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The concept of the “commitment” in “Kalileh and Demneh” and “Marzban book”; Persian literature

Parvaneh Adelzadeh and Tayyebeh Alipour

Department of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Social capital involves norms, values and moral obligations that shape the individuals interactive behaviors. These norms and obligations facilitate the social interactions. “Kalileh and Demneh” translated by Nasrollah Monshi and “Marzban book” by Saadeddin Varavini are important teaching books that refer to the social and moral issues in addition to the literary and political challenges and the social capitals contain significant components in these books. This article investigates on commitment as the main component of social capital and pays attention to the function of commitment in conceptualization of participation in eliminating of political and social problems mentioned in the tales of these books that undoubtedly could be a useful solution in establishing optional social relations and achieve social capital.

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INTRODUCTION

Social capital is a relatively new concept gained attention in economic and social studies in the developed and developing countries that its role in shaping social relations is investigated. Today, it plays more important role than physical and human capitals in the societies. Lack of social capital influences on efficiency of other sectors and leads to delay in cultural and economic development.

Iran classic and modern literary texts contain significant components in social capital area that it could be effective on quality and quantity of social capital. By using recommendations mentioned in these books in practice and theory in peaceful cooperation and collective participation and also employing individuals experiences in interactions and emphasis on optimism in interactions, social capital can be used in communities in effective way. The literary texts that have been written based on inspiration of religious and national beliefs and the concepts and context of these works that have been remained in collective mind poses potential for preservation and survival of social capital that the optimal utilization of it could lead to progress of a society. According to expansion of the subjects in these texts, this article tries to investigate the commitment in “Kalileh and Demneh” and “Marzban book”.

“Kalileh and Demneh” and “Marzban book” were written in thirteen and fourteen centuries and they contain allegories and fables. The allegorical characters appear in social interactions and they interact and challenge and plot and fight with each other. They have a king, court and a community like human societies. Basically, the authors have tried to express the manner of social relations and styles of governance of humans by language of animals.

Although, tales are narrated in order to entertain and motivate the reader in these valuable books, but it can be said that indeed, the theme, thought and social foundation of these works is propagation of the governance styles, collaboration, social justice, good morals, self esteem and confidentiality and commitment.

Commitment means accepting, assignment, taking responsibility, promise, empathy and caring” (Dehkhoda dictionary, 1998:6823).

“Shahid Motahhari defines commitment as obeying rules and undertaking of agreements terms that the man believes in them”. He believes that the obliged person undertakes the promise of the obligation”.

“Commitment implies the person loyalty, avoiding social and moral risks in one hand and obligation and undertaking of moral, religious and social principles” (Social capital and security, 2011:167).

Colman in response to the question of “Why rational interaction leads to commitment?” replies that: “When I serve you, you need me and it does not cost so much for me, if I be rational and interested in my benefits I

Corresponding Author: Parvaneh Adelzadeh, Department of Persian Literature and Foreign Languages, Tabriz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tabriz, Iran

understand that this service is important for you which you pay for it. So, commitment could form a kind of insurance policy”(social theories foundations, 1998: 473).

Based on Islamic teachings, the individuals should be obliged to each other and faithful to their promise. “To be faithful to your promises, since you will be asked about them”. Even in promise to the pagans, in case of observing the agreement items, faithfulness leads to shaping social capital in national and international level”(The prophet tradition, 2006:570).

Commitment in “Kalileh and Demneh” and “Marzban book”:

In “Kalileh and Demneh” and “Marzban book”, sometimes the weak animals make promise with strong animals for their convenient and welfare in order to be secure against their violence. Then they breach their promise. In these texts, three commitments are referred: 1-commitments to confidentiality, 2-commitment to obedience and 3- commitment to security

1-Commitments to confidentiality:

In chapter “the end of Kalileh”, when the leopard hears the words of Kalileh and Demneh and becomes aware of the plot of Demneh against the Shanazbeh goes to the mother of the lion tells everything and makes promise to be confident to her and the mother accepts”(Kalileh and Demaneh ,2004:129).

The mother of the lion went to the lion next day and told her opinion about Shanazbeh and announced him that there is ignorance on him. The lion became curious and demanded his mother to say him everything that she knows. But she did not accept since she had promised to the leopard:

The lion said:“if you know something say me and she said I have heard something but I cannot tell you since I have promised it to be confidential .The scholars have emphasized on confidence on promises and prevention of disclosing the secrets”(ibid:130).

The mother of lion emphasizes on her promise with the leopard:

“It is difficult to disclose the secrets of others and I never be happy by killing of Demneh if I tell the truth, I have to announce him”(ibid:155).

