

Moral Education in a Time of Global Transformation

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Conceptions of morality and moral education are in need of re examination in this time of global transformation. Historical views of morality and moral education are briefly presented, the commonalities and implications of these conceptualizations discussed and their influence on civilization briefly explored. The modern-day conceptions of morality and moral development are presented and compared.

Introduction

The current crisis in this time of global transformation is in the final analysis a moral crisis. Any reform efforts that fail to address the underlying moral issues of this crisis are doomed to failure. Part of the problem lies in the confusion that surrounds morals and morality and how to engender them. Morality and moral education will increasingly become a concern of societies, parents, governments and educators searching for answers to the problems that beset them.

Morals are the principles that guide behavior. These principles change from time to time and place to place. What may be appropriate or beneficial at one time or circumstance, may be destructive and harmful at another. As a result, morals are seen as something relative, and, as such, up to the person or culture who must ultimately decide what is right and wrong. When outsiders try to inflict moral standards on those who do not subscribe to them, conflict, violence and wars can ensue.

What is a universal foundation upon which we can determine the morals that should guide present day affairs? Are there moral principles that transcend time and place? On what basis do we determine what is right and what is wrong? What role do religion and science play in this process? To answer these questions we can look to the moral traditions of old that have withstood the tests of time and that seem to be held universally.

What are the commonalities of culture and religion in terms of right and wrong? Several analyses of religion and human cultures have found values that have become accepted by almost all cultures, though to different extents and in different ways. A study of most of the great philosophies and religions of the world found six ubiquitous virtues common to them all: wisdom and knowledge, courage, love and humanity, justice, temperance, spirituality and transcendence (Seligman, 2002). Several virtues in modern-day Western civilization, such as wealth, good looks, self-esteem, assertiveness and competitiveness, are not found in the teachings of the great philosophers and religious luminaries of the past, rather they were considered vices.

Material versus Moral Education

Most education today can be characterized as material education--that which relates primarily to the physical self and the physical world. This materialistic view of the human race assumes that we are no more than animals, and that the overriding goal of life is the satisfaction of our animal needs. Such views and the systems that have been based on them such as capitalism, socialism, communism and fascism have failed to deliver the contentment and well-being they promised. Modern materialistic education encourages materialism, competition, elitism, division, disunity, injustices and a limited and limiting view of human reality and possibilities and has helped create conflict, violence, instability, hopelessness and multiple violations of personal and collective human rights. In addition, it has failed to lessen hate, prejudice, oppression and greed to the extent needed to transcend our limited dysfunctional patterns of behavior.

We are now at a turning point. We can cling to these ineffective, materialistic ideals in the same way our predecessors clung to their outworn beliefs, or cast aside our modern day dogmas and doctrines for those better suited to the requirements of this age.

Education is a moral endeavor (Goodlad, 1990; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990) in which the role of the teacher is to create a just and caring environment (Tom, 1984). If teachers are to be able to create just and caring classrooms and help develop their students' moral capacities, they themselves must possess the knowledge, desire, skills, fortitude and moral competence to do so. Education should foster love, nobility, high ideals, morality, responsibility, kindness and respect for others. Teachers are to be models of moral education, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in their students, including open mindedness, understanding, tolerance, honesty, fairness, courage, wisdom, trustworthiness and caring. Moral education can contribute to the transformation of our quickly shrinking and flattening world to one where peace, happiness and prosperity will reign for the generality of humankind.

Moral education involves the body, mind and spirit and how they are manifested in action. Moral education can be a strong force in individual and social development as it develops the ability and desire to seek truth and serve the greatest good. For example, by teaching an appreciation for the oneness of humanity and the need for unity in diversity we can help free individuals, families, communities, societies and nations from the prejudices and fanaticism that hamper their development and well-being.

