

Review and Clarification of Methods of Sexual Education Based On Islamic Perspective

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ABSTRACT

In this study, methods of sexual education were investigated based on Islamic perspective. The statistical population of the present research included all the Islamic texts which were related to the above title and no sampling was performed in this case. Here, note taking was used and the obtained data was qualitatively analyzed. The major findings include: preventing sexual misconduct, promoting sexual health and guiding sexual motivation. Within the realm of preventing sexual deviancy, training methods are as follows: the education of sexual roles and identity, eliminating the degeneration conditions, informing the teenagers of the physical changes related to the puberty and that such changes are natural. In the field of sexual health, the following training methods have been obtained: the methods of developing moral virtues, supporting mental- emotional needs, enriching leisure time, choosing a model in terms of sexual morality. In the field of guiding sexual motivation: the methods of answering questions related to sexual matters, channeling the sexual energy into spiritual and desirable matters and trainings related to the control of sexual excitation. By the way, the accuracy of research findings was confirmed by six of seminary and university professors.

Keywords: *Sexual Education, Methods Of Sexual Education*

Education is the gradual and harmonic growth of all human talents and within this realm, sexual education is of great sensitivity and complexity. Sexual education refers to activities which start from the beginning of human life to make the sexual instinct balanced and adequate. Its basic goal is to provide sexual awareness, evolve the sexual behavior and help fulfilling sexual duties and also help survival of generations and acquire love and peace within the life (Moarefai, 2000). Sexual education refers to the application of methods to create healthy sexual traits and behaviors and eliminate undesirable sexual traits and behaviors from humans (Pouramini, 2004). Sexual instinct is an inherent human need that Maslow considered it among humans' physiologic and initial vital needs. He believes that self-fulfilling individuals think of sexual orgasm as a

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means to achieve unity, bond and real love (Vandermassen, 2004). Experts and scholars of education and psychology, each based on their attitudes and their intellectual values as well as social and cultural principles offered a particular conception of sexual education.

Creler (Cited By Sobhaninejad, 2005) believes that sexual education within its comprehensive meaning refers to three basic areas; namely, sexual health, sexual morality and sexual future. As he considers, the first step in sexual education is definitely learning and improving the level of information related to the sexual health. In terms of sexual morality, he emphasizes the positive sexual emotions, providing information about sexual change and sexual self- control and being modest in sexual satisfaction. Finally he illustrates sexual future as including sexual education, providing relevant information and awareness about preparing teenagers to have their future married life together with love, understanding, while being respectful and knowing the emotions of the opposite sex and having adequate verbal and non-verbal communication and paying attention to the demands of the opposite sex (Sobhaninejad, 2005). We need to accept the fact that sexual instinct is an effective force which is present within individuals from the beginning of their lives and which influences the set of one's life time activities and functions after puberty. Scientifically thinking, sexual education is one of the challenging concerns within Iranian family structures. Responsible parents cannot be indifferent towards the sexual instinct of their children since failure in this case may lead them to corruption.

From another aspect, media and advancements in communication technologies and living in the age of communications resulted in faster and easier access of teenagers to the sexual content. This technical capability together with the curious nature of teenagers leads them to exploit sexual images and sexual contents. Therefore, having personal computers with easy access to the immoral sexual websites made parents' monitoring a difficult task (Doran, 2005).

Still, from a different aspect, the increased gap between puberty and age of marriage which leads to social corruptions makes the problem even more complicated. This way the importance of sexual education is more highlighted. All things considered, any society has its specific norms and principles within which the frame of sexual satisfaction is defined making it mandatory for its people to follow.

Here, three main standpoints are distinguished: negligence, excessive and moderate. The negligence perspective towards sexual instinct has a negative point of view and even it prevents people from getting married and considers sexual issues as a matter of shame and sin. Those who follow excessive perspective consider no limitations for sexual satisfaction so that there are no borders defined here. Finally, moderate point of view believes in controlled and guided sexual instinct where it is provided legally (Motahari, 2011).

