

The Concept of Rewards and Punishments in Religion: A Special Reference to *Kitab Al-Adab* of Sahih Bukhari

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Abstract: This study examines the Prophetic tradition in Akidah or Islamic belief through the book of Sahih Bukhari which the Prophet Muhammad PBUH gave direction to educate the people by mentioning and promising the rewards (*al-thawab*) and punishments (*al-iqab*) that aiming at making the people active in persuading and what sort of rewards and punishments were mentioned that motivate the Muslims to do good deeds and stay away from negative behaviors. In fact, peace, tranquility, nobility and real greatness at home and street, in this world and the hereafter can be achieved by following his noble life and teachings. A textual and critical analysis of hadith referred to Chapter of Behavior (*Kitab al-Adab*) will be utilized to demonstrate the application of hadith pertaining to human behavior. The ideas presented could be further developed and appreciated by the society in related discipline in order to address contemporary challenges in understanding for future human living prospects.

Key words: Punishment · Reward · *Thawab* · *Iqab* · Sahih Bukhari · *Kitab al-adab* · *Akidah*

INTRODUCTION

The *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, which was and still is and will remain one of the main sources of Islamic law, second only to the Quran, covered all the activities of the Prophet PBUH [1]. In the Prophetic tradition, the Prophet not only gave direction to educate the people but also mentioned great rewards (*al-thawab*), for instance, teachers and students. He stated that learning and pursuit of knowledge is an obligatory on every Muslim [2]. One who conceals knowledge is liable to go to hell [3].

Here we can say that the concept of positive and negative reinforcement and reward or punishment as is known to a western psychologist was already introduced in Islam. For example, in Islamic teaching there is the concept of the creation of incentive to teachers and students. The Prophet Muhammad PBUH says;

If any one pursues a path in search of knowledge Allah will thereby make easy for him path to paradise and the angles spread their wings from good pleasure with one who seek knowledge and all the inhabitants of the heaven and the earth, even fish in the depth of water, ask forgiveness for him [2, 4, 5].

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The Prophet said: when a man dies, his acts came to end, with three exceptions: *sadaqah jariyah* (recurring charity), knowledge from which benefit continues to be reaped and the prayers of a good son for him [3].

The Prophet also warned of punishment for those who refuse to be tempted into the educative process even by these rewards; the Prophet seems to have indicated punishment, which would inevitably, come because of not teaching and not learning.

Reward and Punishment from Western Perspectives:

This section attempts to look at the concept and understanding of reward and punishment from the Western's point of view. In general, Western scholars are aware of the influence, which reward and punishment plays in shaping the behavior of the human beings. Humans' behaviors from behaviorist perspective like other animals are motivated to produce behaviors rewarded by the environment and to avoid behaviors that are punished.

In order to understand reward from the Western culture, we can see people behave, act and work for money and other economics benefits such as vacation time, sick leave, health insurance and retirement pension. Some of the rewards that people get, for instance at work are not monetary but symbolic for example, titles, large offices and access to parking. Naturally, people are motivated to work hard whenever they expect that their efforts will improve performance, believe that good performance will be rewarded and value the rewards they expect to receive.

A clear illustration in this respect is *Skinner's Beyond Freedom and Dignity* [6]. Skinner is one of the most influential psychologists of our time. Many acclaim him as the modern father of behaviorism. His book is a behavioral analysis, challenges many Western's ideals, values and concept of human nature. Theorizing from his well-known experimental work on reinforcement and operant conditioning, he concluded that behaviors that we call "right" or "wrong" are not due to any real goodness or badness in a situation nor are they due to any innate knowledge of right or wrong but they are simply due to contingencies involving many kinds of positive and negative reinforce, rewards and punishments [7]. In order to understand this concept Skinner states:

A group maintains some kind of order by punishing its members when they misbehave, but when this function is taken over by a government, punishment is assigned to specialists, to whom more powerful

forms such as fines, imprisonment, or death are available. "Good" and "Bad" become "legal" and "illegal" and the contingencies are codified in laws specifying behavior and contingent punishments. A religious agency is a special form of government under which "good" and "bad" become "pious" and "sinful". Contingencies involving positive and negative reinforcement, often of the most extreme sort, are codified for example, as commandments and maintained by specialists, usually with the support of ceremonies, rituals and stories [6].

In explaining the role of reward and punishment in Western society, in order to shape human behavior, they believed there is no place for conscious or unconscious forces because they could not be seen, manipulated or measured. All the behavior can be controlled by its consequences, that is, by what follows the behavior. For Western people especially Skinner's people are primarily products of learning, shaped more by external variables than genetic factors.