In tale of “camel and the pious lion”, when the rooster begins to plot against the camel says him: I tell you a secret that you are benefitted from it, but I know that you cannot be confidential since you are naïve:

“The bear told the camel: I tell you a secret that you benefit of it and it has good and bad consequences, but you are simple hearted and disclose the secret. I want to say something but you have to think about what you want to say”(Marzban book, 2005:571).

The camel proposes making promise as solution and they promise to be confident:

“The camel said: say the secret and if you cannot trust me, let us to make promise. They made promise to be confident and the bear disclosed the secret”(ibid:571-572).

Then the camel does not say the reasons of changing his physical and mental status due to his promise on the bear:

“The camel thought if he says the truth he will not be faithful to his promise on the bear”(ibid:613).

In this tale, the mouse that had heard the speech of the bear with the camel dose not tell something because of fear of the king but when he sees that the fox emphasizes on the following of the camel he decides to say the secret after making promise that the fox not to announce his name:

The mouse said that: “since I see that you are engaged in this secret, I disclose the secret but you have to make promise to be confidential and not say my name and the fox makes promises”(ibid:634-635)

2-Commitment to security:

In the chapter of “lion and cow”, Demneh commissions to go to Shanazbeh to take him to serving to the lion, but when he hears that the lion is fierce he accepts and demands his security from the lion. Then they make promise and go to the lion”(Kalileh and Demneh, 2004:73).

Then, Shanzbeh goes to the lion and he is welcomed and the lion demands him to stay in his realm and take advantage of his beneficence and he accepts and prays the lion”(ibid:73).

Demneh says to the lion that Shanzbeh has plotted against him and he demands him to take action. But the lion points to his promise on securing Shanzbeh and does not breach his promise”(ibid:97).

In tale of “cat and mouse”, “when the mouse sees the cat trapped in the trap becomes happy, but in return he sees that there is a weasel in one end and an owl in other end chasing him and he fears and goes to the cat and unties the trap. They make promise to secure each other”(ibid:270).

The cat accepts and makes promises”(ibid).

In chapter of “Zirak and Zarvi” in the tale of “cat and mouse”, “the wealthy mouse gives the poor cat what he needs after making promise to security and honesty. The mouse said: “let to make promise to help each other in illness and health not to act in hostility in order to live in peace and security”(Marzban book ,2005:381).

The cat said:“I swear to God not to breach my promise until I will be in health and they behave like a mother and child and be kind to each other”(ibid: 282).

3-Commitment to obedience:

In "Introduction and explanation of the reasons for writing the Marzban book", it is narrated that after death of Shervin, the other brothers make promise with the elder brother to obey him" (ibid:39-40).

In chapter "the fortunate king and advices on his sons" in the tale of "deer mouse and eagle", when the deer traps in a trap and the mouse helps him he obliges to obey him:

The deer said: "I promise you to obey and serve you forever after releasing and pray you to be great and I will be faithful" (ibid:125-126).

In this chapter in the tale of "the king of Babel and the prince", a king has a small son. When he is dying he assigns his brother as king and asks him to transfer the government to his son after his puberty and obeys him:

"I introduce you as a new king whenever my son is a child and after his puberty transfer the throne to him and obey him. If you are tempted by Satan will remember this verse that "the God orders you to return the properties to their owners" and never breach your promise" (ibid: 136-137).

Conclusion:

Social capital is a multidimensional concept in sociology and it is effective in many social scopes defined as civil society primary element rooted in the daily interactions.

In the authors of these books opinion, the central idea of commitment can be summarized in term of "relations". Commitment is one of the important human relations aspects that provides context for participation and collaboration. We see that in these two valuable works, the animals oblige to personal characteristics of honesty, confidentiality, wisdom, truthfulness, brevity, good deed and kindness and duties (mostly among the political elites) after interaction with each other that provides context for collaboration and participation.

In both works, the animals take their responsibilities that lead to trust and peace of mind and then security and prevention of perils.

According to the Islamic teachings, faithfulness in promises causes to trust in the society and shaping healthy and appropriate relations" (Social capital and security, 2011: 289). The animals as symbol of humans are loyal in "Kalileh and Demneh" that it leads to peace of mind, trust and empowering of social relations. Since relations among human depends on the promises, agreements and commitments.

In these texts, we encounter with positive and negative values that positive values are related to commitment in social relations and negative values involve greed and cunning that they are prevented.

In "Kalileh and Demneh", at first, the animals seek security and elimination of the factor of fear then bilateral trust. It can be referred to public security and social and political participation in this regard.

The authors of these books believe that the actors and authorities should be appointed consciously based on experience, competency, capacity and other qualities. Since they influence directly on the government and lack of selection based on the obligations causes to imbalance in social classes and as a result chaos in the society.

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