LAWRENCE KOHLBERG'S THEORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT AND ITS COMPARISON WITH ETHICS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SHIA ISLAM

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to examine and criticize Kohlberg's moral development theory from the viewpoint of Shia morality. To this end, we first introduced Kohlberg's theory of moral development followed by introducing the Shia moral view. Afterward, we examine Kohlberg's view from the Shia ethic perspective. The results of this article showed that, according to Kohlberg, moral reasoning is the cause of the moral behaviour while the ethical reasoning is not always associated with ethical behaviour. Moral reasoning is not a guarantee for the ethical behaviour. Also, other foundations – such as the moral nature of man, human love and affection, and the tendency of conscience to moral virtues – should also be considered as the foundations of moral development. For Kohlberg, moral development is a universal phenomenon. However, many psychologists have expressed doubts about the universal nature of his six-step process. From Shia point of view, only the goodness of the act (Good deed) is not enough to create moral value; rather, in addition to the appearance of the act, the person's motivation (Good doer) must be divine and good. In Shiite's view, what is done to please God has an ethical value. Any action (Behaviour) that brings human closer to God is good, and any action that takes humankind away from God is bad.

Keywords: Kohlberg, theory, moral development, Shia Islam, ethics

1. Introduction

Ethics is a discipline that is regarded by psychologists and philosophers as an interdisciplinary field. The study of the development of morality, usually begins with cognitive - development theories, because these theories have played a fundamental role in the field of moral development. These theories are considered as the most influential psychological investigations and are known as the Piaget and Kohlberg theories [1].

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About a half of century ago, the findings of the psychology of growth, ethical development, and moral development tests provided by Piaget and Kohlberg have been used by counselling centres for education and other psychological centres in our country (Iran). Also, the theory of these scientists provides the foundation of instructions on the children and adolescents' growth of teacher education centres and at undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate degrees in various fields of Psychology and education, in all Iranian universities and institutes of higher education [2]. Different theorists, based on the ideological and cultural background, have theorized and examined morality based on the conditions of the society in which they lived [3]. The important point in examining Kohlberg's theory is the cultural bias that is revealed by the recent research of Western psychologists. Over the years, counselling and psychology theories and practices have been challenged for being racial, individual-specific, single-cultured, and impunity for specific ethnic groups. Hence, there has been a lot of work on the subject of multiculturalism. Knowledge about multicultural topics and its acceptance in Psychology and counselling has led to the creation of a fourth force in Psychology [4].

Multicultural experts have emphasized that counselling and psychotherapy theories represent an independent viewpoint that each has its own values, biases and assumptions about human behaviour. Some counsellors criticized on the use of traditional therapies because they believe that they are not related to people of a particular race and to specific populations such as the elderly people. Most techniques are derived from therapeutic approaches that white men of the Western middle class have made for clients who have the same characteristics. These approaches may not be applied to patients with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. While there are major constraints on Western models of counselling for specific populations and minority groups such as Asian and Pacific Islanders, Latin Americans, American Indians, and African Americans. Rigid adherence to traditional Western counselling theories often results in ineffective outcomes for clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. It cannot be denied that modern therapeutic approaches have been derived from European-American culture and are based on a range of special values. These approaches are neither value neutral nor applicable to all cultures. For example, in many traditional counselling approaches, individualism, individuation and emphasis on the self are among the core values. In some cultures, important values are collectivized, and put more emphasis on what is important for the group [5].

Likewise, moral development in different cultures has various content and meanings, and the result of using Kohlberg's tests in cultures rather than the studied community, is the failure of some of the people in those cultures to achieve higher levels of this moral development. Whereas in different cultures, particular behaviours have deep and important meanings in people's lives, therefore these behaviours, habits and traditions deeply affect the moral development of the people of that society. In a society in which the materialistic interest is looked up, hedonistic norms and lifestyle are dominant, people's

internalized ethics will be in harmony with those norms. On the contrary, if people of another society, put other social, cultural and religious criterion as the basis of their actions, the moral development of that society will have different form and content. It's because of these cultural and religious differences that many religious families in Iran, when confronting with a problem, they prefer not to go to a consultant or psychologist because they believe consultants or psychologists are dominated by Western culture and values as they study Western-made theories and use them in consulting. However part of the Iranian religious families prefer to visit a cleric instead of referring to a counsellor or psychologist. One of the reasons is that the clergyman gives them recommendations based on the religion of Islam. However, there are many useful practical viewpoints in counselling and Psychology theories used by counsellors and psychotherapists to identify and provide solutions to problems. Because of the negative attitude of many Iranian religious people to Western theories and the recommendations of some psychologists and counsellors to their clients, they are less likely to refer to counsellor and psychologists or even they prefer to go to a clergyman with psychological or counselling studies.