Time of Global Transformation

A number of scholars, writers, commentators and social scientists have noted the tremendous changes the world is going through at the present time. Among the more popular discourses to come out in the last two years on this topic are Friedman's *The World is Flat*, Wright's *A Short History of Progress*, Easterbrook's *The Progress Paradox*, Diamond's *Collapse* and Jacobs' *Dark Age Ahead*. These authors follow an impressive list of others who have been chronicling the dramatic transformations that are happening throughout the world, including individuals such as Putman, Lazslo and Fukuyama and institutions such as the United Nations and the Club of Rome.

Friedman (2005) describes how the world technological advances have "flattened" the world; leveled the playing field so more people have more access to more options than at any time in history. Easterbrook (2004) describes the many signs of progress in the world, but that these advances have not made us happier. Wright (2004) analyses past cultures that have failed to help us become aware of the problems we are currently facing such as threats to the environment, failure to adapt to changing needs and conditions and the weakening of societal infrastructures. In *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Diamond described the factors that contributed to the rise of civilizations and why they happened in some places and not others. In *Collapse* (2005) he looks at the causes of society's destruction and how we might learn from them to prevent it happening to our present day civilization. Jacobs (2005) examines the signs of North American culture weakening through the undermining of integrity in social networks, education, science, governance and corporations.

Each of these authors describes a world in a dramatic transformation that challenges the long held moral assumptions and cultural values of all peoples. The world has contracted into a global community. Peoples are exposed to different values, religions, beliefs and possibilities. Science and technology have provided the means for our material advancement and our shrinking world. We are bound together as never before by trade, knowledge, media, economics, transportation and communications. We are moving more toward common hopes and aspirations, but lack a moral force strong enough to meet the needs and requirements of the age.

As many of the authors above suggest, our very survival depends on how we address these problems now facing humanity collectively. Unless all of these changes are guided by a moral orientation, they can be a potent source of conflict, evil and destruction. If properly addressed from a spiritual framework, these challenges can lead to development, harmony, good and integration. We must move from short-term to long-term thinking (Wright, 2004; Diamond, 2005) and from materialistic to spiritual thinking, valuing and acting (Easterbrook, 2004). Diamond (2005) further posits that we must critically look at our values and discard or change those that are no longer useful. Material progress should not be discarded, but rather embraced and guided by spiritual awareness, principles and ideals.

As science progresses it will be able to shed more and more light on the questions of cause and effect in terms of moral behavior. For example, are tolerance and forgiveness better than hatred and revenge for personal and community health? Does lying require more energy and result in more psychological and social problems than honesty? An example of science attempting to measure the effects of virtue on happiness from a psychological perspective is found in *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*.

The belief that we can rely on shortcuts to happiness, joy, rapture, comfort, and ecstasy, rather than be entitled to these feelings by the exercise of personal strengths and virtues, leads to legions of people who in the middle of great wealth are starving spiritually. Positive emotion alienated from the exercise of character leads to emptiness, to inauthenticity, to depression, and as we age, to the gnawing realization that we are fidgeting until we die.

The positive feeling that arises from the exercise of strengths and virtues, rather than from the shortcuts, is authentic. (Seligman, 2002, p. 8)

Religion, Spirituality and Morality.

Religion is and has been the primary source of spirituality and morality. The leaders of the world religions, such as Krishna (Hindu), Moses (Jewish), Buddha (Buddhist), Zoroaster (Zoroastrian), Christ (Christian) and Muhammad (Moslem), are among the most influential people affecting past and present-day morals. Their views about what is moral have been tested over time and gradually accepted by the majority of the people of the world. They have helped to transform the individuals and the societies that have followed them.

If we historically study the role of the great religions and their effects on civilization and look for the commonalities and their relationships, we can see the different religions as parts of one great civilizing influence taking place at different times in different places with essentially the same spiritual message. As religious fanaticism, dogmatism and separatism later entered these faiths their influence went from being extremely vital and beneficial to being very destructive and detrimental to progress.

