the things blended with human nature is his need for other humans. People cannot live in isolation because humans are without any doubt, a social being and need to cooperate with others to survive. Majlessi has also observed humans as social beings for acquiring their material needs. He adds that humans cannot achieve their goals and benefits without cooperation, so the social living is inevitable (Majlessi; Vol. 60, P. 175 & Vol. 61, P. 106 & 131).

Based on their natural need, humans need the company and interaction of others. Hence, the people involved in teaching and educational fields must take this into consideration and plan their lessons so that the learners learn the rules of participation and communication; and get involved in the subject of learning to prepare living in a larger society. Living and cooperating in a society is the only way to achieve your goals in life.

4. 2. Considering the individual differences of students and their capacities and abilities:

one of the natural phenomena in all human societies is the existence of differences among them. A healthy, humane, and efficient education system understands and perceives these differences. The existence of such differences among the students is one of the most important problems that teachers encounter in their classrooms. Experienced teachers know that using one single method of teaching for all the students and treating all the students in the same way cannot be useful. People have different abilities, capacities and interests; therefore, it is mandatory for the teachers to identify the abilities, capacities and interests of the learners and set their communication channels in accordance to them, teach them and require homework from them. Messengers of God also used this method in encountering the people with their own language and to their capacity, and expected them to take on responsibilities to that extent (Beheshti and Faghihi and Abu-Jafari; 2001, Vol. 4, P.186).

Majlessi, inspired by the Imams and the innocents, considered the capacities and abilities as important and strongly recommended to pay attention to them. He says: "humans by inheritance and creation have more

guidance in some areas and need more guidance in others" (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 69, P. 213 & Vol. 4, P. 137). Another place, regarding capacities and abilities, he says: "observing the capacities and abilities is not something that we advise, but it is ordains given by the religion's leaders to treat people to their level of intelligence, comprehension, patience and ability and when writing a book, consider the capacity of our audience. It was for this reason that I did not quote some words from the Imams and the prophet about oneness of God (Tohid), not because they did not seem to be correct or valid, but because I was afraid of putting them in the wrong hands who cannot understand their meanings and be misled and infidel." (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 4, P. 46) As a result, knowing about the differences among the students in their capacities and abilities, teachers and educators can adopt the appropriate methods of teaching and student treatment and face the educational problems more pragmatically and be more successful in moderating these behaviors.

4. 3. Moderation (avoidance of the extremism):

 another principle that must be considered in the work of education is moderation. Moderation is contrary to extremism. Extremism is to over-do something or to under-do something else. Any of these two phenomena can lead to life disorder and disruption of health. In education that deals with the mind and the soul of the humans, avoiding extremism is a very efficient and effective tool. Extremism can cause inflammation or vacuum and shortcoming. Majlessi has also viewed moderation as the criterion for wisdom and intelligence and quotes from holy Koran that "one who has turned into god and his faith will moderate" and interpretes it as: the believers will always keep the borders of moderation and stays away from extremism (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 68, P. 386-387 & Vol. 61, P. 291).

This explanation will show the position of moderation in the ethical order in the view of Majlessi, because it clarifies that the believers always keep the rout of moderation and tries to keep on its track. Human has many different dimensions and powers, and needs and in order to keep the balance of this whole system, he must pay attention to each one of these needs in moderation to the extent that no other ones are harmed, he can get closer and closer to God and be a genuine believer (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 68, P. 386-387 & Vol. 61, P. 291). Consequently, educational programs, policies, behaviors and performances can only guide us to our goals if they are in accordance with moderation and keep away from extremism. The educational trend is a moderating process, and in no other way we can achieve a real education and train human faculties and qualities to their absolute perfection. A wise training is one based on keeping moderation in every directions and avoidance from extremism in all aspects of life. Moderation is the necessity of intelligence and wisdom, and extremism is the condition for ignorance. Every educational measure and action must be based on moderation and not pass the middle line.

4. 4. Taking advantage of the human will:

 human is a creature with freedom of choice and it is by his will that conducts his actions. For this reason, God has left the right and responsibility of finding the right way and moving in that direction for each person. The God's guidance does not happen by compulsion and constraint, but it should be boiling from the inside. Humans have the will power by instinct and there is no way out for him. Our actions and behaviors and decisions for doing or not doing something arises from our knowledge and enthusiasm. But the difference among the humans is in their nature and creation; that is, some have more potential for being guided and some have less, and even the temptations by the devil are not mandatory, either (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 69, P. 213 & Vol. 4, P. 137).

