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# Factors effective in influencing on the hearts

### Seeking excellence in discussion or dispute and fussing

In the Islamic instructions, it is highly emphasized on the manner of discussion with people, especially with ignorant and low knowledge people, and the discussions which do not have any "fact seeking aspect" are prohibited under the title of "dispute and fussing". Even in some cases, discussion is absolutely forbidden.

Holy Qur'an says:

And argue not with the People of the Scripture unless it be in (a way) that is better. (29:46)

And somewhere else it says:

#### And reason with them in the better way (16: 125)

In the above two verses, the discussions lacking "fairer manner" and "better way" are prohibited. They are the same discussions having a sympathetic aspect and accompanied with kindness, courtesy, compassion, and do not leave any ill or negative effect on the other party.

Even in some cases, God officially instructs His Prophet (S) to choose silence against the aggression of opponents, and absolutely avoid the discussions, the end of which is dispute and obstinacy.

#### And if they wrangle with thee, say: Allah is Best Aware of what ye do. (22:68)

In the several traditions, discussion is prohibited through different subtle interpretations disclosing a series of mental points:

The Prophet (S) said: Avoid dispute because its wisdom is not understood and there is no security against its sedition. 1

And he said: No one fulfills the reality of belief, unless he leaves dispute, although he is right.2

Solomon, son of David, told to his son: My son! Avoid dispute because it has no profit and provokes the fire of enmity among the brothers.3

Prophet (S) said: no nation strays after guidance, save it engages in dispute.4

Commander of the Believers (Imam Ali) (A.S.) said: O Komeil! Avoid fussing because in this way you impassion the ignorant against yourself, and destroy brotherhood.5

The ill effects of discussions mixed with dispute and aggression are precisely studied in the above traditions and it is inferred from them that:

- 1– Dispute in discussion is useless, and it has no result (because hurting affections of the other party causes him to resist).
- 2- Dispute is not compatible with belief (because it is the sign of arrogance and seeking excellence, and arrogance is never compatible with belief, the sense of which is submission and surrender to the truth).
- 3- Dispute results in sedition and attracting enmity and hostility (because everyone is sensitive and strict

for ruining of his personality).

- 4- Dispute causes misguide (because it excites the sense of obstinacy, selfishness, and prejudice and thereby covers the visage of truth).
- 5– If dispute is made with the ignorant, it encourages them to violate the reverence of one's personality and makes them insolent to him (because when they find their reputation in risk, they will ignore the reverence, which they observed before the learned in normal conditions).

For salvation from such great dangers, Islam instructs to avoid discussions and talks having an aggressive, hostile and eristic aspect, and even do not apply this way for proving the truth.

### **Stopping selfishness**

One, who wants to influence on the spirit and thoughts of others, should never insist them to accept the realities as "an idea belonging to him". Rather, in contrary, he shall try to express the realities absolutely and even as the idea of the other party. Pay attention!

As we know everybody loves his ideas like his physical children, and the reason for love and interest in both cases is the same. His ideas are considered as a part of him just like his children, and loving them forms a beam of self-love, which is the most rooted man's instinct. And in contrast, the thoughts of others are strange to man like the others' children, and naturally fail to attract his interest, and even sometimes they provoke his competition sense.

Therefore, accepting the realities the way of attainment to which is through the man's own mind, is much easier and favourable for him. Because in such cases "intellect" and "affection" are situated in one direction and in contrary, if they are entered to his soul as a strange thing, a contradiction and struggle occurs between his "intellect" and "affection", the result of which in the most individuals is victory of affection. Intellect tends to accept it as it is true, but affection finds it strange and belonging to someone else, and refrains accepting it.

It is noteworthy that if our real purpose is fact seeking and not personal victory in the discussion, it is better to pretend that the idea or its completion belongs to the other party not to us. If our aim is acceptance of an idea, why shall we insist on it being accepted as "our own idea"?

Several trials being performed on the individuals have exactly proved that applying this method for penetration into the thoughts of others has been successful. Basically, for achievement to this goal following principles should be observed:

1– It should be tried to say a part of the matter, and the other party shall perceive the rest of it with guidance of the speaker. In fact, the speaker should play the role of a mental leader for manifestation of innate talents of the other party, not the role of an independent being.

2– It should be tried to propound the matters as discussions under study through mentioning questions and queries, and the other party should make the final reply as the final decision.

3- It should be strictly avoided to attribute matters to oneself, particularly with the phrases like "no one has mentioned this before me", and such like.

4– If there are clarifications or references in the utterances of the other party in respect to the matter in question, it should be explicitly remarked and mentioned as a proof. Even if it exists in the utterance of those being respected and loved by the other party, like his father, master, family, or intimate friend, it should be remarked.

Holy Qur'an, which is a superior symbol of influential and effective speech and its influence on people's thought, has been so wonderful that some have called it as a "magic", often applies this method in its arguments before the adversaries and self deluded persons in the phrases like:

Is there any Allah beside Allah? (27:61)

Who is the god besides Allah? (28:72)

There is no Allah save Him. (35:3)

And also the phrases such as:

Have they not travelled in the land, and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear? (22:46)

It stipulates different issues and leaves final judgment on the burden of the hearers and seeks help from their own conscience in solving the issues.

### **Provoking positive affections**

As it was also referred to in the previous discussion, one shall always try to avoid confliction of intellect and affections in two opposite parts. Rather, he shall attempt to orient the affections in the same direction of intellect for supporting intellect's attraction power just like the power of moon in low and high tide, which is sometimes supported by sun's gravitation for being in the same direction, and for attainment to this purpose, following methods should be applied in a bid to provoke affections.