The evolving nature of moral instruction in religion is somewhat analogous to the stages of moral development in the individual. For example, Adam heralded the stage of knowing right from wrong, Moses the stage of reward and punishment, Jesus the individualistic, instrumental morality stage of

moral development, Muhammad, the social-conventional stage, and the most recent founder of a world religion, Baha'u'llah, a post-conventional morality. (See Table 1.)

The teachings of the founders of the world's religions have exerted a transformational influence in developing morality and furthering the social good. The effect their laws and religious codes have had on humankind over the centuries can be seen today as they have been largely adopted as part of the moral, legal and social frameworks of modern societies. Their social, moral and spiritual truths have been echoed in different forms by the many scholars and philosophers who have illumined our thoughts throughout history. The Ten Commandments and the golden rule are but two examples.

Though it may appear that each of these leaders expressed morality and morally educated their followers in ways that varied, their fundamental moral message was the same. For example, all religions contain some version of the golden rule. In the *Mahabharata* of Hinduism is recorded "This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain." It is recorded in the *Udana-Varqa* that Buddha taught "Hurt not others with that which pains yourself." In the *Talmud* of Judaism is "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow men. That is the entire Law, all the rest is commentary." Zoroastrianism states in the *Dadistan-i-Dinik*: "The nature only is good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self." Matthew of *The New Testament* of Christianity recorded "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye so to them: for this the law and the prophets." Islam's *Hadith* states "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."

Present day religions have generally rejected the revision of the ideas enshrined in their sacred scriptures, even when they clearly are no longer suited to the needs and conditions of today. As a result the religions have been largely unsuccessful at resolving differences and adapting to changing knowledge and moral challenges that were unheard of when they were revealed. In addition, literal and erroneous interpretations of scriptures and the corruption of leaders and teachings have led to a further discrediting of religion.

The perversion of religion that is prevalent in our world today and which has been dominant for several centuries should be distinguished from the more authentic religion as revealed by its founders, which did not contain the superstitions, dogmas and fanatical interpretations placed upon it by misguided clerics and followers over time. These misinterpretations and perversions are evident in history and have led to the demise of religion in this day. A scientific approach to studying these religions would go far to helping removing the superstitions that have been introduced over time.

Religion, like science, must be kept within the bounds of moderation. They are complimentary sources of knowledge and advancement. These two life-forces, like male and female, require one another if they are to bear fruit. Both bring something different but equally vital to the relationship. If either becomes too dominant, then the relationship suffers. Religion is primarily a social-moral force, whereas science is primarily material-rational. Religion provides the direction and goal and science provides the means. It is the blend of spiritual and material. It is the realizing of spiritual aims through material means, the reconciling of faith and reason.

Tripartite Theory of Cognition, Affection and Conation

Moral education depends upon and is conditioned upon mental activities of cognition (knowing, intellectual, epistemological, thinking), affection (valuing, emotional, aesthetic, feeling) and conation (striving, volitional, ethical, willing). This tripartite theory of cognition, affection and conation emerged from the writers of the Enlightenment such as Kant and Leibnitz. It was popular among psychologists until behaviorism, which disregarded what it could not see and measure, became the dominant approach in the early 1900's. The tripartite theory has again gained credence in the latter part of the twentieth

century. It involves the cognitive, affective, and conative domains and their manifestation through the psychomotor (behavior, actions, skills, doing) domain.

Moral education is affected by each of these domains and their respective taxonomies. We need knowledge, desire, will-power and physiological capacity to develop morals. The knowledge of right and wrong alone may not change our feelings, skills or will to act. Even when right and wrong is clear, the valuing, psychomotor controls and moral commitment may not be sufficient to translate that knowledge into action. When it comes to moral education, the affective, psychomotor and conative domains must be considered along with the cognitive, as these are necessary in the moral process. Morality needs balance, nurturing, exercise and caring to fully develop.

Cognition, affection and conation can also be applied to the hierarchical stages of moral development as described in Table 1. Each of the domains described below will be affected by the level of moral development. An individual's thinking, feeling and acting will depend on the stage of moral development achieved. A good educational strategy is to help learners move from one stage to the next.