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Having this in mind that Iranian society being inspired by religious teachings is a moderate one, sexual education here means training, moderating, controlling and directing this inherent human need (FarmahiniFarhani, 2004). Studies show that most countries have emphasized the necessity of sexual education as an inevitable task. For instance, in the US, sexual education is directed in a way to prevent the problems arisen from sexual promiscuity (Lew, 1991).

This way, the dominant culture in western countries is different from what is practiced in our country in relation to sexual education. That's why it doesn't sound logical to generalize from what they find in their research. As far as Islamic rules are concerned, the principle sexual instinct (sexual motivation) and its actions are not prohibited (GaemiAmiri, 1985). From Islamic point of view, the main function of sexual instinct is the survival of generations and to maintain chastity. Islam is not against sexual education. The frequent recommendations to the parents about what they should do in particular situations and what they should teach their children and the relevant religious law in terms of menstruation, puberty, separate sleeping of children, intercourse as in compliance with time and space are all indicators of the fact that Islam pays close attention to sexual education.

Islam has mentioned the role of sexual motivation in different dimensions of individual and social life. In this respect, sexual instinct is not obscene at all but it is a means to reach perfection and pure life (Sabet, 2003).

Considering the studies carried out within the country, Anushe demonstrated that the below factors prevent the parents from paying enough attention to the sexual education of their children: 1- the feeling of shy among mothers, their daughters and health coaches in the process of trainings specific to puberty. 2- Lack of intervention on behalf of mothers and school health coaches in training girls for puberty. 3- Lack of any adequate training program related to puberty at schools. 4- Lack of information and understanding among mothers, their daughters and health coaches about the phenomenon of puberty (Anushe, 2003).

FarmahiniFarhani considered the abnormality of sexual relations as a challenge for human life which is caused by lack of adequate educational program based on religious teachings and continued to represent meaningful relevant content for school kids (FarmahiniFarhani, 2004). Rahebi, in his article discussed the differences of sexual morality in western societies and Islam and mentioned the different viewpoints in terms of sexual education. Later, he expressed some reasoning for the different points of views (Rahebi, 2005).

SobhaniNejad expressed how moral issues prevented parents from educating their children in relation to sexual matters and this way, the children get their information from their individual experience or peer talks. By the way, some health coaches at school refuse answering sexual

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questions only because they find it as abominable. That's why teenagers are self involved and disappointed (SobhaniNejad, 1384).

Eslamian in his article entitled as " a glance at the sexual education curriculum in the education system with an emphasis on the purpose and content elements." , concluded that the content of sexual education curriculum at schools should include elements like sexual training based on religious teachings and that attention should be paid to the religious and social frameworks in sexual behaviors and that useful and constructive information should be presented in terms of healthy sexual behaviors and education sexual health should be carried out based on Islamic principles (Eslamian, Eslamian And Saidi, 2015).

Taking into account the importance and necessity of sexual education and the performed studies within the country, the next step would be to ask which methods are emphasized in Islam for sexual training.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is of document analysis type within which the provisions of Islamic texts about the topic of research have been analyzed.

Statistical population, the sample and methods of sampling

The statistical population of the research includes all the Islamic texts (such as quran, Nahj-Al-Balaghe, Usul-al- Kafi, ...). for the generalizability purpose, no sampling was done and the whole statistical population was investigated.

Data collection tools and methods

The data gathering tool was note taking. To analyze the data based on the distinguished educational methods and to the purpose of having valid research findings, the findings of the present study were reviewed by six faculty members of university and they approved the accuracy of our findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

As a result of the analysis done in terms of sexual education based on Islamic viewpoints, three categories were obtained; namely, prevention, preparation and guidance which are briefly explained.