In addition to the refusal of many religious families to refer to psychologists and counsellors, it should be noted that in the past few years in Iran, a movement has been set up under the heading of localization and transformation in the Humanities and Islamicization of universities. The theoretical management of this movement is mainly with the clergies of the seminary. As a result, the curriculum of Humanities, including counselling and Psychology, have been revised and changed. Lessons like psychology in the Quran, psychology in Nahj al-Balaghah, Social psychology and Developmental psychology with an attitude to Islamic resources, and epistemology, etc. are added to the syllabus.

One way to eliminate this negative mentality toward Western psychology theories is to refine and critique the theories of Western psychologists from the point of view of Islam, as the dominant behavioural norms in Iran are derived from the teachings of Islam. With this introduction, we are going to compare the Kohlberg's moral view and Shi'a ethics in this study. Kohlberg's moral view is different from the dominant moral point of view of the Iranian people, who are Shiite Muslims. Students of Psychology and Counselling in Iran in Developmental Psychology course, in chapters related to moral development, mostly study the same theory (as Western students) from translated books. Some students in classrooms ask, whether we, as a Shia Muslim, do not have Islamic ethics ourselves? Why should we study the Kohlberg's ethics? The important point is that most of students do not have the ability to analyse these views and other psychological theories, and largely used to memorize these ideas without deeply understanding their underlying foundations.

Therefore, it is essential for counsellors, psychologists and students of helping professions, such as counselling and Psychology, to be aware of the fundamentals of this theory, as there are certain anthropological and ethical principles in the Islamic ideological and religious society of Iran, and if the

counsellor and psychologist deal with these theories blindly without considering their cultural context, he will be in trouble. Of course, one cannot ignore the benefits and uses of Kohlberg's theory of moral development, but, on the other hand, neglecting the cultural and religious backgrounds of the people of a country would also undermine the application of these theories.

Therefore, the purpose of writing this article is to enable professors and students of Counselling and Psychology to have a better understanding of this theory and not to be confused or anxious when facing this theory and at the time of practice to not ignore the cultural, social and religious backgrounds of people in Iran and gain more success in their work. As a result, they can compare this theory with Shi'a ethics and by taking into account the Shi'a ethics, analyse the contradictory issues with Shi'a ethics and make use of the helpful points of this theory. Consequently, the theory which was made by Western culture will be more consistent with Iran's cultural and religious structure and will be better understood by the Iranian readers.

2. Lawrence Kohlberg theory - the stages of moral development

The theory of moral development was first created by Piaget. Kohlberg expanded it and examined it further. His theory emphasizes on moral judgment and reasoning as a cognitive theory. The Kohlberg's theory is developed at three levels and six stages which are: pre-conventional morality with stages of obedience and punishment orientation and individualism and exchange, conventional morality with stages of good interpersonal relationships and maintaining the social order and post-conventional morality with stages of social contract and individual rights and universal principles [6].

2.1. First period - pre-conventional morality (ages 4 to 13 years)

In this period, the controlling system of behaviour is outside the individual. Judgment about good or bad deeds is in accordance with the practical rules and consequences of action, and not in terms of abstractive values [1]. In this period, the child's behaviour is controlled by external processes, and child obedience is primarily the result of fear of punishment or gaining rewards [7]. Moreover, during this age, the moral judgment and standards of children are based on avoiding punishment or gaining a reward. This period has two sub-stages.

2.1.1. Stage 1 - obedience and punishment orientation (ages 4 to 10 years)

At this stage, the child learns that he has to comply with the rules; otherwise, he will be punished [8]. At this stage, the child will pay attention to judgment or to the outcome of the action, or to its practical aspects. His judgment is more influenced by the opinions of adults [1]. At this point, the child sees the rules as stable and absolute. Obedience to the rules is important

because it prevents punishment [3]. At this stage, the child follows the ethical standards of others to escape punishment and does not pay much attention to the motive of actions; rather, what is important for him/her is the result of the action.