Cognitive Domain and Capabilities

The taxonomy of the cognitive domain (Bloom et al, 1956) divides knowledge into ascending levels of complexity that can be related to moral education. These levels, ordered from lowest to highest, are recall, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Recall is to remember or recognize, comprehension involves understanding, application requires the ability to make use of knowledge in practical situations, analysis involves the ability to break down knowledge in to its component parts, synthesis is the bringing together of parts of information to gain new understanding and evaluation is the ability to judge the value of the relevant facts and issues. Some scholars have added creativity as a level that transcends the others and that all levels can be applied to four kinds of knowledge: factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Some cognitive moral capabilities include being able to progressively

1. know right from wrong.
2. understand why and how people behave morally.
3. apply moral principles in action.
4. analyze personal and societal moral values.
5. synthesize the various principles that apply to moral problems.
6. evaluate moral solutions to real problems.
7. create multiple solutions to moral issues.

The basic moral cognitive challenge and goal is to "know thyself". Learning about our strengths and weaknesses so we can deal with them effectively is a fundamental charge to all individuals. Learning from our experiences and those of others past and present helps us develop a moral framework. Being able to think critically, constructively and creatively to solve the problems of life is a necessary cognitive moral capability.

Affective Domain and Capabilities

The affective domain has five hierarchical levels with several sublevels (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Maisa, 1964). The lowest level is receiving, which merely requires the person to be aware, accept the input, and control attention. Next higher level is responding: displaying new behavior from experience. The higher levels in ascending order are valuing: being involved or committed; organization: changing the value system to accommodate new values; and finally, characterization by value: behaving consistently with the new value.

Some hierarchical affective moral capabilities might include the following:

1. showing awareness of moral principle or situation
2. reacting to a moral encounter
3. develop a commitment to moral beliefs or actions
4. operate within a system of values that relate to and accommodate other values
5. show a consistent pattern and framework of behavior incorporating new moral standards or values

Moral feelings are engendered by beauty that can be found in relationships through love, harmony and unity; in our actions through moral behavior and in nature through its goodness and balance. The affective domain centers on love and its various manifestations in our lives. Love is the foundation and moving force for all emotions. Happiness is having love or our loved object near to us and well cared for and sadness is the opposite. Anger, disgust and fear, the three other classic emotions, can also be understood and defined in terms relationships with objects of love. Moral affective development should lead to happiness of the individual and others. One must overcome lower loves or passions and cultivate higher loves and attractions that lead to interconnectedness, service, reciprocity, caring and cooperation.

Conative Domain and Capabilities

Conation is vectored energy with both direction and magnitude. It refers to volition in relation to cognition and motivation in relation to affection. People strong in conation are enterprising, energetic, determined, decisive, persistent, patient and organized (http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-041999-174015/unrestricted/chap_2.pdf). Some elements of this domain would include making a decision, setting goals, making plans to achieve goals, commitment, perseverance and evaluation of effort. Some subcategories could include the developing of will power by thinking, deciding, doing for oneself, carrying on in the face of difficulties and seeing challenges as opportunities for growth. Discipline, conscience, confidence, trust, faith and love are other areas that will influence one's volition and motivation.

The taxonomy of the conative domain has five stages: perception, focus, engagement, involvement and transcendence, and twelve steps or sub stages that are cyclical: 1. recognize need, problem, challenge or opportunity, 2. set goal, 3. brainstorm alternatives, 4. assess risks, 5. select strategy, 6. get your act in gear (visualize), 7. organize, 8. make it happen, 9. push on, 10. wrap it up, 11. ooo & ah! (evaluate), 12. purpose/long range direction (Atman, 1982). These stages and steps can be further categorized as aspects of planning, acting and reflecting. Assagioli (1973) has posited six stages of willing that correlate closely with Atman's: 1. purpose (evaluation, motivation and intention), 2. deliberation, 3. choice/decision, 4. affirmation, 5. planning/programming, and 6. direction of the execution. Snow and Jackson (1993) developed a provisional taxonomy of conative constructs that is also useful in understanding conation: 1. achievement motivation, 2. self-regulation, 3. interests and styles of learning, 4. self-related and 5. other-related.