1- Preventing sexual degeneration

Considering our principle slogan "prevention is always better than treatment", as the first coaches, it is essential for the parents to know what the correct education is and that how to initiate the requirements and also how can they prevent the appearance of sexual problems. This way, parents can have a significant assistance in appropriate development and guidance of sexual

instinct in their children. Awakening of sexual instinct and its degeneration returns back to the behavior of parents and their clothes at home and the presence of satellite programs on TV. Now, all these considered, some of the important issues from the Islamic point of view are mentioned.

1.1- Teaching sexual role and identity

One of the issues where the family has an effective role in its foundation is the sexual identity. Sexual identity refers to the portrait each individual has about being man or woman. Sexual identity refers to the adoption of biological, cognitive, mental and social features which appear differently in two different genders. Sexual identity has a close relationship with sexual role and that, boys and girls should have a clear opinion of the social expectations they encounter (Fagihi, 2008).

Recent psychological studies investigating sexual dysfunctions found that all the people suffering from sexual dissatisfaction have experienced a sense of being treated as the opposite sex and have been adorned with a look more appropriate to the opposite sex in their childhood (Fagihi, 2008).

Imam Sadeq (AS) has a statement about the importance of sexual role and identity: “it is OK for girls and women to be decorated by gold yet that would be inappropriate for boys” (Majlesi, 2014).

In this connection, parents should treat children as if not any gender has a privilege compared to the other and that any gender will have its own specific capabilities. Parents should do away with gender related discriminations and they need to teach their children of the specific values each gender has. Also, parents should be serious in teaching their children about their sexual identity; so that, they can be successful in fulfilling their sexual roles as future fathers and mothers.

1.2. Eliminating the required conditions for sexual degenerations

1.2.1. Separated beds for kids

Taking into account the fact that sleeping beside parents can pave the way for sexual degeneration among kids, they should have their beds separated since kids are three years old and they should sleep in a different room. Since sleeping beside each other may cause body contact and provoke curiosity in the kids, that’s why one should prevent from kids awareness of sexual pleasures and have them sleep in separated beds.

The holy prophet (P) said: “when the children are seven years old, separate their beds” (HorAmoli, 2014).

1.2.2. Preventing children from being exposed to the pornographic scenes, images or films and limiting their use of internet and satellite programs

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Since the children get influenced by the environmental factors and that what their parents and others say or play role of has an effect on their mentality, there is the potential probability that they grow sexual degenerations and if this is boosted by other factors in future the effect will be definite.

Imam Sadeq (AS) says: “do not have sexual intercourse in front of kids since it will lead to adultery” (HorAmoli, 2014).

1.2.3. Avoid touching the child's genitals

One method to prevent sexual degeneration is to avoid touching the child's genitals. Considering the fact that sexual excitability is at a higher level after six years old and that playing with the genitals of kids paves the way for their degeneration, Imam Ali (AS) says: “A mother's playing with the genital of her child who is six years old is a kind of adultery” (Majlesi, 2014). Here, adultery means any types of masturbation, homosexuality and adultery (Fagihi, 2008).

1.3. Awareness raising within teenagers about the physiological changes of puberty and that these changes are natural

In term of sexual training of teenagers, parents have two main duties: one is to acquaint them with the sexual realities which have biological roots so that they can get to know how their genitals act and how they can maintain healthy genitals. The other duty is to teach the teenagers how to satisfy their sexual desires considering the moral and cultural values of the society so that they can be safe from anxiety and other psychological side effects. It is always the case that the initial changes within human life are accompanied by a kind of fear. The first time a girl starts menstruation and the first time a boy experiences wet dream is together with fear. Such fear will be at the highest level if there is no preparation or if the children don't know about the fact that it is a natural step in their growth. That's why, it falls within the responsibility of mothers to form a friendly atmosphere informing her child of the menstruation as a symptom of puberty and that prepares her for the role of future mother. Also, fathers should talk about wet dream with their sons which is a sign of fertility and that it prepares him to play the role of a future father (Fagihi, 2008).