2.1.2. Stage 2 - individualism and exchange (ages 10 to 13 years)

Ethics at this stage is relative and depends on the environmental conditions [7]. The good deeds are those that satisfy their needs and those of others. In this case, we can state that the child gradually learns to pay attention to others. People at this stage are aware of the relativity of the views and realize that all people do not necessarily have the same needs and goals [1]. The correct and ethical action is a practice that satisfies personal needs [7]. At this stage, how to meet the needs of the individual affects the points of views and moral judgments of children [3]. Moreover, obeying the rules for rewards and some kind of mutual profit is the criterion of moral judgment.

2.2. Second period - conventional morality (ages 13 to 20 years)

This course requires the imagination of the values or expectations of the family and society; and the individual believes that they should follow the contracts and respect them, and this compliance is natural and ethical [1]. At this level, people are keen to please others with their actions. In particular, receiving praise from those who are important to them is of great significance.

At this level, they tend to obey all laws and this obedience to the rules is to preserve the order of society [7]. This period is divided into two stages.

2.2.1. Stage 3 - good interpersonal relationships

During this period, the teenager has reached 13 years of age and is paying attention to himself. At this stage, teen defines good and bad in relation to motives and emotions. At this age, morality and morals are close to emotions and they have an individual dimension [8]. The person believes that being accepted and loved by others helps them and if others confirmed them, they have acted correctly. So, it is important that humans are approved by others and others love them [1]. At this stage, a practice that follows the approval of others is morally defensible. Individuals, in contradiction to the pre-conventional level, concern the intention and rather than the outcome. Pleasing others is a moral act, but this pleasure is to win the support and approval of others [7]. Living is important in terms of social roles and expectations. Concordance (conformity) with the congregation and attention to the influence of the decisions on the relationship is emphasized [3].

2.2.2. Stage 4 - maintaining the social order

At this stage, social affirmation is very important. Ethical behaviour is a behaviour that every well-understood person acknowledges. Social order is a function of morality that a person uses as correct behaviour at this age [8]. Laws and social contracts are accepted without conditions. At this point, ethics based on a social contract is important, because maintaining social contracts is also beneficial to the individual [1]. The moral act is to observe the law, maintain order and social cohesion, and show respect for the authorities of power. Compliance with the law is also because of the law itself [7]. At this stage, the main focus is on complying with regulations, performing duties, and respecting to authorities of power [3]. Any action that is in accordance with the regulations and approved by the authorities is morally acceptable. Meanwhile, every human being has a duty to fulfil his obligations, as the community has set. In general, at the conventional level, the emphasis is on relationships between individuals and social values, because social values are prior to personal interests. In the fourth stage, the social perspective is prior to everything. The child not only coordinates with the social order but also supports it and tries to justify it.

2.3. Third period - post-conventional morality (ages 20 to 25 years and higher)

In this period, the person returns to himself. This stage is ideologically very interesting as the individual diverges from the conventions and the common social system to pay attention to the relativity of values [1]. Behaviour control has an internal aspect. At this stage, the individual moves toward independent morality and the principles of universal morality [7]. Reaching this level is a sign of real ethics. At this level, the person first realizes that there may be conflicts between the two accepted ethical criteria and he/she must resolve them for himself. While accepting the rules, he may also be aware of the inadequacy of certain legal cases and find that other people may have different ideas and values. The individual has internalized and adhered to some of the principles. This period also has two stages.

2.3.1. Stage 5 - social contract and individual rights

At this stage, one has learned to freely accept ethical rules and democratically change it according to the needs of the community [8]. The person realizes that social contracts are derived from social agreements (consensus). Thus, morality is a set of social contracts and the free admission of the law, which dominates everything [1]. A practice based on law and social regulations is ethical. Because the laws are approved by consensus, the person will follow it consciously [7]. At this stage, attention to the values and beliefs of other people is also important. The rules are important to protect the community [3]. The individual realizes that the laws and regulations are a kind of social

contract whose main purpose is to satisfy the demands of the majority and maximizing social welfare.