1– Name of everybody is the most favourable word and most harmonic song for him. So one shall call him respectfully with his name for provoking his affections, and if he has several names, the most interested and respectful name should be selected. We have read in the traditions a man should be called with his "nickname"6. (Nickname is the most respectful name with Arabs).

It is also narrated in respect to tempers of Prophet (S) that he called everybody with his best name and even selected an appropriate nickname for those lacking any nickname.

2– First, an opportunity should be granted to the others for saying their utterances, and one shall carefully listen to what they say. This shows that one is really seeking for the fact, and moreover, he is also sympathetic and assumes respect and reputation for the other party. Each of these aspects has an effective share in provoking one's positive affections.

On other hand, naturally everyone focuses all of his power in expression of his idea and arguments, and only intends to divulge what is in his mind, and surely in this condition, he does not have any readiness for acceptance of others. So, expressing our own matters and arguments before his complete evacuation is just like seeding in a thorny and brushy land.

It often happens that individuals have some complexes, which are opened, through expressing them, and then they are changed to normal individuals for hearing the truth. We read about Prophet (S) and leaders of right guidance (A.S.) that they granted an opportunity to the other parties for speaking.

- 3- Expressing desire to what the other party likes, and speaking about those who have a significant share in provoking the individual's affections. We read about Prophet (S) that sometimes when he was alone with some of his companions, he asked them about their family concerns and wife and children and whatever they liked.
- 4– The admirable or acceptable parts of utterance of the other party should be remarked so that his soul will become ready for accepting weak points and mistakes of the others.
- 5- Practical sympathy, in its real sense, is one of the most critical factors in provoking affections of others and making their mental condition ready for acceptance of fundamental matters. If they observe a real sympathy from the speaker, they may accept his arguments even if they are not completely acceptable for them, and make themselves understood that his comments are correct and any of his

proposals is beneficial for them.

One of the reasons for wonderful welcome from the speeches of Prophet (S) was this point that everybody recognized him as his real sympathetic one so that non acceptance of the right way by some people appeared in the Prophet (S) as fatal complexes:

Yet it may be, if they believe not in this statement, that thou (Muhammad) wilt torment thy soul with grief over their footsteps. (18:6)

And we read in respect to the biography of Prophet (S):

Whoever came to him, either a freeman or slave and bondmaid, he accompanied him (her) and helped him in his work.7

6- The way of reminding mistakes should be so that if the affections of the other party are not provoked in the favour of speaker, at least they should not be hurt, and thereby the mistakes should be minded indirectly as far as possible.

The phrases like "Don't you think that this is better?", "Isn't it better to do so?", "I sometimes do so", and such like are all phrases which could be used for reminding the mistakes indirectly.

7- We shall never provoke obstinacy sense of someone unduly, and if he insists on a matter which is not the main issue of discussion or criticizes it, we shall coordinate ourselves with him correctly in the criticism or supporting and defending it instead of opposition. This makes the other party disarmed and invites him to more reflection.

For instance, if we what to invite someone to Islam, and find that he has a negative idea about the Muslims and their situation and insists on it, we shall not defend the situation of Muslims so much. Rather, we too shall coordinate ourselves with him and mention some basic criticisms (of course, without exaggeration and indulgence) and then follow our main issue. Certainly, we will be more successful.

## Belief in one's own speech

The well-known phrase, "The utterance coming from the heart, will be accepted heartily" indicates a precise and subtle mental reality, which could be used in the ways of influencing on the others as a vital principle.

As we know tongue and speech is the interpreter of mind and idea and also the scale of speaker's own belief determines evaluation of speeches.

It is not surprising that degree of belief of a hearer to an utterance has a close relation with the degree of belief of the speaker. One may say something apparently very excellent and good, but when his tone shows that he does not believe in it so much, it causes the hearer to doubt in the correctness of that issue. In contrary, if a subject is not very acceptable, but there are the evidences of his decisive belief in it, this provokes the curiosity and precision towards it, and makes them optimistic to that speech.

This too is noteworthy that not believing in a matter could not be totally hidden with mannered utterances, especially in speech that against most deeds, is full of delicacies through which spirit of emotions and mind of speaker will be manifested willingly or not.

Observing one's own speech is one of the important factors for its influence because it is possible that the utterance does not indicate the belief, but one's action is mostly the sign of belief.

### Effect of virtue of the speaker

It is said:

Do not consider the speaker; rather consider his (her) utterance.

But its full observance is not possible for anybody, because everybody assumes the speech as the product of speaker's being. In view of material tools, speech is the same transformation in man's energies. Chemical energy is transformed into mechanical energy in the cells and mechanical energy to acoustic energy.

And in view of spiritual contents and materials, it is the product of thoughts, education, environment, knowledge, attributes, and spiritual states.

Thus, any speech has the same colour of its speaker, and carries the speaker's attributes, either his spirituality or his ugly and bad attributes, and on this account, when an utterance is issued by a virtuous individual, all windows of human spirit are opened to it, and all existence of man receives it.

And in contrast, a speech uttered by an impure and evil person faces with the unconscious negative reaction of the hearer, and the windows of his spirit are closed to it.

- 1. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 138/2
- 2. The same document, narration 53
- 3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 134/14

- 4. Ebne Majeh, Sonan Ebne Majeh, 19/1, published in Beirut
- 5. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 270/77, narration 1
- 6. HorreAmeli, Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, volume 8, chapter 5
- 7. Al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, 226/16

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