From a religious point of view, a teenager (whether a boy or a girl) should be aware that he or she is the noblest of all creatures (Dashti, 2003). They should know that they carry the god's faithfulness and that they have a decisive role in the mental and spiritual health of society.

1.4. Friendship Control

From the age of seven, children are under the influence of peers and friend and such influence increases within teenagers so that occasionally they are exposed to greater influence from their friends than from their family. That's why parents should be careful about their children not to be with people who seduce them.

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It's often the case that the initial talking about sexual intercourse occurs among the same sex students at school. About the impact of friends on the character and behavior, the holy prophet says: “as being impressed by friends, humans follow their behaviors; thus, one needs to be alert enough in terms of making friendship” (Majlesi, 2014).

1.4. Observing appropriate coating and refraining from adornment

One important aspect in sexual education is for parents to maintain appropriate coating in the presence of their children. Mother of the family, as a practical and influential model on the mentality and character of her children, especially on girls, has a symbolic role whose behavior determines the children's process of growth and development. This is also true about covered appearance of the mother in the presence of her children who try to follow her.

The way family members wear clothes is of great importance when puberty is in place. Boys tend to be sexually provoked faster when they see their mothers or sisters half naked which lead to early puberty. In this respect Imam Sadeq (AS) says: “for a Muslim woman, it is not appropriate to cover herself by a shirt or a scarf that displays her body” (HorAmoli, 2014).

2. *Methods of paving the way for sexual health*

2.1. Cultivating moral virtues

One of the best methods of sex education is moral education. By having moral virtues, kids become resistant against immoralities. Among the most important moral virtues in relation to sexual education are: modesty, chastity and honor.

The holy prophet says: “modesty is equal to the whole religion.” The reason why modesty is defined as the whole religion is due to the broad range of components it includes which avoid people from doing bad things (Fagihi, 2008).

Imam Ali (AS) says: “each person has a value equal to his effort and has chastity equal to his zeal” (Dashti, 2003).

2.2. Supporting with emotional and mental needs

Kids are born with emotional and mental needs and by satisfying those needs, appropriate sexual education can be attained. On the contrary, those needs not being satisfied may have a lot of inappropriate mental impacts among which sexual degenerations are expected. Though there are plenty of emotional and mental needs, there is a set of them which has greater significance; namely, kindness, fondling, giving gifts, giving value and security.

2.3. Leisure time enrichment

One of the factors leading to teenagers' degeneration is having leisure time. If the leisure time is deplete from different entertainments and useful tasks, teenagers tend to fill it with illegitimate

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activities. Parents who leave their children idle for long hours and tend to be self-involved with their own activities may be regretful in future (Ganji, 1999).

In this respect, Imam Ali (AS) says: “ for any believer, there are three periods of time, the period when he spends for praying, the period when he is busy working for a living, and the time he is busy enjoying lawful pleasures” (Dashti, 2003)

2.4. Having a model in terms of sexual morality

One of the most essential strategies in realization of education is providing normative model (Dashti, 2003).

There is no doubt that parents as the first behavioral models have a dominant role in sexual model choice by children. The way parents treat each other and their attitude towards their own sexual roles will influence the process of monitoring children. Moreover, other methods like the way kids' toys are selected and specific activities and reactions against kids' inappropriate behaviors affect the way children choose their sexual models (Barahani, 2010).

In sexual education, it is not just enough to represent information and parents' behavior and their attitudes towards sexual issues have great impact on the effectiveness of sexual education.

3. Guiding sexual motivation

3.1. Answering the questions

For children, there are different unanswered questions about sexual matters and they try to find their correct answers. It seems that the answers should be in an understandable level for children and one should avoid unreal and masked answers.

Shahlui quoting from Alfson believes that if parents raise children's awareness of sexual matters, they will not show a strong curiosity about that and will not devote their lives for sexual instinct. Most children ask questions about their boy and how they were born. If the parents find basic answers to such questions then their children will not be astonished when they get to the puberty age since they have enough knowledge about that (Shahlooi, 1994).