2.3.2. Stage 6 - universal principles

At this stage, adults adopt and adhere to some of the principles of supra-ethics such as observance of justice and liberty on the basis of ethics and try to generalize it [8]. The characteristic of this stage is the growth of universal ethics. The person comes to the belief that there is a moral and universal principle that goes beyond the validity and power of the group and social groups. These principles can lead to judgments, orientations, and actions in a person that isolates him in society [1]. The universal rights of humans and respect for mutual trust in the choice of moral behaviour are features of this stage. At this stage, judging the good and evil of deeds are done by individual conscience. Moreover, in this judgment, what is important is the universal rules and respect for humanity and human rights [7]. Individuals act complying with the universal ethics, even if these principles conflict with social laws and regulations [3]. This stage is the last and most important stage in moral development. Individuals, based on definitions of ethical standards, choose principles individually and adhere to them in every situation. If the law conflicts with the chosen principles, it will not be followed. In general, moral judgments at this level are based on broad abstract principles that are right in themselves, not because the society knows it correctly.

3. Ethics in Shia Islam

3.1. Characteristics of the ethical system in the Shiite perspective

In the Shia view, ethics has certain characteristics that separate it from other ethical schools. The features of the Shia ethics system are described below.

1. Ethics in the Shia viewpoint has a teleological aspect; i.e., good and bad, and moral dos and don'ts, that brings a man to perfection and ultimate happiness. In fact, ethical decrees and dos and don'ts have a set of ultimate goals and ends.
2. The Shia ethical system is self-oriented; i.e., the goal in Shia ethics is that human beings reach the ideal perfection.
3. The ultimate goal and purpose of Shia ethics is a pleasure, but not earthly and superficial physical pleasures, but spiritual, deep, and immortal enjoyment in the world and the Hereafter.
4. If the human being moves on the path of the purpose of creation, i.e., the pleasure of Allah (nearness to God), this ultimate goal, which is a sustained and deep pleasure, will be achieved.
5. The ultimate goal of moral behaviour is human perfection, which will be realized by performing certain behaviours. For example, in Shia's view, humans should be right to say that they would end up at the expense of him.

Indeed, truth (honesty) has a moral value, regardless of its material and financial benefits.

6. The Shia ethical system is rational-revelation. In other words, the intellect and thought of man can reveal some of the ethical good and bad, and that many examples of good and bad should be given to humankind by the prophets of Divine through revelation [9].

3.2. Ethics presuppositions in Shia perspective

The Shia ethical system is different from other moral systems in the West. The Shia moral viewpoint is based on a number of major assumptions, which are the understanding of the human being and the perception of the Universe.

In the Shia moral system, man is an entity whose existence and life neither ends with death nor is destroyed. Therefore, in the Shia ethical system, good and bad, is not only defined based on worldly pleasures and interests. In the view of the Shiites, the world is the creature of God, and God has sent messengers with heavenly books to lead men and in those holy books, he has introduced many moral goods and bads (behavioural dos and don'ts), and ethical imperatives. Therefore, Shia ethics is not independent of religion and divine revelation and requires divine revelation [9].

In Shia's view, human beings are two-dimensional, whose life is not limited to life, and after his death, their lives continue. Therefore, good and bad (ethical imperatives) in Shia's view are defined according to the afterlife's pleasure. In fact, the role that behaviour plays in the fate of a person after death is a decisive factor in the good and bad deeds of human beings. Other presuppositions of the Shia ethical system are:

1. A human being is free. Because a person can choose between a good and a bad one and do it; then, he has the authority to do so. In this case, man is only responsible for his works and behaviours. If a person does not have the will and authority to do his/her works or behaviours, then he will not be held responsible. One of the preconditions of ethics in the Shia's view is that the human being is an entity with will and authority [9]. From the viewpoint of Shia Islam, man is responsible for himself and others, for his family, for society, and even for nature [10].

Accordingly, his behaviour, in all these situations, is moral if his motivation is divine. For example, avoiding damage to the flowers and the branches of trees, if it is with the motive that they are the creatures of God, is considered as worship and is an ethical practice. Or, respecting parents, if it is with divine motivation, it is worship and a moral practice.

2. In pursuing his work (behaviours), man is looking for a final goal. A person can do his or her work with intent and will. Human beings are free to do so. In fact, human beings do their works to achieve a certain ultimate goal [9]. The ultimate goal of all human actions, which is the purpose of the creation of man, is the nearness to Allah, which is achieved through the servitude and worship of God. According to Shiite Islam, the believer follows a special

purpose in all his behaviours. This purposefulness is realized in all human behaviours, according to the variable of intention. Given the intentions and purposes of the believer, the whole life of a Shiite Muslim can be considered as purposeful. In fact, if the intention of the believing human being is to achieve the satisfaction of God, all his actions are considered to be worship; and, in this way, his life becomes meaningful. This purposefulness of the Muslim man originates from his attitude to the creation of the world and man [10]. It is of note that proximity to God is achieved only through worship. Worship is not just prayer and fasting, but every act like working, studying, marrying, helping others, etc. providing that they are with divine intentions and motives, will be considered as worship.