The great scholar, Majlessi, then opens up a new chapter in his book and talks about the Satan (the devil) and his qualities and the extensive field of his operations which don't seem to be in opposition to human's free will power; instead, he claims that the existence of such tempting power makes people to act with more caution and care (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 63, P. 131-194). This is similar to the guidance, promises and victories by God which are bestowed upon humans that will change their behaviors and actions, but do not compel them in any way. As a result, if a master orders his servant to some action and clearly justify the action to him and promise him to big rewards and or punishment, he will be enthusiastically willing to do job without being forced to do it (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 5, P. 83). We should obey such method in the field of education, too. The learners have free will. We should pave the way to the ethical values and virtues in such way that they would be willing to cover the distance at their will. Many of the behavioral problems of the people relates to the extreme behaviors by their instructors. If a behavior is forced upon a person without any inner satisfaction, they will lose their interest shortly after the start and will hand it back to us. Such behaviors will never become rooted in their personality.

4. 5. Pay attention to changeability of personal characteristics and traits:

according to this rule, we can change a trait or behavior through training and education. Regarding this case, Mr. Majlessi mentions: "The inherent behavior is changeable; for example, a person who is stingy by nature can learn how to be generous by practice. For this reason, everyone is responsible for acquiring virtues by increasing their knowledge and improving their mind, efforts and practice (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 70, P. 372). Subsequently, although every soul and person possesses a particular personal trait, it can be changed by thinking and efforts.

So, according to the principle of changeability of personal traits if a person has some talents in a particular trait, it can become rooted in his personality by repetition and practice and for changing them also, we need to reverse the process. Children, youth and young adults are more susceptible for behavioral formation, because their soul and mind is more prepared for learning new behaviors, but after this age period and in the middle ages, although possible but it is very hard to change their habits and characteristics. This is because of their dependence and attachment to their cognitive, behavioral and sensational dimensions of their soul that makes it more like a miracle to change their behaviors.

4. 6. Joint of ethical education with spirituality:

 there is an intrinsic connection between education and spirituality. In every components and elements of education, we must direct our efforts towards God by prayer and meditation to fulfill our educational goals. This connection is so strong that if some of these human values that are acceptable by Islam exist in a person, he will eventually reach the divine spirituality. The great scholar Majlessi believes that humans are created in such way that they all have a tendency to move towards God and joining him by nature. (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 68, P. 318). He considers the divine nature of the man as universal and permanent and reminds us that all humans are by nature believers in God, and you cannot find anyone who doesn't believe in God or whatever force he calls it; even the people who deny the existence of God. (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 3, P. 276-277)

Knowledge and search for God is the first step in human evolution. It is so intrinsic and inherent that will lead into a very strong and blessed bond with the God and will bear much fruits (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 67, P. 137). As a result, it is a very fundamental principle to be attended and must be used in educational activities to fulfill the educational goals.

4. 7. Creating suitable conditions:

creating and providing the proper conditions for educating the learners has such high effects that without them we cannot educate the learners. To achieve efficiency, behavioral correction and the educational goals, it is essential to create some effective conditions, as failure and deviation from achieving these goals are also dependent on these conditions. In addition, the root for some of the thoughts, intentions and behaviors of mankind can be found in the conditions he or she lives in; therefore, this principle can be based on the impressionability of human from his various conditions including the location, time and society that he live in (Bagheri; 2007, P. 136).

Mr. Majlessi was aware of this matter and believed that the environment and the people around the child are very influential in his education. For instance, regarding the effect of parents on the ethical training of the children and referring to some verses of Koran and quotes by the Imams, Mr. Majlessi writes: "children will take effect from their parents, so they accept the religion, faith, morality, and inclinations by their parents, so much that the prophet of Islam, Mohammad (P.B.U.H) explains this impressionability as follows: every born child is created based on a divine nature, except when their parents are Jewish, Christian or Magus (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 3, P. 282). Therefore, the parents, teachers, and instructors who are effective on the learners' behaviors must possess some admirable, nice and constructive virtues so they can become a good model (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 70, P. 229-343). Considering this important educational principle in educating children, all the people involved in teaching them such as the parents, teachers, heads of homes, institutes, and the society at large must move on with constructive behavior, and try to create a healthy environment for the children. This will help them to acquire good traits and admirable behavior.