Using Atman's five stages, we can describe how conative capabilities might apply to moral education.

1. Have a moral purpose and direction that can be applied to experience
2. Set moral goals
3. Decide what is right and how to accomplish it
4. Take initiative to do good
5. Commit wholly to moral behavior, seeing through to completion, transcending obstacles and limitations

Other moral capabilities that involve conation are listed below.

1. Sustaining effort, persevering and overcoming obstacles.

2. Transcending one's lower passions by focusing on higher purposes and capabilities.
 3. Participating effectively in consultation.
 4. Committing oneself to empowering educational activities as a student and as a teacher.
 5. Forming a common vision of a desirable future based on shared values and principles, and articulating this in a way that inspires us to work towards its realization.
 6. Contributing to the establishment of justice.
 7. Serving in societal institutions so as to facilitate the expression of the talents of others that are affected by these institutions.
 8. Being a responsible and loving family member as a child, spouse, or parent.
- (Nancy Campbell Collegiate Institute, <http://www.nancycampbell.net/curriculum002.html>)

Psychomotor Domain and Capabilities

The psychomotor domain is primarily concerned with the development of physical skills that can be applied to moral skill development in our actions and interactions with others. Taxonomies in this domain have been less studied and basically move from reflexive to highly skilled movements. We will use the one developed by Simpson (1972). The lowest level, perception, involves using sense organs to obtain cues needed to guide motor activity. The next higher psychomotor level, set, refers to being ready to perform a particular action. Guided response, performing under the guidance of a model, involves imitation and trial and error. The fourth level, mechanism, refers to being able to perform a task habitually with some degree of confidence and proficiency. The fifth level is complex or overt responses and the sixth is adaptation, using previously learned skills to perform new but unrelated tasks. The seventh and highest level of the hierarchical list of objectives in the psychomotor domain is origination, the creating of new performances after having developed skills.

Psychomotor capabilities that could be applied to moral education are

1. sensing cues needed to guide moral activity
2. moral readiness to act
3. imitating moral behavior through trial and error in various situations
4. being able to act morally regularly with confidence
5. moving moral behavior to a higher degree of proficiency
6. using moral skills in new situations
7. originating new moral performances

Moral actions and ends depend upon physical means. Though one may have the knowledge, desire and will to act morally, one must ultimately put those capacities into a physical expression. This domain is closely related to the conative domain. As a result, it is a moral responsibility to care for your physical well-being as it is the vehicle for morality.

A New Framework for Moral Education

A new framework for moral education can be found in the writings of Baha'u'llah, the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í writings identify and define the virtues, moral principles and ideals needed in today's world. Baha'u'llah specifies that to know, love and will are distinctions and capacities unique to humanity and the means to develop virtues. True education then is drawing out potential in the cognitive, affective and conative faculties rather than the dispensing and retrieving of facts. Each individual has physical, intellectual, and spiritual realities that are in need of development. These three natures are linked together and influence each other. Mental and moral disharmony can result in physical ailments, and physical surroundings can affect mental and moral dispositions. No education can be considered complete without the proper treatment of all three areas.

Where formal education concentrates on the development of the mind, moral education relates to the qualities of character. If character is not properly developed, both the body and mind are affected and may become the cause of great harm. For instance, the Bahá'í guidelines for proper moral development, such as abstinence from narcotics and intoxicants, moderation in all things and cleanliness, protect individuals from practices that are harmful to physical, mental and spiritual well-being. These can be included in the curriculum for moral education.