3. The effort of man to achieve his goals is indisputable. Man's actions are effective in achieving his goals, and the result of his actions returns to himself. The final result of human life in the world and in the hereafter depends on his own behaviours.

3.3. Ethical value of an act in the Shiite view

From Shia point of view, for the abstraction of the good and bad concept, one must pay attention to the proportion and relationship between two things, which are the arbitrary action of man and his perfection. As mentioned earlier, from the point of view of Islam, man is a two-dimensional entity. A human dimension is a body and then another is the soul. The desirable perfection of man is the perfection of his spirit and his nearness to God. Any action that brings human closer to God is good while any action that takes away humankind from God is bad [11].

The nearness to God is the criterion of the ethical valuation of actions. To achieve this goal, both the appearance of the person's behaviour (Good deed) and the person's motivation to do that work (Good doer) must be good. In this regard, the role of intention is of great importance as it is the human intention that makes a practice moral. An important question in this regard is that how one can figure out what brings human closer to God. According to the Shia, the human reasoning (wisdom) has the power to distinguish the good from bad of some behaviours, such as the good of justice and the bad of oppression. However, some good and bad examples should be told to humans by the prophets, suggesting that, according to Shia, morality needs religion [12].

In the Shia ethical system, the intention has a central role and it is the basis of moral value and the source of good and bad. From the Shia perspective, only the goodness of the act (Good deed) is not enough to create moral value; rather, the person's motivation must be divine and good, as well. In this case, such a behaviour has an ethical value for someone who does it. In Shiite's view, what is done to please God has an ethical value. That is, the person's motive for doing that should be God's consent and approaching him. In fact, the effect of intention on human actions is a real and natural effect, not a contractual (arbitrary) or fake effect [9].

Usually, in moral schools, the criterion for judging the moral value of a behaviour is action and its results, irrespective to the motive and intention of the subject (the person who performs that behaviour) of the work. In fact, in most ethical schools, the criterion of judgment about behavior is the appearance of action (Good deed), and the motive and intention of the doer of the work (Good doer/actor) are not considered.

From a Shia point of view, for a behaviour to have an ethical value, it must have both a deed and doer (actor) goodness. In other words, both the appearance of the action and the motive of the person who performs that behaviour must be good. For example, honesty is good, but if the intention of the person from honesty is to satisfy others, although it seems to be a good act, it does not have an ethical value in Shia. Or, for example, although worship is good in the Shiite, if people do it due to duplicity, it has no moral value [13].

3.4. The role of religion in ethics

From the Shiite scholars' perspective, religion is a collection of beliefs, practices, and ethical rules that contribute to human perfection and prosperity. Indeed, religion has three parts: beliefs, ethics, and religious orders or practical decrees [14]. In this respect, morality (ethics) is a part of religion and the relationship between religion and ethics is precise because religion does not deal only with human and rather it is a way of communication with God and covers all human life [12].

Divine religion, whose teachings are based on divine revelation, helps ethics in various fields including the establishment of an ethical and value system, providing enforcement guarantees and strengthening the internal motivation. Undoubtedly, human beings will find goodness and ugliness of many things without the use of revelation, and they also believe that the following of wisdom rules is inevitable. However, there are few who adhere to rational (wisdom) rules. For this reason, humans need divine prophets in the realm of individual and social ethics. The prophets encourage people to do good work and scare them from doing bad deeds because the end of good deeds is a divine reward while the end of evil is divine punishment [15].

Religious instructions including ethical and practical decrees have real criteria, and these criteria are the source of the emergence of religious guidelines. In some cases, the reason (Wisdom) can understand those criteria. For example, it can understand the evil of oppression of others as well as the necessity and the goodness of justice and help others. However, in some cases, the reason (Wisdom) alone cannot distinguish between the good and evil of an action, highlighting the needed for revelation [14].