In short, the effects of reward and punishment during our lifetime mould our behaviors along certain lines. When we learn how to swim, ride a bike, throw a ball, sew, sweep a floor, drive a car and so on, the successful (reinforce) responses are the ones we continue to make. The unsuccessful responses tend to drop away. The same process holds true for our social behaviors at work, school and home. For example, speaking and dressing in acceptable ways bring approval from employers, teachers, parents, peers and others. Approval and other social reinforcers are very significant influences. Whether we consider physical or social activities, the effects of reward and punishment are critical.

The Concept of Reward and Punishment (*Al-Thawab Wa Al-Iqab*) in Islam: Good moral behavior is the basis of a successful Islamic life. Life on earth began as a test from Allah SWT to see if we could be His true servants and fight off the temptations of *syaitan* (devil). The holy Qur'an describes the Muslims as the true believers as:

"Believers are they who fear God and fear nothing else" [8].

However, sometimes things can be so difficult and this is where the motivation of reward and punishment helps. It really does play an important role in our life. The fact is that many people do operate on the basis of reward and punishment. In addition, Allah as our Creator and

Lord understands this. For this reason, He gave His noble Messenger an idea of what was in store for his followers during the *Israk* and *Mikraj* when the Messenger was taken on a guided tour of heaven and hell.

In general, the preordainment implies reward for pious deeds and punishment for the impious actions. The fact is that the man is free. He is endowed with intellect and with it he is able to exercise control over material matters and distinguish and discriminate between fair and foul, righteous and unrighteous [9].

The Islamic ideology also provides a motivating force to inspire individuals and groups of individuals to conduct their affairs in public and private in accordance with the moral code of Islam [10].

The dimension of reward and punishment in Islam are numerous, far-reaching and comprehensive. The Islamic reward and punishment deal with the relationship between man and God, man and his fellow men, man and the other elements and creatures of the universe, man and his innermost self. This is because Islam views human life as an indivisible, unified whole which cannot be broken up into unrelated parts [11].

The promise of reward and punishment towards Muslim play its role to guard his external behavior and his manifest deeds, words and thoughts, feelings and intentions.

In general, the concept of reward or allowance serves as a means of encouragement while punishment as a means of discipline. All the rewards and punishments come from the authority of God only. In other words, only Allah has the power and right to set what kind of reward and punishment that will be received by His slaves of each single deed that they performed. Therefore, there is no one who can simply promise reward or punishment towards certain act or deed without His permission. Islam possesses an authority for making such a judgment about reward and punishment. This authority rests with Allah SWT and His Prophet Muhammad PBUH. It is this authority alone which determines the reward or punishment of each and every act.

In Islam the concept of reward and punishment are subject to freedom. Without freedom, there would have been no punishment, for an evil done under compulsion is not punishable [9]. The man is rewarded whenever he does something good and is punished when he does something foul. Moreover, Allah does not encumber anyone beyond his capacities and He is never failing in appreciating even the slightest good deed done by a person.

Reward and punishment have the following two elements. First, it inspires the believers to move forward through encouragement and pushes him back through threats. It is extremely difficult to encourage anyone to do anything by himself solely by examining if the results are positive or negative for him. Indeed, some philosophers state that when the person likes something and works towards it on his own, he operates from self-interest relative to what he loves in this thing. Moreover, he acts on the love by responding to the inner conditions, which makes him earn for the things he likes [9].

This is an issue, which the Quran elucidated in dealing with heaven and hell and with good and evil as the elements, that propels a person to accept or reject something. This is the natural way to which a human being is inclined-even in matters of *kufir* (infidel) and *iman* (faith) which are related to the negative or positive ways that a person chooses. Negatively or positively, that person relies on faith to endure the errors of non-belief, thereby opening up more to faith.

The Quran refutes the doctrine that certain consequences necessarily follows from sins and that man must in all cases bear them. In fact, this is one of the most misleading doctrines to have invented deeply by human imagination. If it was true, it would mean that a sinner would never have the opportunity to have his repentance accepted. It is a mechanistic view of reward and punishment and thus prevents and discourages the sinner from improving himself.

When the death approaches the person, on divine command, separates his soul from the body. The souls separated are then preserved until the last day of the judgment day when the souls are reunited with bodies to receive the eternal reward or punishment which will be decided by the divine tribunal.

The *Quran* and *Sunnah*, on the contrary, tell man that reward for good actions and punishment for bad ones rests entirely with God. The reward that one receives for good act is not the natural consequences of those acts; it is rather due to the grace and benevolence of God and it is entirely up to Him to reward one or not. Likewise, punishment for evil deeds is not a natural and unalterable consequence of man's acts. God has the full authority to punish man for his sins as well as to pardon him.