5.   Conclusion

Considering what was said, the principles of anthropology were studied in Mr. Majlessi's views. It became clear that in his views, human has two independent aspects: the soul and the body. The essence and identity of man is by his faculty of speech. In addition, human has many different dimensions, powers and needs that all must be attended for and taken care of. This can only be possible, if the principle of moderation is observed to the extent that no faculty interferes with another. The more moderate a man is in his faculties and the farther he is from extremism, the closer he can get to God and be more genuine believer.

The great scholar Majlessi believes Humans have the will power by instinct and there is no way out for him. Our actions and behaviors and decisions for doing or not doing something arises from our knowledge and enthusiasm. But the difference among the humans is in their nature and creation; that is, some have more potential for being guided and some have less, and even the temptations by the devil are not mandatory, either (Majlessi; 1987, Vol. 69, P. 213 & Vol. 4, P. 137).

Human, by nature and instinctively, has free will and there is no escape from this; because all his behaviors and actions are based on two simple choice of doing or not doing it. But the difference among the humans is in their nature and creation; that is, some have more potential for being guided and some have less, and even the temptations by the devil are not mandatory, either.

He believes that the inherent and natural behavior of the humans can be changed. He also knows human as a social being who cannot live without the help and cooperation of others to fulfill his needs and his goals. Regarding the nature of man, he believed human's nature is more towards the evil. At last, he recognizes that the nature of man is towards God and his companion. He sees this as a universal and comprehensive phenomenon and reminds us that all humans are in search of a god by nature. Some of the principles of his anthropology inferred from his works are as follows: The principle of participation in the learning process. According to this, the learners must know the way to cooperate and share things with others, and with sharing and cooperation he can get involved in the learning process. This is because Majlessi believed that humans are social beings and cannot supply for their needs. The second principle was the principle of individual differences and considering the capacities and abilities and the fact that we should not expect a student work more than his or her capacity. Teachers and parents involved in the education of children must pay attention to these differences and this will help them to choose the right method and approach for teaching each individual student more practically and tangibly. This will help them to fixate or moderate each individual student's traits and behaviors. The third principle is the principle of guiding and directing the learners. Teachers and instructors must not leave the learners to themselves, because the nature of mankind is mostly towards the bad and evil and this will mislead them to a wrong direction. For this reason, Mr. Majlessi used any opportunity to guide and direct people and his students. Having moderation and avoiding extremism is the fourth principle inferred from Majlessi's works. That is, any educational movement or action must be based on moderation and does not lead into too far left or right. Dealing with human souls and minds, this principle must be carefully observed and practiced. Next is the principle of taking advantage of the human will in the field of education. We must notice that the learners have free will and they must be directed in such way that they want to attain moral virtues and humane traits at their free will, because many of the problems in people results from the extremism in the instructors. If a behavior is forced upon a person without any inner satisfaction, they will lose their interest shortly after the start and will hand it back to us. Such behaviors will never become rooted in their personality.

The sixth principle is the principle of changeability of personal traits, and that we can change the bad traits by the environmental and educational factors. The principle of combining education and spirituality, as the seventh principle, states that in every components of education, we must take advantage of the power of prayers and meditation to direct our efforts towards God and achieve our educational goals, because there is an intrinsic relationship between education and spirituality. The eighth principle is to create suitable conditions in teaching the learners. To achieve efficiency, behavioral correction and the educational goals, it is essential to create some effective conditions, as failure and deviation from achieving these goals are also dependent on these conditions. All the people involved in teaching them such as the parents, teachers, heads of homes, institutes, and the society at large must move on with constructive behavior, and try to create a healthy environment for the children. This will help them to acquire good traits and admirable behavior.

The ninth principle is the create motivation in the learners to direct them to growth and perfection. Therefore, motives must be identified and stimulated. Motives are the forces for moving the learners towards their goals and must be identified and stimulated in the children. Finally, the principle of self-discipline is what must be considered in the field of education because without it no prosperity and success will be attainable.

It is essential to take advantage of the results by such researches because they are the results of findings by great thinkers who had a comprehensive understanding of human nature and those who have spent most their lives doing research work, and their adopted methods in their own daily lives were the result of many years of efforts and experience.

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