For example, from the viewpoint of Shiite Islam, voyeurism is forbidden and immoral. Its forbiddenness is explicitly stated in the texts of religion and Quranic verses because this act has a negative effect on the perfection of the human soul. In this regard, the Prophet of Islam has highlighted the relationship between the voyeurism and human perfection and its negative impact on the

perfection of the soul for Muslims; because human reason (wisdom) cannot understand the negative impact of this act on the perfection of the soul. Another example is the respect for parents, elderlies, and teachers. According to the teachings of the Shia, it is immoral (unethical) to talk loudly with parents and disrespect them unless the result of this act on the Day of Resurrection is the divine punishment. Human reason cannot understand the effect of this act on the human soul, and the prophets have told us that such behaviour with the parents at the Resurrection will lead to the divine punishment.

One of the dependencies of ethics to religion is the determination of the ultimate goals of moral (ethical) values. In fact, one may ask that why he/she should do moral actions. What is the ultimate goal of doing ethical behaviours? Indeed, in religious teachings, God is introduced to human beings and is defined as the evolutionary purpose of man. Based on this definition, moral (ethical) values are created. In Shiite terms, if there were no God, moral values did not have ultimate goals. On the other hand, only knowing good or bad cannot motivate people, and if there are no encouragement and punishment, most people do not care much about doing good behaviours and avoiding bad deeds. Some religious teachings such as the belief in divine justice, the existence of resurrection, and the Day of Resurrection – according to which all human beings will see the results of their actions on that day – can provide a guarantee of morality. Religion leads people to moral values, by providing the necessary guarantees and expressing the effects and benefits of the worldly and the future of moral verbs (ethical behaviours) [12].

4. Kohlberg's moral development theory and comparing it with ethics in the Shiite Islam perspective

Although Kohlberg believes that one's friends and parents can improve his thinking about moral issues, his basic assumption is that the type of person's argument in dealing with an ethical problem (due to the level of his thinking) plays an essential role in his performance. He believes that the ethical judgment and behaviour of children and adolescents comes from the stage of cognitive development in which they are located, instead of being subject to the requirements of social and cultural life. This is one of the weaknesses of Kohlberg's theory. Another disadvantage of this theory is that the ethical development of children and adolescents is merely based on moral judgment and the learning of laws and social relationships of life in an environment that Kohlberg studied. The cultural foundations of other societies, as well as the non-cognitive and motivational foundations of morality, have not been taken into consideration [2].

Kohlberg believes that his theory is universal and that all children in the world undergo roughly similar stages. However, many psychologists have expressed doubts about the universal nature of his six-step process. A number of Kohlberg stories are more suitable for those who live in Western industrial societies. Therefore, Kohlberg has altered his stories to examine the

development of morality in countries such as Taiwan, Korea, Mexico, and Turkey. In addition, boys get more points than girls in response to Kohlberg's stories. So, criticisms have been made on Kohlberg's theory. It should be noted that some of the world's cultures (such as Iran) have certain criteria for ethical values and therefore may not earn high points in the Kohlberg exam [2].

The basis of moral development should not be limited solely to the cognitive judgment of social laws and the concept of justice. Also, other foundations, such as the moral nature of man, human love, and affection, and the tendency of conscience to moral virtues, should also be considered as the foundations of moral development. In general, psychological views such as Kohlberg have not focused on these ethical foundations and have only emphasized cognitive reasoning [2]. In terms of Shia Islam, God has given the man the ability to understand good and evil, and human beings naturally understand some of the good and evil. In terms of Shia Islam, humans naturally have an inborn power to distinguish between good and bad. Human beings, through natural tendencies and through the power of reason or wisdom, recognize values from anti-values [10].

For example, there is a set of good and bad moral attributes agreed upon by all people around the world. Even those who have not benefited from the teachings of the prophets and those who live in other parts of the world can understand and recognize the good and evil of such actions. The Holy Quran mentions this fact in various verses: *"(I swear) by the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right (deeds)"* (Qur'an 91:7-8) *or "And we have shown him (the human being) the two paths (of right and wrong action)"* (Qur'an 90:10) or *"Verily we created man from a drop of mingled sperm in order to test him. Thus, we have given him hearing and sight"* (Qur'an 76:2); *"I swear by the Resurrection Day and I swear by the self-reproaching spirit"* (Qur'an 75:1-2).

The previous verses mean that God has made interest in good and hating evil in the heart of a human. These verses show that man has the power within himself that can distinguish between good and bad. Therefore, in terms of ethics, man is not an impartial and neutral entity. Because of having a soul, man will punish himself after committing a sin.