The concept of reward is sometimes stated as positive commitments that must be fulfilled and sometimes punishment as negative prescriptions, which must be avoided. For instance, gratefulness to God is always rewarded;

“As a grace from Us. Thus do We reward those who give thanks”. “And remember! Your Lord caused it to be declared publicly that if you are grateful, I will add more favors unto you, but if you show ingratitude, truly My punishment is terrible indeed”[12].

Love for God follows naturally for obedient believers. Those who obey the command of their Lord, gradually develop love and affection for Him. This process of gradual development of a feeling of love and affection towards God through obedience is the desire of all His faithful servants. On the other hand, ingratitude has a lot of disguise. It may be a state of feeling, it may come in words or acts, or in other ways a willful rejection of God’s authority and rebellion against His law. In the end, the guilty one is always the loser and will be lead to punishment of hell fire, for God never loses.

Indeed this voluntary and willing acceptance that we call it as faith is far more effective and stronger than any other that can be achieved through the external force of law and order. The believers voluntarily accept the sovereignty of God and willingly obey His law and way of life. In fact, they strive hard in their efforts to seek the pleasure of God and try to perform every act, in open or in secret, with great humility and sincerity [10]. Indeed, sincere repentance from any sin may bring God’s mercy and salvation [13].

In conclusion, all these deeds for no reward in monetary terms but simply to please their Lord. This is perhaps the strongest motive and most effective incentive for the believers to obey the commands of their Lord. Furthermore, the belief that whoever obeys His Lord’s commandments and does good deeds will have a happy and peaceful eternal life in the hereafter surely provides a strong incentive for pious and virtuous life, even if one may have to face some hardships and difficulties in the temporary life of this world. On the other hand, the belief that whoever breaks the law of God will suffer eternal punishment, no matter how rich and luxurious a life he may have led in this world, will be a strong deterrent against an immoral and impious life. The stronger and firmer this belief in a good reward for obedience and a severe punishment for violation on the day of judgment, the stronger will be the motivating force to inspire one to lead a virtuous life even if the consequences appear to be damaging and harmful and to abstain from impious and evil deeds even if they appear to be very fruitful and profitable [10].

Hadith of Reward in Sahih Bukhari

Reward for Being Good to Parents Is the Blessings of God:

Narrated Al-Walid bin Aizar: I heard AbiAmrAsh-Shaibani saying, “The owner of this house.” he pointed to Abdullah’s house, “I asked the Prophet 'Which deed is loved most by Allah?’” He replied, “To offer prayers at their early (very first) stated times.” Abdullah asked, “What is the next (in goodness)?”. The Prophet answered, “To be good and dutiful to one’s parents,” Abdullah asked, “What is the next (in goodness)?” The Prophet said; “To participate in Jihad for Allah’s Cause.” Abdullah added, “The Prophet narrated to me these three things and if I had asked more, he would have told me more”[14].

Analysis: The Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH mentioned clearly about the reward of being good to parents. The reward is receiving the mercy and blessings of Allah and it is also consider as the deeds love most by Allah. The kinds of mercy in the Hadith that can be deduced are many. It can be gaining the goodness in the day of judgments, receiving a bounty in term of widening ones wealth, the blessings of God will be gaining life long and also save from any bad things and so on. The action of being good in this Hadith is not only including a Muslim’s family but it is also include the none muslim family. Ibn Haja rmentioned the verse from surah al-Ankabut while explaining this hadith because Allah SWT stated to being good towards parents in the Holy Quran generally [15].

“And We have enjoined on man to be good and beautiful to his parents...”

After obedience to Allah and his messenger it is more important to be obedient to one's parents. Being polite and helpful to one's parents is the duty of every Muslim. The lesson that one’s should consider the life of one's parents blessing because their life provides one with an opportunity to serve them wholeheartedly, which is ordained by Allah.

The action of being good in this hadith is not only including a Muslim parent but it is also including the non-Muslim parents. When the parents are not Muslim, Prophet Muhammad PBUH taught us to be kind and respectful to them. We should take care of them and continue to explain Islam to them. If parents ask their children to do something which Allah has forbidden, children should obey Allah over the order of their parents.

However they should respectfully explain to their parents the reasons for their disobedience.

When they become old and too weak physically to care for themselves, parents need loving care, just as they gave their children when they were young. We should never forget that if our parents had not taken care of us when we were young and helpless, we probably would not have survived. We truly owe our lives to our parents, so taking care of them in their old age should be our pleasure and become as the main reason of gaining the reward as mentioned in the hadith.