Below are the points of concern when answering kids' questions:

- A) When answering kids' questions, there should be enough openness and transparency to avoid their mental confusion.
- B) The answers should not be provoking.
- C) Observance of modesty is a requisite in answering their questions.
- D) Excited and detested reactions to children should be avoided.
- E) Concerns about the age of children should be taken serious in answering their questions (Faghihi, 2008)

3.2. Directing sexual energy towards spiritual and desirable affairs

Freud believed that one of the human defense mechanisms against the odds is sublimation. Sublimation is the displacement of an internal force towards a high level social goal. Psychoanalysts believe that sublimation is similar to an engineering practice where the cascade energy which has the only effect of land erosion is turned into electric power. This is useful for eliminating human's needs. Sublimation has an important role in helping individuals to adjust to the social environment (Ganji, 1993).

In Islam, considering the fact that tender requirements and artistic and esthetic sense and power culminates in adolescence, it is recommendable that parents reinforce these aspects in their children so that teenagers can discharge their mental energy in these activities. Art classes, gyms can distract their attention from sexual desires to artistic and athletic desires (Faghihi, 2008).

3.3. Teaching methods of controlling sexual excitations

One of the most important methods of controlling sexual excitations is for the teenagers not to look *at* a person with whom marriage is not prohibited since this can be the beginning step of degeneration.

Inverse 31 of Surah Noor, god declares: *“say to the faithful men to lower their gazes, and to guard their chastity. This is better for them since god is aware of what they do.”*

As well as the sense of looking, sexual fantasies and thoughts have also an important role in this respect. Opposite to that, thinking of god and rejecting Satan will have a positive effect. That's why, parents involved in training their kids should emancipate their children of such sexual thoughts and fantasies and get their children to remember god all the time.

It has been quoted from Imam Sadeq (AS) that “Havariun gathered beside the Jesus the Christ and said: you are the teacher of goodness, so guide us. Jesus replied: Moses recommended you not to do adultery and I recommend you even not to talk about that. The fact is that any person talking about adultery or thinking about that is like the person who plans to make a fire and as a result although the house doesn't catch fire but the smoke ruins everything” (Khansari, 1994).

Sexual desire is also affected by senses and especially by looking and this looking sense creates the mental images. That's why to control the mental images, one needs to control his/her eyes.

Humans change when exposed to sexual provocations. Environmental provocations which lead to sexual excitations are abundant: such as newspapers, magazines, satellite programs, etc and each one has its role in sexual provocation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sexual desire is one of the most powerful human motivations and has undeniable role in humans' physical and mental life and many of the physical and mental illnesses have their origins in this desire. If it is wisely guided then it makes individuals' life comfortable and the reverse is also true in that, extremity in sexual desire may eventually have hundreds of physical and mental injuries.

Scientifically thinking, sexual training is one of the most challenging matters among Iranian family settings and that, responsible parents might not be indifferent towards their children's sexual desires.

Considering the fact that sexual satisfaction is a function of each society's belief system and that the spirit of Iranian society is derived from Islamic trends and that Islam makes a considerable focus on this issue, the current study concludes the following principles: prevention of sexual degenerations, paving the way for sexual health and guiding sexual desires. In terms of preventing sexual degenerations, the recommended training methods are educations about the sexual role and identity, eliminating all the prerequisites of degeneration, making teenagers aware of their puberty and the relevant physiological changes and that such a change is quite natural and refraining from unnecessary adornments and maintaining adequate body coating. In terms of paving the way for sexual health, methods of developing moral virtues and supporting mental- emotional needs and enrichment of leisure time and choice of an appropriate model of sexual morality have been suggested. In terms of sexual morality and guiding sexual desire, methods of answering questions related to sexual matters and sublimation and education of controlling sexual excitations have been offered and discussed.

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