Kohlberg has counted the commitment to social rules and social justice in the European and American living environment as the cornerstone of moral development and made his tests based on it. In turn, he has not paid much attention to the fact that the basis of people's lives in those countries is not to achieve justice, but to achieve material progress and personal well-being and enjoyment. Moreover, the original and classical ethical beliefs in those countries have degraded. This is why that the moral reasoning of very few people reaches the first stage of the Post-conventional Morality. Moreover, the vast majority of people, even in response to questions from ethical judgments (which differ greatly from ethical behaviour), do not go up from the third and fourth levels of Kohlberg's moral process [2].

Kohlberg has focused on ethical reasoning more than moral behaviour. According to this view, a child and adult may behave the same thing, while their moral growth is not the same. So, according to Kohlberg, the reasoning behind the moral practice is more important than the moral behaviour itself [3]. In the Shia ethical system, the intention has a central role and it is the basis of moral value and the source of good and bad. From the Shia point of view, only the goodness of the act (Good deed: the appearance of action) is not enough to create moral value. But, in addition to the appearance of the act, the person's motivation (Good actor/doer) must be divine and good. In this case, that behaviour has an ethical value for someone who does it. In Shiite's view, what is done to please God has an ethical value. That is, the person's motive for doing that should be God's consent and approaching him. In fact, the effect of intention on human actions is a real and natural effect rather than being a contractual (arbitrary) or fake effect [9].

From a Shia stand, for a behaviour to have an ethical value, it must have both a deed and doer (actor) goodness, suggesting that both the appearance of the action and the motive of the person who performs that behaviour must be good. For example, honesty is good providing that the intention of the person from honesty is to satisfy others. Although it seems to be a good act, it does not have an ethical value in Shia. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, although worship in Shiite is good, it has no moral value if the doer intends to duplicity [13].

Another critique of Kohlberg's theory is that there is always no consensus between moral judgment and the moral behaviour of individuals. Moreover, the moral argument of the individual may be one thing, but in practice, he behaves differently. In many cases, there is a weak correlation between the moral reasoning of individuals and their actions in real situations. Sometimes, the individual's ethical behaviour may be completely in the opposite of his words and arguments. Therefore, there is no acceptable guarantee for the definite coordination between the moral reasoning of the individual and his moral conduct. Certainly, there is a stronger connection between moral judgments and the behaviour of young children with little experience but as they become older, this relationship may be weighed down by the influence of various factors, especially personal interests in social life. In fact, the important point is that moral reasoning cannot be a guarantee for an ethical behaviour.

Meanwhile, in Shia morality, religion is the guarantee of implementing the morality. The Holy Quran introduces morality as one of the prophetic purposes. One of the functions of religion, in the field of ethics, is to provide a criterion for ethical work. These criteria are God's command and God's consent. These two components motivate a believer. The criterion of moral value is the real perfection of man. This ultimate perfection is the nearness to Allah and the consent of Allah. Religion is the guarantor of the implementation and consolidation of ethical behaviours [3].

Indeed, in religious teachings, God is introduced to human beings and is defined as the evolutionary purpose of man, based on which the moral (ethical) values are created. In Shiite terms, if there were no God, moral values did not

have ultimate goals. On the other hand, only knowing good or bad cannot motivate people, and if there are no encouragement and punishment, most people do not care much about doing good behaviours and avoiding bad deeds. Some religious teachings such as the belief in divine justice, the existence of resurrection, and the Day of Resurrection – according to which all human beings will see the results of their actions on that day – can provide a guarantee of morality. Religion leads people to moral values, by providing the necessary guarantees and expressing the effects and benefits of the worldly and the future of moral verbs (ethical behaviours) [12].

It needs to be explained that Kohlberg eliminated the sixth stage of his theory because he found that many teenagers and young people and people of Western countries only grow up to the second to fourth stages of moral judgment and one cannot find people who have reached the third period of moral development, especially the sixth stage. Accordingly, it can be stated that people studied by Kohlberg, in terms of moral judgment, ultimately reach the recognition of fundamental rights and social contract, and universal moral principles do not mean to them [2].