Children should do their best to obey their parents. Being good toward parents can be achieved while the parents are still alive and after their death. When they are still alive the children should not argue with their parents, refuse to help them, or make a fuss over every small matter. If one wants to be nice to them after their death, one should adopt the methods of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH. It needs to be noted that it does not mention the ceremonies like recitation of the noble Quran on the third, seventh and fortieth day after the death of a person, which is practiced in our society. All these methods of conveying the reward of virtuous deeds or rites are wrong for the reason that they are neither helpful for the dead nor the living. It may become as the thing that stops the blessing of Allah. The question here what really benefits the dead as well as living, is prayer and begging forgiveness from Allah. It clearly means that the children will be rewarded for the virtuous acts they do for their parents and the status of the deceased parents will also be elevated in the next world. In this regard we can say that the things that death did not bring to an end all the activities are ongoing *sadaqah* like the digging of a well, the building of a mosque, etc. Secondly, knowledge, that benefits Muslim. Thirdly, prayers that are offered from virtuous offspring.

Hadith of Punishment in Sahih Bukhari
The Punishment to the Person Who Severs the Bond of Kinship:

Narrated by Jubair bin Mut'im: That he heard the Prophet saying, "The person who severs the bond of kinship will not enter Paradise"[16].

Analysis: This hadith highlights the point that maintaining the bonds of kinship (*silat al-rahmi*) indeed enjoys extraordinary importance in Islam. Conversely, severing the ties (*qat'a al-rahim*), is very high on the list

of enormities where the person who severs the bond of kinship has great impact. It will prevent a person from entering paradise and will lead to Hell-Fire.

At two places in the Qur'an, Allah has cursed the one severing family ties.

"And those who break the covenant of Allah, after its ratification and sever that which Allah has commanded to be joined (i.e. they sever the bond of kinship and are not good to their relatives) and work mischief in the land, on them is the curse and for them is the unhappy home (i.e. Hell)"[17].

Silat al-rahmi has been defined as politeness, kind treatment and concern for all one's relatives even if distantly related, corrupt, non-Muslim, or unappreciative. While nearly every religion has emphasized good family relations, Islam has taken it to unprecedented heights. It is a duty to be discharged without an eye for reciprocity. A Muslim is required to be kind even to his non-Muslim relatives. Similarly he is required to be kind to even those relatives who are harsh to him.

A curse person is one who is deprived of the mercy of Allah. As mentioned in the hadith it is an indication of this deprivation that this sin is punished in this world as well as in the hereafter. We can also understand that there is no sin more deserving of having punishment meted out by Allah to its perpetrator in advance in this world along with what He stores up for him in the next world than oppression and severing ties of families.

Islam came to set all our relationships right. This includes our relations with Allah as well as with other human beings. *Silat al-rahmi* is a very important part of the letter. Today, unfortunately, these teachings can mostly be found in Muslim societies in their violation. The best we do today is reciprocate, more commonly we backbite, cheat and hurt our relatives and continue the spiral of hurt and humiliation as they respond. And we just abandon those of our relatives who are economically unfortunate. All of these examples can be the forms of severing the *qat'a al-rahim* or breaking the ties of kinship.

There are three reasons for this sad situation. First is the widespread ignorance about Islamic teachings in this regard. Even in various Islamic groups the subject hardly gets attention it deserves. Second is the rampant materialism. While materialism hurts all aspects of our life, it is especially damaging to family ties for they require sacrifice of time, money and personal comfort. The third reason has to do with recent history. It is a "gift" of the

transformation of Muslim societies under colonialism. Industrial revolution came at a time when Muslim civilization was in the doldrums. Muslim historian pointed out very accurately that the genesis of European Renaissance and the industrial revolution was in the golden age of Muslim Spain. Yet it is also true that it progressed at a time of Muslim decline. And that explains the form it took and the devastation it caused to the family life. Everywhere it disrupted human relations. Iqbal pointed to this when he said in his famous line: "The rule of machine is death for the heart. Machine tools crush compassion."

Later, under the influence of colonialism, urban centers throughout the Muslim world faithfully duplicated all of these problems. This was just what a blind following of the west promised. Relation between husband and wife, between parents and children, between workers and managers, between neighbors, between relatives, in other words between all segments of society were dealt a devastating blow.

The process continues in the postindustrial, neo-colonial period. To quote one example, television is rapidly destroying what was left of human relation, cutting of even members of the same family from each other and engulfing everyone within his or her own pleasure, oblivious to the world without. It is just one, but probably the most subversive and intrusive tool of our so called postmodern global village.

CONCLUSION

This research highlighted that all the rewards and punishments come from the authority of God only. Moreover, Allah SWT does not encumber anyone beyond his capacities and He is never failing in appreciating even the slightest good deed done by a person. Reward and punishment have the following two elements. First, it inspires the believers to move forward through encouragement and pushes him back through threats. The reward that one receives for good act is not the natural consequences of those acts; it is rather due to the grace and benevolence of God and it is entirely up to Him to reward one or not. Likewise, punishment for evil deeds is not a natural and unalterable consequence of man's acts. God has the full authority to punish man for his sins as well as to pardon him.

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