Moral education involves seeking moral solutions to social, economic and political problems. Many of the Baha'i principles apply to these same goals:

- independent investigation of truth and universal compulsory education provide an educational foundation fundamental for moral education.
- the oneness of a creator and the oneness of religion allows us to look at the major religions with opened unbiased minds, not considering them as opposing forces, but as progressive stages in human development.
- the oneness of humankind helps us consider all peoples with respect and to value unity in diversity.
- science and religion are in harmony eliminates the conflict between these two powerful and complimentary forces, enables them to operate on a higher plane and makes the acquisition of scientific knowledge a moral responsibility.
- men and women are to have equal rights and opportunities corrects long held biases about who should receive an education and how it is presented.
- the elimination of prejudice of all kinds helps to create world consciousness and an environment of growth for individuals and society.
- consultation and group decision making promotes unity, social justice and security

There are many more such teachings within the Baha'i writings with implications for future curricula and possibilities for reconstructing future approaches to moral education. Some examples of statements presenting Bahá'í ideas on moral education are "Education for a New Namibia" (NSA of Namibia, August, 1990), "Educational Policy: A Bahá'í Perspective" (NSA of India, November, 1985), "Charter for Bahá'í Schools" (*American Bahá'í*, April, 1990) and "Position Statement on Education" (Bahá'í International Community Task Force on Education, January 2, 1989).

Conclusion

Society, parents and educators pay too little attention to moral education or character training. We are now reaping the fruits of such neglect--crime, immorality and neurosis. Parents are occupied with material pursuits and pleasures, while school teachers concern themselves mainly with maintaining classroom order and providing intellectual training. This condition is lamentable, as the development of moral qualities is the most important element in producing a healthy individual and a progressive society. People with well developed mental powers but poorly develop moral powers been the cause of great harm. We must first know which qualities are helpful to our lives, then have the motivation and volition to cultivate those qualities, and finally to consistently and progressively manifest those qualities in our lives. Through the ages the philosophers, prophets and seers have identified attributes necessary for the healthy development of both the individual and society.

Much could be done in media, homes, communities, schools and society to facilitate moral development. A moral education will identify the attributes necessary for a happy and fulfilled life, encourage a desire and volition to develop them, and create situations in which they may be developed. Many believe that children should be free to experiment and learn completely on their own, and to

develop their own values unhampered by the confused world around them. Children need to be taught what values are important for productive living and what values cause harm.

Moral education is a critical need in our rapidly changing world today. Modern moral education requires the recognition of religion's role in civilization and that our understanding of both scientific and religious truths is evolving. As religion becomes more scientific in its method and science becomes more guided by religion, scientific truth and religious truth will be reconciled. We have to challenge established beliefs and independently search for truth in order to progress.

Using what we know about cognition, affection, conation, psychomotor and moral development, along with the framework for addressing the problems that have resulted from the misuse of religion and the breakdown of morality presented in the Bahá'í teachings, we can go far in helping our children and youth develop into happy and healthy adults.

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Age	Thinking	What's Right (I should:)	Reason to be good
0	Egocentric Reasoning	get my way	To get rewards and avoid punishments.

4	Unquestioning Obedience	do what I'm told, follow the rules (if in my best interests)	To stay out of trouble
6	What's in it for me	look out for myself but be fair to those who are fair to me.	Self-interest guided by mutual interpersonal expectations
10	Interpersonal Conformity	a nice person and live up to the expectations of the people I know and care about	So others will think well of me (social approval) and I can think well of myself (self-esteem).
14	Responsibility to "The System"	fulfill my responsibilities to the social or value system I feel part of	To keep the system from falling apart and to maintain self-respect as somebody who meets my obligations.
17	Social Contract	uphold society's values unless violate my principles	To maintain the social contract with others, but not if they are wrong
21	Principled Conscience	show the greatest possible respect for the rights and dignity of every individual person and should support a system that protects human rights	The obligation of conscience to act in accordance with the principle of respect for all human beings.

Table 1. Stages of Moral Reasoning. (Adapted from Kohlberg and Lickona)