It is not said in Kohlberg's theory that what is good and bad, what is right and wrong. In this theory, justice and law are generally considered to be a good and proper measure of behaviour, which is a universal and interpretable concept. In comparison, in Shia's view, a good and bad measure of behaviour is specified. From Shia point of view, for the abstraction of the good and bad concept, one must pay attention to the proportion and relationship between two things, which are the arbitrary action of man and his perfection. From the Islam's perspective, man is a two-dimensional entity including a human dimension (i.e., the body) and the soul. The desirable perfection of man is the perfection of his spirit and his nearness to God. Any action that brings human closer to God is good and any action that takes away human from God is bad [11]. The nearness to God is the criterion of the ethical valuation of actions. To achieve this goal, both the appearance of the person's behaviour and the person's motivation to do that work must be good. Here, the role of intention is highlighted as it makes a practice to be moral. It is very important to know how one can figure out what brings human closer to God. According to the Shia, the human reason (wisdom) has the power to distinguish between the good and bad of some behaviours, such as the good of justice and the bad of oppression. However, some good and bad examples should be told by the prophets to humans, suggesting that, according to Shia, morality needs religion [12].

Kohlberg seems to have confused in distinguishing between ethics and law and social laws. One of the differences between ethical behaviour and legal behaviour is their type of guarantee. The guarantee of enforcing legal orders is external and legal while the ethics guarantee is more intrinsic. The purpose of the law is to establish a social order and the intention of the people does not matter. From a legal point of view, the motivation of individuals to observe social rights and to comply with the rules does not matter. However, in Shia morality, the goal is to achieve ultimate perfection, by which intentions and

motives play a very important role. The purpose of the law is to meet the needs of the people of the community and the aim of the Shia morality is the individual perfection.

Another critique of this theory is that he has used only boys in his research and his theory is somewhat male-dominated. However, according to Shia, ethics is not gender-based. Both the woman and the man have the spirit and body. The purpose of creation is the same; i.e., proximity to Allah. Every act that a man or woman does, with the motive of divine consent and with the intention of nearness to Allah, is a moral practice and makes the man or the woman closer to his ultimate perfection.

5. Conclusions

One of the most prominent examples of research on the development of morality, based on the Piaget tradition, is the work of Laurence Kohlberg's, who has proposed a stage theory of ethical development. According to Kohlberg, moral development has three periods and each course is divided into two stages. His stages of moral development are Obedience and Punishment Orientation, Individualism and Exchange, Good Interpersonal Relationships, Maintaining the Social Order, Social Contract, Individual Rights, and Universal Principles. Kohlberg believes that his theory is universal and that all children in the world undergo roughly similar stages. However, many psychologists have expressed doubts about the universality of his six-step process. It is of note that some of the world's cultures have certain criteria for ethical values and therefore may not earn high points in the Kohlberg exam. The basis of moral development should not be limited solely to the cognitive judgment of social laws and the concept of justice. Also, other foundations, such as the moral nature of man, human love and affection, and the tendency of conscience to moral virtues, should also be considered as the foundations of moral development. Kohlberg has focused on ethical reasoning more than moral behaviour. According to this view, a child and adult may behave the same while their moral growth is not the same. So, according to Kohlberg, the reasoning behind the moral practice is more important than the moral behaviour itself. There is always no consensus between moral judgment and the moral behaviour of individuals. Moreover, the moral argument of the individual may be one thing, but he indeed behaves differently.

In the Shia ethical system, the intention has a pivotal role and is the basis of moral value and the source of good and bad. From Shia point of view, only the goodness of the act (Good deed) is not enough to create moral value, but in addition to the appearance of the act, the person's motivation must be divine and good. In terms of Shia Islam, God has given the man the ability to understand good and evil, and human beings naturally understand some of the good and evil. In terms of Shia Islam, humans naturally have an inborn power for distinguishing between the good and bad. Human beings, through natural tendencies and through the power of reason or wisdom, recognize values from anti-value. Quranic verses show that God has made interest in good and hating

evil in the heart of human and man has the power within himself that can distinguish between good and bad. Therefore, in terms of ethics, man is not an impartial and neutral entity. In Shiite's view, what is done to please God has an ethical value. Any action (behaviour) that brings humans closer to God is good, and any action that takes away humankind from God is bad. In fact, the important point is that moral reasoning cannot be a guarantee of ethical behaviour (as mentioned by Kohlberg) while in Shia morality, religion is the guarantee of the implementation of morality. The Holy Quran introduces morality as one of the prophetic purposes. One of the functions of religion, in the field of ethics, is to provide a criterion for ethical work. Some religious teachings such as the belief in divine justice, the existence of resurrection, and the Day of Resurrection – which all human beings will see the results of their actions on that day – can provide a guarantee of morality. Overall, religion leads people to moral values by providing the necessary guarantees and expressing the effects and benefits of the worldly and the future of moral verbs (ethical behaviours).

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